

## Making Wise Decisions

Proverbs 3:5-6

I love the story of a woman who was driving in the mountains towards Denver when it started to snow a lot. She was lost when suddenly she saw a truck removing snow. She decided to follow the truck and stay as close as possible so that she could find the way back. The woman did that for a while until the truck driver stopped and came to talk to her. He asked, "Ma'am, where are you going?". "I want to go to Denver," she replied. "Well, if you continue following me you'll never get there because I'm plowing a parking lot."

If we want to reach our destination we must ensure that we are not only on the right path, but also question whom we are following, as this will determine where we'll end up. Many say they want to know and follow God's will for their lives and this is possible because the Lord delights in revealing His purposes and plans for our lives. He wants you to know His will more than perhaps you want to know what it is. Let's start by looking at some misconceptions about the plans and the will of God for our lives.

**1. It is difficult to know what the will of God is.** Although there are specific situations in our lives for which we need to discern what God wants us to do, the reality is that much of what He wants for us is already revealed in the Bible.

Speaking about the word of God Proverbs 6:22 says: **When you walk, their counsel will lead you. When you sleep, they will protect you. When you wake up, they will advise you.** The Word of God guides us, protects and speaks to us. The Bible reveals God's will for most situations in life.

For example, there are instructions on the family, marriage, discipline, relationships, money, the tongue, friendships, work, etc. There are many things about God's will for all of us that are already revealed in Scripture and if we really want to know and do God's will, we have to spend more time reading the Bible and obey what it reveals about His will. The problem is that there are many Christians that don't like what the Bible teaches on many issues, and for that reason they don't read and say not to know what God's will is.

**2. God will show me the future.** Proverbs 6:23 says **For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching a light;** The image is of a light that illuminates (reveals) not all the way but enough to show the closest terrain. When we step forward then we have enough light to see a little more and take the next step.

Usually God's revelation is progressive and dependent on our obedience, that is, if I obey I'll receive further direction. It is rare for God to reveal what will happen in the next week, month, or year, but He asks you to take one step of obedience at a time.

One reason why God doesn't reveal your future is because He wants you to trust in Him, moment by moment, a step at a time. We ought to spend less time trying to know the future, and instead be committed to obey what we already know He wants for us today.

**3. We need to be 100% sure before making a decision.** In our quest to be 100% certain of the will of God, we can become paralyzed by doubt and fear. Trusting God means that we put our faith in Him, even when we have some doubts or fears. The scriptures are filled with stories of men and women who, though they didn't understand everything that was before them, decided to trust God and walk by faith. It was that trust and obedience that took them in the direction of the complete will of God for their lives.

Do not wait and wait until you're 100% sure because you might end up waiting for a long time. God wants us to walk in faith and when we do so He fulfills his purposes. Proverbs 19:21 reminds us that **You can make many plans, but the Lord's purpose will prevail.** God is sovereign, He is in control. Even if we make bad decisions His purpose will prevail.

Instead of worrying so much about where to live or what to do, or to be 100% sure before making a decision, seek to be transformed because that's God's desire for all of us as it says in 1 Thessalonians 4:3 **God's will is for you to be holy,** meaning living away from sin, living for Him and in communion with Him. God is far more interested in the type of person we are becoming.

These are three misconceptions about the plans and the will of God for our lives. Let's look now at Proverbs 3:5-6 to discover what He expects of us regarding His will. **Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.** There are certain conditions that must be met for God to fulfill his promises.

## **A. CONDITIONS**

**1. Trust in the Lord.** Here the word trust is more than simply placing our trust a person. The word "trust" in Hebrew literally means "to lean your whole body" or "put all our weight" on something. God expects us to trust Him completely.

To trust in the Lord is to place your whole being, all your weight, all your burdens, your concerns, your fear, and so on, on Him. Proverbs 29:25 says that **whoever trusts in the Lord is kept safe.** In first place we are called to trust in God completely. Secondly we should do it:

**2. With all your heart.** Why is this important? Because the person who doesn't trust completely is indecisive and inconsistent. What happens to a relationship when people don't fully trust each other? It can't be a lasting or a healthy relationship, and the same happens when we don't trust God completely.

In the Old Testament, the heart was considered the center of the mind, will and emotions. The Bible encourages us to trust God with all that we are, with all our feelings, our thoughts and decisions. Thirdly,

**3. Don't lean on your own understanding.** The "understanding" is the mental process we use to analyze a problem and what we understand leads us to make decisions. But here we are told, positively, to trust in the Lord and, negatively, not to rely on our own understanding. Those two things are mutually exclusive. In other words, if we trust in the Lord, we can't depend on our own ability to understand all that God is doing. God expects us to trust Him even if we don't understand certain things.

Imagine that I ask you to trust me as I stand behind you and ask you to fall backwards. I'm sure that you won't have a problem doing that because you see me there, you feel my presence and you know that I can catch you. But if I step back a little more, and you can no longer see me or feel my presence, it becomes complicated to trust because you're not sure if I'm there or if I can get there in time to catch you. What you're doing is using your mind to make the decision to trust or not in me. But God says we must trust Him no matter what we feel, see or think. We need to trust that He will catch us because He said so, that's faith.

As we read in Hebrews 11:1 **Faith gives us assurance about things we cannot see.** Although I don't see, feel or understand, I am determined to trust God. This is what it means to not lean on your own understanding.

The following verses further explain why we shouldn't put much confidence in our own understanding of things. Proverbs 14:12 **There is a path before each person that seems right, but it ends in death.** Proverbs 28:26 **Those who trust in themselves are fools, but those who walk in wisdom are kept safe.**

Many believe that they don't need anyone to make decisions and solve problems. But if we are going to make wise decisions we ought to resist the natural tendency to think that what we know is best. That does not mean we should not consult our minds and hearts, but we should not rely only on ourselves. That's why Proverbs 12:15 encourages us to seek counsel. **Fools think their own way is right, but the wise listen to others.** Proverbs 20:18 **Plans succeed through good counsel; don't go to war without wise advice.**

Up to now we have learned that we must fully trust the Lord, let the Word of God lead us and correct us, and seek counsel from others. Verse 6 urges us to do a second thing:

**4. In all your ways submit to him.** In other words, in all your ways submit yourself to Him. What this means is that we should consider God in all our decisions and actions. We must involve God and consider what He wants in everything we do, in every detail of our lives. If we don't do so, that will prevent Him from fulfilling His promises because we do not consider what God's Word says and we don't seek His direction.

Submitting to Him is to invite God to all areas of our lives and seek to know Him more intimately. If we do it, we'll be changed and in the process we will know more of His will for us.

The conditions to receive the promises of God are then: trust in the Lord with all your heart, don't rely on your own ability to understand what God is doing, and invite Him to all areas of your life. And if we do our part His promises are amazing.

## **B. PROMISES**

**He will make your paths straight** (v.6) - If we do the above, then, and only then God will direct and help us in all things. Verse 6 promises that God responds to our obedience, and that verse says can be translated in different ways that you can apply to your situation in particular need. If you do your part God will:

For those who may need direction - **God will show you which path to take.**

For those who haven't lived with integrity - **God will help you live righteously.**

For those who might have lived a life of ups and downs, or have found many stones and rocks in your path -

**God will make your paths smooth**

Maybe your life has been full of zig-zag paths - **God will make your path straight**

Whatever the case - **God will help you in everything.**

**Conclusion** - Let us remember that God's priority is our transformation, more than our calling or place you should live in. Submit to God, seek to be transformed and in the process you'll find God's will and direction for your life. Seek to fulfill the conditions that God determines and then you can expect Him to fulfill His promises to you.

If we trust Him completely, if we obey Him completely, then He has wonderful provision for His children. We should not ask whether God will guide us, but if we will let Him guide us.