

Overview:

In making major life decisions, it is important to recognize that we often have a battle between our wills and God's will. To be sure we are following God and not ourselves we need take great care to be objective, to seek objective input, and most importantly to hear from God.

Outline

I. Recognize the potential conflict between your will and God's will.

- A. Jer 17:9 "deceitful above all things"
- B. Jonah 1:1-3 "The word of the LORD came... but Jonah ran away...to flee from the LORD"

II. Wrong Views on Everlasting Punishment

- A. Annihilationism
 - 1. Belief that those not saved will be eliminated or annihilated.
 - 2. Not biblical.
- B. Purgatory

II. Beware of common pitfalls.

- A. Be careful not to blindly justify what you've already set your mind to do
 - 1. Ex: 1 Thes 4:11 "Mind your own business"
- B. Don't take every open door!
 - 1. David and Saul - 1 Sam 24:3-10
 - 2. Jesus on the Cross - Matt 26:53; 27:39-44
- C. Don't stop at every closed door!
 - 1. Neh 4:10,11;16,17

III. Examine your motivation.

- A. Is my primary motivation the advancement of God's kingdom or for the consideration of others?
 - 1. Matt 6:33; Col 3:17; Mark 12:29-31; Matt 28:19,20
- B. Is it a good thing or the best thing?
 - 1. Do I tend to gain more from this decision than God or other people do?
 - 2. Can I make a different decision that will benefit God and others more, even if it benefits me less?
 - a) Ex: *The job vs. the family; Jesus could have kept healing people*

IV. Look for where God is at work.

- A. Is God currently working in my life in my present situation?
- B. Is God currently working through the different situation that I am considering?
- C. Is God currently working in my life through that different situation?

V. Get objective input.

- A. Are my spiritual mentors supportive of the decision I'm considering?
 - 1. Prov 12:15; Prov 15:22; Prov 19:20
 - 2. Ex: *Rehoboam - 1 Kings 12:3-12,17*
- B. Are my parents supportive of the situation?
 - 1. Prov 13:1; Eph 6:1-3
- C. Do *recommended* experts in the field support it?

VI. What does God say about it?

- A. Have you sought him in prayer to the point that you are confident He has answered?
 - 1. James 1:5; Luke 18:1-5; Matt 27:39-44
- B. Does the Word support the decision I'm considering?
 - 1. List references: _____
- C. Does the Word say anything against the decision I am looking at?
 - 1. List references: _____

VII. Consider your circumstances

- A. Consider how your circumstances positively or negatively effect your interpretation of how God is at work. Don't rely too heavily on them!

Conclusion:

Seek him FIRST in everything, know and apply the Word, get lots of council, and pray until you're confident that God has lead.

Supporting Material:

Verses:

Battle of the wills

Jer 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?

Jer 10:23 I know, O LORD, that a man's life is not his own; it is not for man to direct his steps.

Motivation

Matt 6:33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Col 3:17 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Mark 12:29-31 "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. 30Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' 31The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."

Matt 28:19-20 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Matt 5:29-30 If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. **It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.**

Get input

Prov 12:15 The way of a fool seems right to him, but a wise man listens to advice.

Prov 15:22 Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.

Prov 19:20 Listen to advice and accept instruction, and in the end you will be wise.

Prov 13:1 A wise son heeds his father's instruction, but a mocker does not listen to rebuke.

Eph 6:1-3 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2"Honor your

father and mother"-- which is the first commandment with a promise-- 3"that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth."

Ask God

Luke 18:1-5 Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. 2He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared about men. 3And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.' 4For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care about men, 5yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually wear me out with her coming!'"

Ram 14:23 But the man who has doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin.

Prov 4:26 Make level paths for your feet and take only ways that are firm.

James 1:5-8 If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. 6But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. 7that man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; 8he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.

Matt 26:39-44

39Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."

42He went away a second time and prayed, "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done."

44so he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing.

Quotes:

I find doing the will of God leaves me no time for disputing about his plans.

George Macdonald

The center of God's will is our only safety.

Betsy ten Boom

To walk out of his will is to walk into nowhere.

C.S. Lewis

This is one of Satan's greatest tools . . . the good is the enemy of the best.

Dawson Trotman

To will the will of God in himself and for himself and concerning himself is the highest possible condition of a man.

George Macdonald

References:

Henry T. Blackaby & Claude V. King, *Experiencing God*, Leafy Press, Nashville Tennessee, ©1990.

Paul Abbott, *God's Will for Your Life*, Great Commission, In, ©1984.