

Sunday, August 19, 2018—I Corinthians 16:12 Decision Making and the Will of God

Introduction

- Two weeks ago, during our time together we considered the travel plans of Paul and Timothy by looking at verses 5 through 11.
- As we considered the comings and goings of these two men by comparing Paul's epistles with the book of Acts, we failed to touch upon something as it pertains to Paul's decision-making process.
- Paul did not talk like a Calvinist or a Pentecostal rather he viewed himself as responsible for his own decisions.
 - Verse 6—"And it may be that I will abide"
 - Verse 7—"... but I must tarry a while with you, if the Lord permit."
 - Verse 8—"But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost"
- Paul viewed himself as free and responsible under grace to make his own decisions. Paul does not talk like someone who thought he needed seek the Lord's face and read the tea leaves or circumstances of his life to know God's will.

I Corinthians 16:12

- Paul's desire or will was that Apollos go and see the Corinthians around the time I Corinthians was written. Meanwhile, Apollos did not desire to go to Corinth at that time.
- Notice that Paul does not try to persuade Apollos against his will. Paul does not play the Apostle Card on Apollos, "Well you know Apollos God told he that he wants you to go to Corinth."
- Paul viewed himself and other believers as free to make decisions for themselves based upon a renewed mind functioning with an intelligent understanding of God's word.
- I Corinthians 7:39—who you marry is your choice. Choose wisely.
- Philippians 2:25—Paul supposed it necessary. He made the decision on his own.
- I Thessalonians 3:1—Paul, Silas, and Timothy made this decision.
- Philemon 15—after the fact, the best Paul can say is "perhaps" this is the reason it happened as it did.

- God has never used circumstances as a means of divine communication. The only way you know that you have received a message from God is through an objective standard outside of yourself.
- Romans 2:17-18—how did Israel, the sign people of God (I Cor. 1:22) know God’s will? They were instructed out of the law. God’s word told them what their circumstances meant.
 - Deuteronomy 11:16-17—when there was no rain and crop failure Israel did not have sit and wonder what God was trying to tell them? No, His word already told them in advance what the physical circumstance meant.
 - Deuteronomy 28
 - Deuteronomy 13:1-4—an event can never communicate a message apart from the written Word of God. The only way you know that you have heard from the God of heaven is through an objective standard outside of yourself i.e., God’s written word.
- Many believers attempt to fleece the Lord like Gideon. Gideon was not functioning based on faith.
 - Judges 6:1-10—why is Israel in this condition? Duet. 28 for a failure to obey the law.
 - Judges 6:11-22—the angle of the Lord already worked the sign that Gideon as a member of the nation of Israel required.
 - Judges 6:36-40—Gideon is not operating on the basis of faith in these verses. Believers are constantly fleecing the Lord in this fashion.
- When it comes to the issue of decision making and the will of God, we must realize that God’s will is not first focused on us but on God and what he is doing. If you want to do the will of God find out what God is doing. Do what God is doing and you will be doing the will of God.
- How do you find out what God is doing? The word of God rightly divided tells us what God is doing, he is forming the church the body of Christ.
 - Ephesians 1:9—through the revelation of the mystery God has revealed the mystery of his will.
 - Ephesians 2:13-18—God is forming the one new man i.e., the church the body of Christ.
 - Ephesians 4—how does God want me to walk as a member of the body of Christ?
 - I Thessalonians 4:3-5

- I Thessalonians 5:16-23—there are plenty of things to occupy my time and attention without asking God for more revelation.
 - Ephesians 5:15-17—once again the will of God is to be understood and acted upon and not sought after.
- Circumstances are the context or the stage upon which we live our lives. We are to act upon that stage based on God’s revealed will as set forth in scripture.
- II Timothy 3:16-17—God’s written word is what furnishes the believer for the good works God has for them to do. The same Holy Spirit that was active in inspiring God’s word (II Peter 1:21) indwells and seals believers unto the day of Redemption (Eph. 4:30).
 - I Thessalonians 2:13
- I Corinthians 16:12—was Apollos out of the will of God by refusing to submit to the will of the Apostle Paul? No, Apollos was doing God’s will wherever he was.
 - I Corinthians 3:5—if Apollos was ministering the word of God where he was he was doing the will of God.
- The things that happen in our lives are the result of our own choices. Sometimes our choices intersect with the choices of others. There is such a thing as being in the right place at the right time or the wrong place at the wrong time. Everything that happens to you is the result of a predetermined life plan that has already been decided.
 - I Samuel 6:9
 - II Samuel 1:6
 - Ecclesiastes 9:11
 - Luke 10:31
- I Corinthians 16:12—Paul made decisions based upon a renewed mind considering the objective facts of the word of God and applying them to his present circumstances.

Conclusion

- We hold in our hands a competed book. Inspiration has ceased.
- Sings belong to Israel’s program.
- God has never used circumstances to reveal his will.

- Through the cross we have peace with God and a standing in absolute grace.
- Therefore, we are free and competent based upon our understanding of the current dispensation of grace and with a renewed mind to make decisions for ourselves.
- God needs his ambassadors in every community and on every job site and place of occupation.
- If you will find out what God is doing and do that you will be doing the will of God in the details of your life.