

The Heights Baptist Church

GOD'S WILL THROUGH HIS SPIRIT • JOHN 16:5-15 • 3/21/2021

MAIN POINT

Living God's will is about living in constant communion with the Holy Spirit.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Is it easy or difficult for you to depend on other people for help? Why?

What about God? When do you depend on Him? When do you try to handle life on your own?

How long do you try to hold on to control of life situations before you give it over to God? How long until you trust Him fully in these events?

Most of us come to faith in Christ in desperate dependence; but then somewhere along the way we start to think we can live out that faith in our own strength. The Bible gives a very different picture. If we are going to share the gospel, demonstrate faith in daily living, and make important decisions, we must desperately depend on the Lord. God has given us the gift of the Holy Spirit in order to guide us, help us, and convict us.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| HAVE TWO VOLUNTEER READ MATTHEW 28:20 AND DEUTERONOMY 31:6.

What does Jesus promise in Matthew 28:20? Given your previous knowledge of the context of this verse, why do you think this promise would have been comforting to Jesus' disciples?

In both passages, God promised His presence. Do you struggle to believe this in your day-to-day life? Why?

We see God's commitment to His children in both of these passages. In Matthew 28, Jesus promised His abiding presence to His followers for all time before He ascended to heaven. In

Deuteronomy, through Moses' instruction to Joshua, we learn that God is intimately involved in our lives and won't depart from us.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 16:5-15.

For three years, the disciples had desperately depended on Jesus. Now He was going to leave them. According to Jesus' words here, why was His departure a good thing?

What other name does Jesus call the Holy Spirit in this passage? What is the significance of Jesus' calling the Holy Spirit this other name?

What clues in this passage can you find as reasons why you need to depend on the Holy Spirit in daily life?

How has the Holy Spirit proven to be the Helper in your life?

The Spirit is our teacher and our guide as we read Scripture. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we are able to understand and apply God's timeless Word. As the Spirit searches our hearts and minds, nothing gets untouched in this renewal process. In the process, our hearts are transformed and our minds are renewed (Romans 12:1-2). Think about it this way: When you read the Bible, you are reading the words that the Spirit inspired. That very same Spirit is now guiding you to discover truth and be transformed into the likeness of Christ.

How does the Holy Spirit's power to help us better understand Scripture enable us to make God-honoring decisions?

As God transforms our minds, we are empowered to make wise decisions. You don't have to check your brain at the door when it comes to discovering God's will. If God is renewing you, and you are seeking Him, He will give you wisdom through the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JAMES 1:5-6.

How do you define "wisdom"? What does James say we should do if we seek wisdom?

What does James teach us about the nature of our prayers for wisdom?

How will God respond to us when we pray by faith for God's wisdom?

God's provision of wisdom allows us to make decisions that we can trust and live out with confidence.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ROMANS 14:1-18.

How does the Holy Spirit help you make decisions that aren't specifically addressed in the Bible?

The Holy Spirit helps us develop convictions in areas that are not directly referenced in Scripture. Most of the grey areas in Scripture concern the use of Christian freedom. In the early church, many of these issues centered on what people should eat or not eat or on the religious practices that should carry on from Judaism to Christianity. These were issues of conscience. If your conscience was clear on an issue or a practice, you could practice it freely unless it caused someone else to sin. If your conscience was not clear on an issue or a practice, you should stay clear of it. The Spirit of God turns issues of conscience into issues of conviction so that we clearly know the will of God.

What specific little areas of your life do you think God is concerned about? Why do they matter to Him so much?

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

What are some practical ways you can continually listen for the voice of the Holy Spirit this week?

Are you currently seeking God's will by continually listening for and heeding to the Holy Spirit? If not, what changes will you make this week in order to do so?

What are some grey areas in which you would like to have direction from the Lord? How will you seek His will?

PRAYER

Invite the Holy Spirit to speak to you loud and clear, and repent from any sins that might be keeping you from hearing Him.

COMMENTARY

| MATTHEW 28:20

28:20. The Great Commission (vv. 19-20) is preceded by a reference to Jesus' authority and followed by the promise of Jesus' spiritual presence among us. Both are necessary if we are to fulfill our God-given mission.

| DEUTERONOMY 31:6

31:1-6. The narrative of Moses' imminent death and the succession of Joshua to leadership is reminiscent of an earlier part of Deuteronomy (Deuteronomy 3:21-28). It also anticipates the formal call and commissioning of Joshua following Moses' departure (Jos 1:1-9). Human leaders are only God's surrogates and therefore are to be followed only if they are obedient to Him.

| JOHN 16:5-15

16:7. Reference to the Counselor harks back to the anticipated coming of the Spirit and the inauguration of the age of the kingdom in OT prophetic literature (Isa 11:1-10; 32:14-18; 42:1-4; 44:1-5; Jer 31:31-34; Ezek 11:17-20; 36:24-27; 37:1-14; Joel 2:28-32).

16:8-11. The Holy Spirit will judge the world's sin of unbelief on the basis of His righteousness. On the ruler of this world, see note at 12:31.

16:13. The Spirit's ministry of guiding Jesus' followers into all the truth will fulfill the psalmists' longing for divine guidance (Ps 25:4-5; 43:3; 86:11; 143:10). Isaiah recounted how God led His people in the wilderness by the Holy Spirit (Isa 63:14) and predicted God's renewed guidance in the future (Isa 43:19). The word declare occurs over 40 times in the Book of Isaiah, where declaring things to come is said to be the exclusive domain of God (Isa 48:14) and where God challenges pretenders to declare the things to come (Isa 42:9; 44:7; 46:10; cp. Isa 41:21-29, esp. vv. 22-23; 45:19).

| JAMES 1:5-6

1:5. The world's harsh treatment tempts us to withdraw and refuse to expose our lack of wisdom for fear of being shamed by our peers, but God gives to all generously and without criticizing. Thus he who lacks wisdom should ask God freely.

1:6-8. A person should ask for wisdom in faith without doubting. The basis for confidence here is not just the fact that we exercise faith, but the person in whom we place our faith—God.

ROMANS 14:1-18

14:1. The believer who is weak in faith is overly conscientious about matters not regulated by Christian revelation. Paul commanded believers to welcome weak Christians but not to get into arguments about doubtful issues.

14:2. Jews were not normally vegetarians, but some were (e.g., Daniel; see Dan 1:8-12).

14:3-4. Mutual toleration is a Christian virtue. God accepts each believer, along with issues stemming from his background and maturity level, and is able to sanctify him. Though we may be used of God to help inform weak believers, we must never criticize another's household slave.

14:5. The observing of special days is complicated (cp. Paul's warnings in Gal 4:10 and Col 2:16 about "a sabbath day"). Luther believed Sunday was not the Sabbath but a new day of worship, whereas Calvin believed the Sabbath was changed to Sunday. Some groups believe in Friday/Saturday Sabbath observance. In thinking through this issue, we should consider the implications of Christ's Sunday-morning resurrection and the new covenant.

14:6. Our religious practices are to be done out of conviction before God. How we live and die must come from the conviction that we belong to the Lord.

14:7-9. We are not our own. Christ died and rose to be Lord of all. Luther said paradoxically, "A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant, subject to all." But most of all, we belong to the Lord.

14:10-12. The tribunal of God is elsewhere called the "tribunal of Christ" (2Co 5:10). Many interpreters distinguish this from the great white throne judgment in Rev 20:11-15. The "tribunal of Christ" is where believers will be rewarded or suffer loss of rewards (1Co 3:13) based on their deeds and their stewardship of God-given responsibilities. In distinction to this, the great white throne judgment is the place where unbelievers will be raised for judgment. Believers take part in the first resurrection, and there is no condemnation for them (Rm 8:1; Rev 20:4-6). All people will bow before God and give an account of their lives. Christians might think that because they are exempt from the final condemnation they can live any way they want, but Christ the Lord will evaluate His servants.

14:13. Our goal must be to help all believers grow into spiritual maturity and not to hinder their progress.

14:14. This is one of Paul's most amazing statements. His background as a Pharisee trained him to emphasize the distinction between clean and unclean, but Jesus persuaded him that this distinction was no longer valid. Thus Paul adopted a new stance, but he also recognized that some believers, especially those from a Jewish background, had not made this transition. Mature believers should not recklessly push "weak" believers (v. 1) into such a transition.

14:15. A strong Christian must live in love and not violate the conscience of a weak believer. The conscience is the moral faculty of the mind. It can be educated by God through the Holy Spirit, but we must never teach anyone to go against his conscience. Do not destroy means that we can cause a person's spiritual ruin by teaching them to ignore or violate their conscience.

14:16-17. Christian liberty will get a bad name if love does not govern it. Food is never to be a major concern in our lives, but we are to promote righteousness, peace, and joy in the churches.

14:18-19. Our actions should serve Christ and help other Christians grow and flourish.