

Doing God's Will

Acts 13:1-4

2/27/05

Intro

Many people experience a lack of direction in their lives; there is commonly an emptiness that comes with this. Yet, God gives us principles by which we can follow what the Lord wants us to do.

This another key turning point in the book of Acts. The church at the city of Antioch will become a significant place where the Holy Spirit moves and directs the church.

Here, Paul and Barnabas are called out to serve the Lord by the leading of the Holy Spirit. In these verses we see the way the Holy Spirit leads and how the church responds.

These are the principles of doing God's will.

I. Minister Unto the Lord

A. It begins with a desire to bless the Lord

- Many people are not aware that they are called to minister unto the Lord; to bless the Lord.
- What an honor it is to be allowed to minister to the Lord. This was the role of the priest in the Old Testament.

Illus – Samuel, when he was a boy, ministered up to the Lord and gave blessed him by calling him to become a prophet.

1 Samuel 3:1, “Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the Lord before Eli. And word from the Lord was rare in those days, visions were infrequent.”

- To bless the Lord is a great privilege.

Psalm 103:1-2, “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget none of His benefits;”

Illus – it's interesting that the word here in Greek is the word from which we get “liturgy,” yet so often, liturgy is often done without heart.

B. God directed when their hearts were His

- **Verse 2 says that *while* they were ministering unto the Lord, God directed them.**
- Many people are so busy with the things of the world that they have no time to minister unto the Lord. **But that is when are ready to receive from the Lord.**

Psalm 22:3, “But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.”

Romans 12:1-2, “Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”

C. Ministering to others ministers to God

- When we bless others, God is blessed.

Matthew 25:31-40 you did these things unto Me.

II. Be Set Apart For the Lord

A. God's will is set apart

- When someone says, "I want to do God's will," it's important to know that God's will runs distinctly separate from the world.

Verse 2 -- in this case, God is saying separate these men for the work to which I have called them; specifically, to carry the good news to the Gentiles.

- **"Set apart"** is from the same word as when the Lord separates the sheep from the goats.

II Corinthians 6:14-16, "Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, 'I will dwell in them and walk among them; and I will be their God and they shall be My people.'"

II Corinthians 6:17-18, "Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate," says the Lord. "And do not touch what is unclean; and I will welcome you. And I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to Me," says the Lord Almighty.

Illus – *In knowing God's will, it's important to know that He often leads by the principles of His Word.*

B. Fasting is setting apart from the flesh

- While they fasted and prayed together the Lord showed them what He wanted them to do.
- Praying and fasting is commonly done as a way of seeking God's will.

Illus – **when I was in the restaurant business, my partner and I had to decide whether should put in a bar. We disagreed so we fasted and prayed. God gave me an answer that I should separate myself.**

Illus – **Someone I once knew was about to make a bad decision about a loan and I asked him to set aside three days to pray – he made the right decision.**

- Fasting is setting apart from the flesh.

Illus – **The flesh says, "eat, eat, eat," and we say "no." You don't do the will of the flesh.**

I Corinthians 9:25-27, "Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so

that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.”

III. Let the Holy Spirit Lead

A. Through the Word of God

- God has given us His Word to live according to its truth and the principles contained in it.

Psalm 119:105, “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”

II Timothy 3:16-17, “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”

Hebrews 5:13-14, “For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.”

Luke 16:29-31, But Abraham said, “They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.” But he said, “No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!” But he said to him, “If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.”

B. Through sound judgment

- God gives us wisdom and judgment so we should be careful not to do anything that goes against sound judgment.

Romans 12:3, “For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.”

- That means live according to that which is right – with integrity of heart.

Proverbs 11:3, “The integrity of the upright will guide them,”

C. Through peace in your soul

- Some people say that God leads them in audible words that they can write down and quote, “God told me this or that.”
- But I have never met anyone who can truly demonstrate that they can do this. It is usually someone who doesn’t want to be questioned, so they use “God said” as their authority.

Illus – the best way to counter this is with God’s Word. We had a gal in the church once who said this and it wasn’t too long before she ran afoul of God’s Word.

- There is an old saying, “Let peace be your guide.”
- The ways of the Lord are in peace.

Proverbs 3:17, “Her ways are pleasant ways and all her paths are peace.”

Conclusion

Following the will of the Lord is a decision that we have to make. It is a decision to minister to the Lord – to serve the Lord. “But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”