



First Baptist Pulpit

Sermon Publication of First Baptist Church

Preached by Pastor David Saylor

How to Get it All Wrong!

Proverbs 3:5-6

Proverbs 3:5-6 *⁵Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; ⁶in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make (direct) your paths straight.*

How many of you sincerely want to do God's will in your life, but you often wonder what it is? Yeah, me too.

Last time I started a topic called "Discovering God's Will." Today we're going to try to answer the question, "What am I doing wrong?"

For those of you who perhaps missed last time, let's review. You remember, we had the two soccer goals representing two boundaries of God's Will.

- One boundary of God's Will we called the **Providential Will of God**. That's God's will that's going to happen no matter what. For instance when God determines that its time for Jesus to return for his bride the church, it doesn't matter whether you pray for it or against it, God is going to bring it about. That's God's providential will.
- On the other side we looked at another boundary that we called the **Moral Will of God**. Remember what the Bible said in **1 Thess. 4:3** - *it's God's will that we be sanctified*, purified. That we live on the correct side of the moral will of God. Therefore if we get outside the boundary of the moral will of God were in danger.

- We've got the providential will of God, we've got the moral will of God, and somewhere inside we've got to **Personal Will of God**. It's God's will for our lives, personally. You will always find God's Personal Will for your life somewhere inside God's Providential and God's Moral Will. We learned that the more that you UNDERSTAND the Providential will of God - what God is doing in this world, and the more you LIVE by the Moral will of God - how God is calling you to live according to Scripture - the better you'll be able to discern the PERSONAL Will of God for your life.

This week and in the up coming two weeks we're going to search God's Word and learn better to discern His personal will.

How do we know what God is saying? Well a lot of people have very good intentions and yet still mess up big time in seeking God's will.

It's a lot like the guy who is just very desperate and was praying "God I don't know what to do. God I just need to know what you want me to do." So he got his Bible and he just opened it and said, "God whatever you want me to do I'll do" and he opened it up and did this (point to verse). And it's sad, "*Judas went out and hanged himself.*" And he thought, "That can't be right, so I'll just do it again." And he looked down and he read, "*Go and do likewise.*" One more time God. He opened the Bible, put his finger in and it said, "*Whatever you must do, do it quickly.*"

How do we know when we're messing up? What do we do when we don't know what to do? **Proverbs 14:12** is our foundational first today.

Proverbs 14:12 *¹²There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.*

There can be things that we do that seem right, but they're actually not. Today we're going to look at three incredibly common mistakes that people make when they're seeking God's direction for their lives.

I. WE DON'T ASK GOD - **JAMES 4:2**

The first one, it seems like we shouldn't have to say this, but honestly we do. One of the first

mistakes that we make is simply that we DON'T ASK GOD. We may want God's will, but we simply don't pray to ask God's direction.

James address this problem in **James 1:5**

James 1:5 *5If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.*

God gives wisdom to all who ask him, that's what God says. The problem is, quite honestly, that rather than going directly to God for the decisions that I have to make, I often go to my friends. Or I'll go and ask Nina, "what do you think?" Some go to their horoscope.

I've heard of some people who go to their Magic Eight Ball. "Magic eight Ball, what do you want me to do today?"

I know people who will more often go to the Dr. Phil or Oprah than God. Now, Dr. Phil and Oprah sometimes have some good advice. But were not after "good" advice, were after "God" advice.

So many of us, we go to good sources for help but we don't go to the best.

How many of us would be honest enough to say, "A lot of times I don't even go to God.?" Big issue.

Mistake number one is that we don't ask God and James talked about the challenge of not asking God. **James 4:2**, he said *"you do not have because you do not ask God"* mistake number one is that we do not ask God.

II. WE RELY TOO MUCH ON LOGIC -**ISAIAH 55:9**

The second mistake is this: **We rely too much on logic, assuming that it is the will of God.** And oh man does this one knock me upside of the head. Because I can be way too logical.

Just like, as a kid, I tried to figure my parents out, in the same way I try to figure God out.

The Bible says it this way. **Isaiah 55:9**

Isaiah 55:9 *"As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."*

You see, when it comes to the will of God, sometimes God's will IS consistent with human logic, and sometimes it ISN'T. Because God is not bound by our thoughts, our humanistic principles.

In fact as you look at the disciples, you'll see that, more times than not, Jesus would defy human logic.

- One example of many is when Jesus was with his disciples and there were 5000 hungry men (Matt. 14:15-21), (implying there were many other women and children there too). Jesus said *"Let's feed them."* The disciples said *"This is logically impossible. We only have five loaves and two fish. This can't be done."* And once again Jesus proved that what is logically impossible with men, is spiritually possible with God. Logically they said, "We don't have enough." Spiritually Jesus proves that there is more than enough.

One of the weird things today is that Christ's followers, so many of us, make decisions based on logic, assuming that it is the will of God.

- For example, let's say you get a job offer to move to a new city with a substantially higher salary. Most Christians assume that it is naturally God's will that you take it. Now listen to this -- we think this way, not because there is some biblical teaching that says that when we can produce more money it most likely is the Will of God. No, because we live in a materialistic society and we have come to assume that this must be God's will.

And it possibly *may* be...

Or, on the other hand, it could be that you could go and get this new job, and work your buns off, working ridiculous amounts of hours, and your marriage all of a sudden gets shot in the foot, because now you're investing in your job and not your marriage. And all of a sudden the extra money doesn't look so good, does it?

Or, God is using you where you are, right now to do wonderful ministry. Maybe your discipling people or helping new believers. Or maybe you're pouring into teenagers every week and god is using it to change an up-and-coming generation. Or, maybe you're involved in mission trips around the world or serving in the inner city. And God is calling you to make disciples more than he is calling you to make greater money.

Logically the world says “more money equals God” but is that necessarily true?

Or, maybe you to take that job to earn more money, but spiritually your children are right now better off than they’ve ever been. There groveling and flourishing in their relationship with God. There is no amount of money that’s more important than our children being right with God. And serving him faithfully. We don’t always make decisions by logic.

- Another big thing is in so many young married couples are making is “When shall we have kids?”

And many people, including Christian couples, make those decisions by logic. Logically, what’s really popular right now, is to try to control the situation and say “We’re not ready, we don’t have a big enough house, we don’t have enough money saved, we’ve got too much debt, AND WE DON’T HAVE AN SUV!” And everyone knows you can’t raise a child without an SUV. So we say “We’re not ready.”

But the funny thing is, the Bible says that *“children are a blessing from the Lord,”* and I was thinking, where else do to we say “No God, don’t bless me, I’m not ready.” Yet logically, that’s what we say with children.

- Another great example is that God calls us to manage the resources that He gives us. He tests us and watches to see if will be faithful stewards of them. Because God loves to give more to those who are faithful.

One of the greatest things that God allows us to do is keep 90% of what he gives us. And he tells us to give as a starting point 10%, returning back to the Lord that which he trusts us with, as the tithe.

Bare minimum starting point and God says if you don’t believe it, test me. To see if I will not bless you beyond what you can imagine

Now logically we say “keeping 90% is less than 100%, so I’ll have less.” But God says “Give 10%, and I can do more with the 90%.”

But most people today. Most Christ followers follow logic and explain it away, whine about it, don’t want to do it, gripped onto everything

materially, and as a result live under a curse, when God wants to bless us. Because we believe what we can *see logically* rather than what God says. And he says *my ways higher than your ways*.

God’s will is not always consistent with logic. Sometimes it is, sometimes it’s not. That’s why we seek him.

Now, in my mind I’ll tell you, this is probably one of my greatest weaknesses. I depend on logic. Show me the data, show me the numbers, showing the trends. I’ll read it, analyze it. I’ll spend too much time there before I go to God. But I often need to remember that “God’s ways are higher than man’s ways.”

Proverbs 3:5-6 Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding

The first mistake is that we don’t ask God. The second mistake is that we often lean too much on human understanding and logic.

III. WE OFTEN HEAR WHAT WE WANT TO HEAR.

The third mistake is that **we often hear what we want to hear**. We’ll read too much into something and then say, “Well this is what God wants me to do.” When were just reading something into it *what we want to do*.

2 Timothy 4:3, Paul is telling Timothy “watch out.” And we’re seeing this played out in churches all over the place today. *“For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.”*

You can surround yourself with people who will tell you what you want to hear, instead of people who will tell you what you *need* to hear.

You can go to God and pretend like he’s saying one thing, because you’re reading into something that’s really not there.

We read something into an event that wasn’t even close.

- “God, is it your will that I call this girl and asked her out on a date?” And you’re driving along and there’s a billboard and you say, wait a minute the last two digits of that 800-number are the same as the last two digits in her phone number... “It **MUST** be God’s will!”

- I know people who sincerely pray, “God is it your will that I move in with my girlfriend? Remember, the moral will of God? But then their driving and... “Oh, there’s a for rent sign, it must be a sign from God.” Reading into things.
- People want their dream home. Oh, there’s a open house sign. It must be a sign from God... Even though they don’t have a buyer for their present house, and they don’t qualify for the size loan. “But there is this supersonic bridge, bubble loan - I have to put my two kids down for collateral.. But it must be a sign from God that we can buy that house!”

And that *dream home* quickly becomes their *nightmare home* when things start to fall apart. The economy drops, they have two mortgage payments.

Manipulating something that wasn’t there. People hearing what they want to hear.

TRUE STORY (NAMES AND SOME DETAILS CHANGED)
Story of finding a wife... Came to me with a very weird story. Had a dream, God told him he’s going to meet a girl named Ellen.

Searching for a girl named Ellen. Searched and searched. Finally met a girl named Lisa. Her last name he found was Newton. Lisa Newton. L.N. Reading into things.

If you do counseling with people you find that many people come wanting advice (permission) to get permission to do the things they’ve already decided to do, rather than real direction to do the wise thing.

A lot of us go to God that way too. We honestly do. We want God to bless our decisions and give us *permission*, rather than direction.

Three big mistakes. We don’t ask God. We rely too much on logic. And we often hear what we want to hear.

CONCLUSION

NOW WHAT DO WE DO? If you want God’s very, very, best, there is no shortcut. Do you want to know God’s will? YOU SEEK HIM. And he says you will find him. It’s not some kind of game show where you spin the wheel and hope you get lucky. You pursue the heart of God, and God loves to share his will, his heart, his plan, because he is a God who speaks.

How do you do it? I don’t know how you do it, but you do it. You seek Him in your life.

- Some people fall on the carpet prostrate before God and wait on him. Some people pray when they’re driving to work. Some people may take a prayer weekend or retreat. Some people may have others pray with them. Whatever your style is, do it.
- Sometimes you fast. You deny myself physical nourishment so spiritually I’m more in tune with God.
- Sometimes I’ll devote an entire lunch to prayer. Or, I’ll schedule a four o’clock appointment with God.

Seek him. Listen to him. And when you ask God, trust God and not logic, listen to Him, he will give you his peace, and you will know that you’re inside the providential and the moral will, living out the daily personal will of God.

Scripture. **Philippians 4:6-7.** *Do not be anxious about anything, BUT IN EVERYTHING, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, make your requests to God and the peace of God which transcends all human understanding will guard your heart and mind in Christ Jesus.*

Seek him, and let his presence, his direction, his peace confirm what He’s calling you to do.

PRAYER

Today we talked about what we’re doing wrong. Next week will talk about where do we go from here. Remember He *will* speak to you. He wants to guide you.

Some of you are facing decisions. Big decisions. Some relational. Should I keep dating this person? Should I marry her? How can I forgive someone for something that seems unforgivable?

Some of you are facing questions about an aging parent. How can I take care of them? How can I honor them?

For some it’s children. Or it’s school issues. For its job issues or financial?

What should I do? Whatever decision that you’re facing, God wants to reveal his heart to you.

Those of you that are saying, “Yes I’m facing a decision, and I need to hear from God. Pastor Dave

would you pray for me?" I'd be honored to. Would you lift up your hands right now.

God I just come to you humbly as I know how to, and we pray according to scripture that you would show us your wisdom. We thank you that you give generously to those who ask. We thank you for the wisdom that you're going to give us. God we present our request to you, not knowing what to do, and not wanting to move without your direction. Guide us God. We are your sheep and we will follow your voice. Speak got, in whatever way you choose to speak, whether through your spirit, so your word, through circumstances, through other godly people, however you choose God, lead us. And we commit to follow you. To trust you. Give us the peace that passes all understanding. We don't want anything but your perfect will.

As you continue praying today, those of you, if you were really honest, you'd say, "you know what, at this moment, you don't have a heart that is at peace with God. If you're like me, when I was growing up, I could put it aside and pretend it was not there, but every now and then it would bother me deeply. Knowing deep down I was not at peace with God.

So I tried to figure out logically and I figured "well I'm better than a lot of other people, so maybe God will accept made based on how good I think I am." But still no peace. The problem was I trying to please God with a humanistic way, but the Bible says you can never please God by your own works. You could never, ever be good enough.

Because the Bible says "*without faith (in Jesus), it's impossible to please God.*" This was the most profound revelation that I ever understood. That I could never get to him by works but by his grace alone.. the grace that Jesus provided. He shed his innocent blood on the cross so that I can be forgiven. The Bible is crystal clear. Anyone, that means you, who comes to him *just as you are*, and call on the name of Jesus, your sins will be forgiven just as if they never happened. You'll be made brand-new. You'll be able to hear and pursue the heart of God, and your life will count for his glory and his namesake.

What do you do? Surrender today. Give it all up. It's no longer about me, Jesus, I want it to be about you. Change me. Forgive me.

Call on his name. Come to him just as you are. Jesus, save me and leave me. Lift your hands boldly, now. I just want to meet you, I to I.

Heavenly father, I know I'm not good enough and I never will be. So I call on the one who it is. Jesus, save me. Change me. Forgive me. Make me a brand-new. Because she died for me, I choose to live for you. Reveal yourself and your perfect plan that I can follow you all the days of my life. Take it all in Jesus name, amen.