

How to Know God's Will? (Part 2 of 3) _ Removing the Obstacles

John 7:10-24 New American Standard Bible (NASB)

¹⁰ But when His brothers had gone up to the feast, then He Himself also went up, not publicly, but as though in secret. ¹¹ So the Jews were looking for Him at the feast and saying, "Where is He?" ¹² And there was a great deal of talk about Him in secret among the crowds: some were saying, "He is a good man"; others were saying, "No, on the contrary, He is misleading the people." ¹³ However, no one was speaking openly about Him, for fear of the Jews.

¹⁴ But when it was now the middle of the feast, Jesus went up into the temple area, and began to teach. ¹⁵ The Jews then were astonished, saying, "How has this Man become learned, not having been educated?" ¹⁶ So Jesus answered them and said, "My teaching is not My own, but His who sent Me. ¹⁷ If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know about the teaching, whether it is of God, or I am speaking from Myself. ¹⁸ The one who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who is seeking the glory of the One who sent Him, He is true, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.

¹⁹ "Did Moses not give you the Law, and yet none of you carries out the Law? Why are you seeking to kill Me?" ²⁰ The crowd answered, "You have a demon! Who is seeking to kill You?" ²¹ Jesus answered them, "I did one deed, and you all are astonished. ²² For this reason Moses has given you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and even on a Sabbath you circumcise a man. ²³ If a man receives circumcision on a Sabbath so that the Law of Moses will not be broken, are you angry at Me because I made an entire man well on a Sabbath? ²⁴ Do not judge by the outward appearance, but judge with righteous judgment."

Introduction

Let me tell you a story of Jesus (John 5:1-18) that provides us with the context of today's text. One day He was walking in Jerusalem by a pool named Bethesda ("house of mercy"). Around the pool, there were a multitude of people who were sick, blind, lame, and withered. Day in day out, all of them were waiting for one thing: an angel of the LORD to come down at certain seasons and stir up the water; after the stirring up of the water, whoever first stepped in would be healed from whatever disease they had. You can imagine the competition among those folks: everyone wanted to be that first person! I am sure that many folks also solicited helps from their families and friends.

Well, one of them was a man who had been sick for 38 years. That day Jesus met him and asked, "Do you wish to get well?" "Of course, sir," the sick man answered, "However, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up. Even though I try, while I am coming, another always steps down before me" (John 5:7). Then, Jesus said to him,

“Arise, take up your pallet, and walk.” And immediately the man became well, and took up his pallet and began to walk. So far so good, right?

However, it didn't go well for Jesus. You see, the problem was that this thing happened on the day of Sabbath. The Jewish authorities saw the man walking home with his pallet and said, “Hey, it is the Sabbath, and you are not permitted to carry your pallet.” But he answered, “The one who made me well asked me to do so.” They asked him, “Who is the man who asked you to do so?” “Jesus,” he answered. From then on, the Bible says, the Jewish authorities persecuted Jesus and tried to kill Him because He did these things on the Sabbath (John 5:16, 18). Keep this story in your mind as we proceed: the tension between the Jewish authorities and Jesus on the issue of breaking the Sabbath.

Added Commentaries

With that in mind, I am going to read to you today's text one more time with a little bit of [my own commentaries].

¹⁰ ***But when His brothers had gone up to the feast*** [the Feast of Booths/Tabernacle—five days after Yom Kippur, the fifteenth day after Rosh Hashanah, 10/7/25. 7 day-festival of rejoicing and thanksgiving], ***then He Himself also went up, not publicly, but as though, in secret.***

¹¹ ***So the Jews*** [Not the common folks but the Jewish religious leaders at the time who were dead against Jesus—John 5:16] ***were looking for Him*** [On-going search effort with ill intention to arrest and kill Him (v. 19)] ***at the feast and were saying, “Where is He?”***

¹² ***And there was a great deal of talk about Him in secret among the crowds: some were saying, “He is a good man”; others were saying, “No, on the contrary, He is misleading the people.”***

¹³ ***However, no one was speaking openly about Him, for fear of the Jews*** [Jewish authorities].

¹⁴ ***But when it was now the middle of the feast Jesus went up into the temple area, and began to teach.***

¹⁵ ***The Jews*** [Jewish authorities] ***then were astonished*** [Marveled: vexed], ***saying, “How has this Man become learned, not having been educated?”*** [Greek: learned (grammata—Scripture, letter, learning); How does He know so much of the Scripture when he was never educated—never been disciplined / trained under any rabbi?].

¹⁶ ***So Jesus answered them and said, “My teaching is not My own, but His who sent Me.*** [Hey, you look for credentials? God is My Rabbi. My teaching is not mine. It is from God.]

¹⁷ ***If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know about the teaching, whether it is of God or I am speaking from Myself.*** [Jesus saying the reason why you don't recognize Me and My teaching is because you are not interested in doing God's will. If you do like I do, you will clearly know that My teaching is from God.]

¹⁸ ***The one who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who is seeking the glory of the One who sent Him, He is true, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.*** [Jesus points out here that He is seeking God's glory not His own and that the heart of doing God's will is the glory of God.]

¹⁹ ***“Did not Moses give you the Law, and yet none of you carries out the Law? Why are you seeking to kill Me?”*** [What Jesus saying is this: You have no desire to please God. You are not interested in God's glory, either. Your heart is not there. Therefore, you don't keep God's law. Instead, you try to kill Me who carries out God's will and keep His Law.]

²⁰ ***The crowd answered, “You have a demon! [Terrible way to acknowledge God's Son] Who is seeking to kill You?”***

²¹ ***Jesus answered them, “I did one deed, and you all are astonished.*** [Jesus refers to healing of the sick on the day of Sabbath in John 5].

²² ***For this reason Moses has given you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and on a Sabbath you circumcise a man.***

²³ ***If a man receives circumcision on a Sabbath so that the Law of Moses will not be broken, are you angry at Me [Bitter with me--- taste of gall, poison: cf. Matthew 27:34] because I made an entire man well on a Sabbath? [Greek root for “break” also means to destroy. In order not to destroy/abolish the Law of circumcision, you say it's O.K. to circumcise (that is, a work) even on the Sabbath. On the Sabbath, I too worked to restore this man to full health whose health was **destroyed** for 38 years. And you accuse me of breaking the Law?”]***

²⁴ ***Do not judge by the outward appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.*** [Think and act in God's perspective, not in your own narrow prejudice].

Content

Two weeks ago, we learned that God wants us to know/understand/do His will. Whether we live out His will (or not) will determine our eternal destination (Matthew 7:21-23). I also pointed out that doing God's will is not an option: it's a must and a genuine Christian experience for every child of God. Today, as part 2 of 3, we are going to think about some obstacles that stand in the way of knowing God's will. Before we expect to know God's will, we must clear these obstacles.

In today's text, in His dialogue with the religious leaders, Jesus exposes three obstacles that block us from knowing God's will: *staying in our comfort zones, refusing to acknowledge who He is, and seeking our own glory instead of God's*. If you do any of these three, you will never be able to know God's will. On the other hand, if you avoid these three, you will be able to clearly discern His will.

First, let's look at the danger of

a. Insisting on Staying in Comfort Zones. Here, we see the *Jewish authorities'* comfort zone was their system of power and tradition entrenched in their **narrow, legalistic interpretation of the Law**—which Jesus challenged. They refused to change the status quo. Their attitude was “Don't rock the boat” attitude. They refused to be changed/challenged/corrected by God and His Word. That's why they hated Jesus when He confronted them with truth. Remember Jesus' healing on the Sabbath? He challenged them not to pass judgment on Him by outward appearance but by righteous judgment. Yet, they refused to do so insisting on their own ways only: *Don't heal people on the Sabbath*. This attitude tells God: *Don't ask me to give up what I love. Don't ask me to sacrifice my comfort. Don't ask me to carry my cross. Instead, You carry my cross. Don't ask me to love You more than my own family. Don't ask me to give up my TV/Internet time for reading your Word and pray. Don't ask me to forgive my enemies. Don't ask me to give more than one hour on Sunday morning. Don't ask me....* When we cling to comfort, we close our hearts to God's will and His transformation. May it never be with us.

Second, we see how refusing to acknowledge Jesus blinds us to discern God's will.

b. Refusing to Acknowledge Who Jesus Is: There was one individual whom the Jewish authorities respected the most: Moses, right next to God. To the point where Torah, God's Law, was commonly called the Law of Moses (v. 23). They revered Moses with the highest esteem. Consider this time how they treated Jesus. They called Him: 1. *Misleading the crowd* (v. 12), 2. *Uneducated* (v. 15), 3. *Crazy, demon-possessed* (v. 20). Don't you think their treatment of Jesus clearly reflects their attitude toward Him? Furthermore, their treatment of Jesus revealed their ignorance of God's will.

Attitude determines treatment and treatment determines the knowledge of Jesus. The knowledge of Jesus determines that of God's will. Our treatment of Jesus today—whether we honor His name or ignore His Word—shows whether our hearts are truly open to God's guidance and His will. E.g., You see people use the name “Jesus” in vain. It gives away how they regard and treat Jesus. God would never reveal His will to those who refuse to treat Jesus with respect. Ask yourself who Jesus is to you. If He is the Lord and Savior as you confess, treat Him likewise. Don't fool yourself saying that He is your Lord yet use His

name in vain or never obey His Word. God will not be fooled with our hypocrisy. He only reveals His will to those who acknowledge Jesus with utmost respect. Their *disrespect* for Jesus was the direct outward evidence of their *inward seeking of self-glory*.

c. **Seeking Our Own Glory/Desires/Greed, not His Glory.** What blinded the religious leaders was that they didn't seek God's glory and honor. With lips, yes, they did: all the time. Yet, in their hearts, they didn't. They were most interested in being honored by people as their leaders, but never in God's will. That's what Jesus was able to see all the time: *seeking one's own glory not God's*. I don't think such attitude has changed a lot even among God's children today. There are too many believers who seek their own interests, desires, and wishes in the name of God's will. E.g., A man is hanging for his life on a branch sticking out on a cliff. "Help!" he cried out. "Is anyone out there? Please help!" No one came. A few seconds later, he began to pray to God: "God, please help me!" Somehow, he felt his prayer was heard. Sure enough, there came a voice from heaven, saying, "Did you call Me?" The man said, "Yes, Lord, I did. Please help me!" God said, "Do you really want Me to help you?" "Yes, please and quickly, because I am about to fall!" God said, "Let go of the branch, then." The man couldn't believe what he just heard. "Lord, did you really say to let go of the branch?" God said, "Yes." The man said, "No, really, you don't mean that!" God replied, "I mean it. If you let go of the branch, you shall live." The man thought for a while and began to shout, "Is anyone else out there? Please help!"

We can't know God's will if our prayers are really about our own success or comfort. God reveals His will only to those whose hearts seek His glory.

Conclusion

John 7:17 is the key verse: *If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself*. Have you noticed that this sentence is conditional? In other words, we must fulfill the first condition before we will know God's will. When we say, 'Lord, I want to know Your will.' God says, "Do your part first, and I will do Mine. Make your heart willing to do My will, then I will reveal My will to you."

The late Father Archer Torrey once said: "*Willingness to do God's will is the key to knowing God's will. If you are willing, you are already 80% ready to know His will.*"

The Greek word for "**willing**" (*thelō*) often carries the idea of an intense, settled **desire** or resolve, not mere passive agreement. It means, "No matter what, I will obey You, Lord." E.g., Consider Jesus' own prayer on Gethsemane: "*Not as I will, but as You will*" (Matthew 26:39).

Move out of your comfort zone. Acknowledge Jesus as Lord and listen to Him. Seek God's glory, not your own. Then, you will begin to discern God's will for your life.

Next week: 7 ways to discern God's will for you. Let's pray.