

Series: Knowing God's Will

**Title: Haystack in a Needle**

Text: Jeremiah 29:11

Time: 1/1/2012 (a.m.)

**Introduction**

1. In the story of Alice in Wonderland, Alice comes to a fork in the road but doesn't know which path to take. Stuck in indecision she looks up for help but instead of finding God she finds a Cheshire cat perched on a limb.

"Which way should I go?" Alice asks.

"That depends ...," said the cat, fixing a sarcastic smile on the confused girl.

"On what?" Alice managed to reply.

"On your destination. Where are you going?" queried the Cheshire fiend.

"I don't know ...," stammered Alice.

"Then," said the cat, with grin spreading wider, "it doesn't matter."

2. Destination should matter to a believer in Christ. Destination determines direction. This is what Colossians instructs us to do, **Colossians 3:1-2** Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.

3. God knows the future, and His plans for us are good and full of hope. As long as we surrender our whole selves to God's plans and as He goes with us as we fulfill His mission, we can realize unlimited possibilities.

**1 John 2:17** The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

4. It may be difficult to believe that the person who does the will of God will live forever. But this is based on the facts of Jesus' life, death, resurrection, and promises.

5. When evil, pain, suffering, or hardship strikes, we can still be thankful for God's presence and for the good that He will accomplish through the distress. God loves you and wants only His best for you!

**Romans 8:28** And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.

6. God works in "all things" – not just isolated incidents – for your good. This does not mean that all that happens to you is good. Evil is very present in our fallen world, but God is able to turn every circumstance around for our long-range good.

7. Two crucial issues:

1. God is not working to make us happy but to fulfill His purpose.
2. This promise is not for all people. Only those who love God and are called according to His purpose.

8. A.W. Tozer helps us out here. "Before a sinful man can think a right thought of God, there must have been a work of enlightenment done within him. Imperfect it may be, but a true work nonetheless and the secret cause of all desiring and seeking and praying which may follow.

We pursue God because, and only because, He has first put an urge within us that spurs us to the pursuit. 'No man can come to me,' said our Lord, 'except the Father which hath sent me draw him'" (John 6:44) *Pursuit of God pg. 11*

9. Such people have a new perspective, a new mind-set on life. They trust God, not life's treasures; they look for their security in heaven, not on earth -- they learn to accept, not resent, pain and persecution because God is with them.

10. Most of us approach God's will by asking the wrong questions. We ask things like,

- "How can I know for sure that what I am doing is what God wants me to do?"
- "Is this person the one God intends for me to marry?"
- "What kind of work does God want me to be involved?"

11. All of these are good questions, but if we begin with these questions, we've missed a crucial step – these kinds of questions are "guidance" based; meaning, we are looking for indicators like open or closed doors, signs, or circumstances.

12. If we approach the subject of "how to determine God's will for my life" from this perspective, we will become frustrated and will never arrive at a satisfying answer.

## 1. Step One

1. We must first turn to God's Word for the only true answer. There are just two places in the New Testament where we find the phrase, "this is the will of God," both occurring in First Thessalonians:

**1 Thessalonians 4:3** For this is the will of God, your sanctification; *that is*, that you abstain from sexual immorality;

### **1 Thessalonians 5:18**

..in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

2. Here we discover that God's will is my sanctification. Sanctification has to do with what I am, not what I do.

3. You can never discover God's will until you begin with this all-important first step: have you presented yourself - your body, soul, and spirit - to God?

4. Have you agreed to God's will – a voluntary submission and surrendering of your life – to His desire to inhabit you entirely? In truth, we should not even attempt to know God's will for us until we have given Him complete control of our lives – body, soul and spirit.

**Romans 12:1–2** Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is* your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

5. By reading God's Word we become more acquainted with God's heart.

6. There are times when we need specific guidance in areas of our life and we need to seek God through prayer and trust God the He is big enough to provide what we seek.

7. Some questions to ask:

1. Does the attitude or action please God?
2. Would God say it is good?
3. Would it cause me or someone else to lose touch with God or cause me or someone else to stumble?
4. Is it healthy and good for me?

8. Sometimes when we have choices between things that both agree with the Bible, the important thing is to start going in one direction. God will direct you if your heart is open to Him and you honestly want to do what He wants for you. Remember, if what you do is done in faith, it is not sin even if you misunderstand His direction. **Everything God does is restorative and redemptive.**

**Proverbs 3:5–6** Trust in the Lord with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight.

9. His Holy Spirit, who dwells within the heart of every true believer, is our Guide and our Teacher, directing us to do what God wants us to do.

**John 16:13** "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.

## **2. Seven Key Principles**

1. Surrender, Peace, Discernment, God's Word and the Holy Spirit, Refection, Prayer, and Confirmation.

2. All seven of these principles work hand-in-hand and must never be isolated or one thought of more highly than another. The greater the decision, the greater the need for having several of these principles confirmed before you make a major, life changing decision.

3. The Bible maintains a consistency of having at least two or three of these principles confirmed prior to moving out in faith. Most errors occur when any one of the seven is overemphasized above another.

4. We must understand that Satan often uses decoys to throw us off track. When we are seeking God's will for our lives – for ourselves, our families, our businesses - Satan will present something that appears to be "good" as a decoy to distract and deceive us. It is his hope that we will think we have found what we have been looking for and stop searching for the real truth.

**1 Corinthians 14:10** There are, perhaps, a great many kinds of languages in the world, and no *kind* is without meaning.

**2 Corinthians 11:14** No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.

5. Satan and his servants can deceive us by appearing to be attractive, good, and moral.

6. Our impressions alone are never accurate indicators of discovering God's will; so it helps to ask these questions:

1. Does the direction line up with God's Word (Acts 17:11)?
2. Does the one giving direction affirm and proclaim that Jesus Christ is God who came into the world as a man to save people from their sins (1 John 4:1-3)?
3. Is the lifestyle of the one giving advice consistent with Biblical morality (Matthew 12:33-37)?

7. Counterfeits are designed to be believable, that is what makes them so dangerous.

**Ephesians 1:18** *I pray that* the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.