

ONE STEP AT A TIME
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Choices are like forks in the road. Each one determines the futures that become possible thereafter. Each choice can be said to represent a parallel universe. Each represents a new possible outcome for life. Sometimes it is possible to get back to where we made a poor choice, but usually we just make do. In most cases, the cards we are dealt, those with which we play are mostly dealt by us to ourselves. But do they result in the best life we could have?

Does God have a perfect will, a perfect design for our lives? He most likely does. It is most likely what He designed us to be and the role He created us to fulfill. To take the right choices to keep us in the path God intended us to follow, or to get back to that path once we have lost our way, requires us to listen to and trust the right guide. This begins by seeking out what we know of His will – and submitting to it.

I have heard people wonder aloud what God's desire might be for their lives or even in a particular situation. I have done the same thing myself. There are some aspects though of God's will for which we do not really have to search. Since it is not God's will that any should perish, the first choice we should make regarding our activities is whether each choice will draw us closer or away from the presence of a holy God. We should also examine our lives and choices in the light of the scriptures, allowing the water to be washed by the Word. If we notice a problem, since God never changes, we will have to. Why would God ever speak to us regarding His will if He has already given it to us in writing we ignore? It is foolish to say we are going to pray about whether we should do something that God clearly already tells us to do in the scriptures.

Sometimes, those to whom He speaks and reveals His will are those who have already demonstrated their willingness to listen when God speaks. **John 10:4** says His sheep follow him, because they know his voice. Our children learn our voice because we talk to them as they do to us, over and over again. Have you ever been around someone so long you begin to know their thoughts before they even voice them? How do we get to know someone that well? One way to get to know God is to study His ways and thoughts recorded in His letters to us. Think of it as a long distance courtship, conducted through correspondence. It is the best way to get to know Him before we decide whether we will be betrothed to marry Him. Another way to get to know His voice is by spending time together, like in prayer. Think of that as long distance conversations. They do not always need substance or answers. Sometimes it is just enough to hear His voice and know He is listening to ours.

Some are familiar enough with His Word to recognize His voice if He speaks beyond what He has recorded. There are many voices, but when God speaks, it will always agree with His recorded Word. For those who really care, He does not leave us wondering. **Psalms 37:23** assures us the steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD. There are the scriptures to direct us on the paths we should take. David said in **Psalms 119:105**, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." Besides the scriptures, He offers us an internal guide to direct our lives, if we are willing to let that guide stay with us. **John 16:13** speaks of that Holy Ghost available to all, saying, "when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come."

David included submission to God as a prerequisite to being guided by God. **Psalms 16:7** speaks of God's reins directing David in the night seasons. Letting someone pull our reins to guide us requires letting God put a bit in our mouths and requires submission to and trust in the driver. No wonder Solomon said in **Proverbs 3:6**, "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths." Whether we obey demonstrates to God the value or lack thereof we place on His instructions to us. Those instructions are discussed in **Isaiah 30:21** and **Psalms 119:133**. They are directions on how to walk straight and have our steps ordered by God, so iniquity will not rule over us.

Having our steps ordered by God requires seeking and then following guidance once it is given. It requires listening – followed by obedience. Jesus told His disciples in **Luke 6:46**, "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" We get tired of trying to instruct our children when they

demonstrate they have no interest in listening or obeying. I imagine God does the same. Maybe that is why He said in **Genesis 6:3** that His spirit would not always strive, or contend, with men.

Will we allow God to order our steps, or will we walk our own paths, insisting on making our own choices? Admittedly, at times we find it difficult to determine God's will for our lives in certain areas. God spoke to Moses through a burning bush. He showed His will to Gideon with an unnatural fleece. He spoke to Saul through a blinding light. It would be so nice if God just gave all of us instructions in such an unmistakably supernatural way. Elijah sought for God's voice many different ways in **1 Kings 19:11-13**. After seeking for it in the powerful, ultimately, he found it in a still small voice. Sometimes hearing God's will for our lives will require us to listen very, very closely.

Life is a never ending series of decisions. How are we to know we are making the right choices? God knows exactly where we are and is willing to direct our steps. On our part, we must be willing to allow Him.