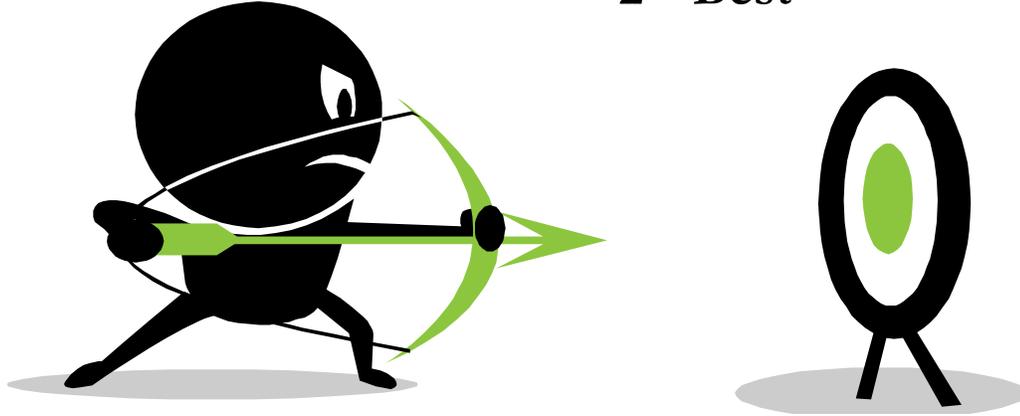


WHEN SEEKING GOD'S WILL IS WRONG

I. REVIEW FROM LAST WEEK

- A. God has two wills, not three

God's Moral Will, 2nd Best



God's Perfect Will

- B. Traditional view locks us in a maze of uncertainty—anything less is 2nd best.
- C. Don't get caught looking for the "center of God's will"—Finding God's will by heartburn!
- D. Biggest decision everyday is to live for Christ and Die to self—"Love God and do what you will"

II. PROBLEMS WITH SEEKING GOD'S PERFECT WILL

A. IMMEDIATE PRESSURE

As soon as we tell believe that we cannot go forward until we know God's exact will for this decision, we place ourselves in a pressure cooker from which there is no escape. If we don't hear the "still small voice" or receive a vivid vision, or feel a strong peace or inner leading, then we are stuck. We can trust that God will guide us in decision making but that is a completely different statement than trusting that we must discover God's perfect plan for our lives ahead of time. This is especially true in our current world/national situation. Many of us thought we lived in a stable country with a stable gov't and a stable economy. We thought we had a stable family, stable job, stable future. Now in midst of a deep recession, retirement looks different, many of us have lost jobs, or started new ones, reevaluating careers, making new business decisions, some just graduating from college, some just getting married, some just getting divorced. We don't know which way things will really go and it breeds uncertainty about moving forward. What should I do? What does God want from me right now? Uncertainty often leads to indecision, paralysis through analysis. These complications make "God's Will" even more overwhelming to the average person. **Matthew 6.25-34, Luke 12.6-7, I Peter 5.7**

B. WITH FREEDOM COMES...LOTS OF OPTIONS

We simply have more choices to make than any generation or culture before us. Our world is saturated with options on everything. Barry Schwarz, author of *The Paradox of Choice* notes that in his local grocery store—285 varieties of cookies, 65 box drinks, 85 kids' juices, 95 types of chips, 80 pain relievers, 15 different bottled waters, 275 cereals, 360 shampoos! 100 years ago, things were different. Who should you marry? You had about 15-20 girls in your hometown to choose from. What would you do? Work on the farm or for your father or for whoever needed help in town. How about entertainment? Play a game, read a book, go to a play, play the piano, or go to bed. **Ex → My Grandfather.** Each decision means that we're limiting our options. If we marry that girl, we can't be with others, if we choose this college we might miss out on the others, if I take that job I might miss out on a better opportunity. We can travel any where in the world, live any place, do any thing, be with any people, etc. In this marketplace, we have lost the ability to "trust God and get going." **Proverbs 16.1-9**

C. THE AMERICAN DREAM IN A MICROWAVE

Our culture promises us the moon, and we go for it lock stock and barrel. Christianity used to have this robust, strong, pilgrim attitude about it. Many of us look at what our parents have at age 55 and believe that we are *entitled* to the same lifestyle by age 22. We think that we can have everything here on earth. We get married and expect to always have amazing sex, exotic vacations, perfect harmonious friendship with no disagreement. We get a job and think we'll never dread going to work and we'll always have enough money. We think we can live forever without struggle. But Scripture tells us plainly that some seasons of life will be suffering, trouble, some like a desert, some like a prison. But we expect so much that every decision we make has to be perfect or it will ruin things. When something goes wrong, we feel like we made the wrong decision and then live in agony. Often, Christians use God, we use the concept of His will to make sure we always get what makes us most comfortable. We used to think about our faith and think in terms of journey, battle, struggle, fight. Now we tend to think comfort, rest, security. **Hebrews 12.3-17, II Corinthians 4.8-12, 16-18, I Timothy 6.12**

D. WE USE GOD'S WILL TO GET OFF THE HOOK

It is easy to make God the scapegoat for our own unpopular decisions. When a girl breaks up with a guy or a pastor leaves a church or a volunteer wants to step down from a ministry, etc. and they use as "God's Will" as their only reason, then they have spiritualized their desires, used God, and attempted to alleviate themselves of any responsibility. There are great reasons for any of the above decisions, but simply quoting the words, "God's will" is not one of them. **Luke 22.22**

E. WE FEAR RISK

One problem in our decision making is that we fear taking any risks. We sometimes use the seeking of God's will as a living actuary table. We've sort of made Jesus into this nice soft fluffy guy who wants to make everything smooth sailing for us. Jesus supposedly promises us a never fail, secure, stable life where we never have to worry. Our culture is built to hedge us against all risk and it just gets built into us. It's hard to make decisions if you can't take a risk. I hope the next generation of Christians coming up now will want to do something great with their lives, that they'll be willing to go for something, to risk something, to sacrifice something. **Matthew 10.28 and more on this next week.**