

## MOODY DISTANCE LEARNING

### Errors to Avoid in Determining God's Will, Part 2

*Greg Wheatley:* Welcome to Radio School of the Bible, a ministry of the Distance Learning Center at the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. My name is Greg Wheatley, and we're studying together this quarter of Radio School of the Bible, God's will for your life. We've been gaining some very valuable insights into what it means, not just to know the what's and the how's and the mechanics of God's will for our future, but really to get to know the God who has given us our salvation and the God who wants us to walk with him. So it's been a very helpful study and we're glad you're with us. Our instructor is Dr. Bill Thrasher, Professor of Bible and Theology at Moody Bible Institute's Graduate School.

Well, we've been talking about prayer, about pouring our heart out honestly before God and how that's what God desires of us as his children. So we're looking forward to today's study, Dr. Thrasher, as we continue to talk about God's will for our life. Please stay tuned. At the end of the program I'll give you some important information about Radio School of the Bible.

*Dr. Bill Thrasher:* Thank you Greg. We've said that a person who wants to know God's will needs to realize that God is eager to guide them. What we were looking at last time in particular was some errors to avoid and there were several that we cited. One was an unwillingness to think ahead. In other words, not to think of the long-term consequences of the decision. Also, an unwillingness to take advice. And then thirdly we talked about an unwillingness to suspect one's self; that not every strong urge we have was a prompting of God. And then also an unwillingness to discount personalities. Just because someone said, it doesn't automatically mean it's God's will. And then we wanna look at some other errors to avoid and the first one we'll look at today is an unwillingness to learn from experience, an unwillingness to learn from experience.

The Proverb, there are Proverbs 26:11 that says, "Like a dog that returns to its vomit is a fool who repeats his folly." You know we need to learn from what our past deceptions. The Lord graciously allows us to learn from those and yet sometimes we have a tendency – what – to make the same mistake again, again, again because we're not really paying attention to the Lord. And unwillingness to learn from experience, I think, you know I did this for many years and then recently the last year I have started getting back to it and that is keeping a journal.

At the end of a day or the beginning of the next day, I'll just in very shorthand way, doesn't take me a long time, but just jot down in a sense some lessons of that day or the provisions of that day or whatever they may be and to write that down. And also what I found to be very helpful is to look back in the journal of what was happening a year ago at that exact same time. And I've discovered many times in my own life that spiritually, the year is sorta cyclic. Although at some times of the year, our heart is spiritual than others and so sometimes I can prepare me for that. But I'm just saying that's one way in a sense to just tell the Lord we are paying attention or seeking to learn in a sense from our experiences. Probably we've all done things and okay Lord, you know if you in your grace give me an opportunity to do that again, I'll know how not to do it. So an unwillingness to learn from experience is an error to avoid.

Another error is an unwillingness to wait on the Lord; an unwillingness to wait on the Lord. We're told in Proverbs that he who makes haste with his feet errs. We're given the admonition to wait on the Lord. I've basically given this advice to people that when a person comes to you and they ask you to make a commitment or decision in regard to a matter, generally speaking don't ever say yes or no on the spot. Cause most the time you don't have to. I know there's certainly maybe some exceptions where you do have to, but most of the time I've discovered you don't cause I know that somebody can sometimes catch me in a good mood, a joyful time and well anything looks good. And then you think about that, and say, "Well how in the world I ever get myself into this?" So I find it's always, even when I think I know the answer to just say, "I appreciate that and I'll get back with you."

*Greg Wheatley:* And I heard someone say once that if you ask for some time to think, pray about it and they say I need to know now, then it's probably just as well to say no.

*Dr. Bill Thrasher:* That's good, that's true. When there's pressure to act now, certainly we know in a sense some financial schemers or whatever are always after – what – act quick, act quick. You're gonna miss it if you don't ask quick. And that's why it certainly has to have that bigger perspective in regard and that's certainly in regard to God's will for purchasing. They'll try to put the fear in you. If you don't get it – and but you don't have to be afraid. Hey, if the Lord wants me to have it I'll have it.

And that's true: an unwillingness to wait on the Lord. Long delays are sometimes before special gifts of God, special works of God. He can appoint waiting in order to prepare us for what He wants to do for us. So that sense of pressure that comes from an unwillingness to wait certainly, that produces that unwillingness to wait is not of the Lord. God wants to prepare us for the answer.

He also wants to develop our life. It's in regard to – you know if God wills marriage for one, certainly sometimes waiting is involved there, I know it was for me. And that was a part of God's perfect timing, God's perfect plan. So if God wants it, He will bring it about. If God wants it, He will bring it about. You can trust Him to do that. When I think we feel the pressure totally upon ourselves to make it happen, we're perhaps are unwilling to wait on the Lord.

Another error to avoid is this: an unwillingness to follow the guidance that God has already given. If I'm not following the guidance God's already given, the question is: Why would the Lord wanna give me more? It's because He doesn't reveal it to us in a theoretical way to satisfy curiosity.

Scripture tells us to live up to the light you have and it'll produce more light. Sometimes a person can come to you in regard to counseling and they'll somehow expect you to say something to solve their problem but when they're in disobedience they have to obey themselves into more light. They can't just be talked into more light.

*Greg Wheatley:*

Yeah, it's almost as if we wanna wait until we get the answer that we wanna hear, then we'll do it. You hear an answer maybe from the Lord or from a good counselor and instead of going with that you say, "Well, I'll wait until I hear the one I want," and then we wanna obey that one right?

*Dr. Bill Thrasher:*

That's exact, in fact there's a very good scriptural example of precisely what you have said. Because this used to puzzle me. It's in regard to Balaam here where Balaam was given the opportunity to go and curse God's people and God said to Balaam, "Don't go with him. You shall not curse the people for they're blessed." So he rose up in the morning, he said to Balak's leaders, "Go back to the land. The Lord's refused to let me go with you."

And then the leaders they come and they went to Balak and said, "Balaam refused to come with us." And Balak then sent more leaders, more numerous, more distinguished than the former. They came to Balaam and they said, "Thus says Balak, 'Let nothing I beg you hinder you from coming to me. I'll honor you richly and do whatever you say or need. Please come here, curse this people for me.'"

Balaam answered and said to the servants, "Though Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not do anything either small or great, contrary to the command of the Lord my God." And I'm not sure his heart was quite as pure as that as we keep reading. He says, "Now please, you also stay here tonight and I will find out what else the Lord will speak to me." See, God's already told him not to go. But it's we keep seeking God on what he's already tell us no.

And God said to Balaam at night, said, "If this man has come to call you, rise up and go with them, but only the Word which I speak to you, you shall go." So God said go, but keep reading here. He rose and he went, but God was angry because he was going. You see he—exactly what you said there Greg, God told him no and he kept seeking God on what God already clearly made—and so God finally said go, but He said He wasn't pleased that he was going. And I think that's true that there are times that God has made things clear and we keep seeking Him and finally He allows us to have our way and as we alluded, that's one way God disciplines a believer by just – what – giving them their way, but it's not that He's pleased.

*Greg Wheatley:* Well and sometimes you hear about people who – there are clear commands in scriptures, moral commands and I'm thinking about sometimes the awful mess that can be gotten into with extramarital situations. And a person maybe will say, "Well, I really feel this is God's will," but it clearly is not. But yet somehow we're able as in our fallen state to try to make sense out of something that clearly is prohibited.

*Dr. Bill Thrasher:* Yes. You know and that's – that is why God is so clear to us saying, "Watch over your heart with all diligence for from it flow the springs of life." There again, we can get our souls entangled in a way that literally can be an incredible bondage so that we're not able to hear God. I mean, it's because you know we come to the point that we're not willing to hear Him and really lose the ability to hear Him. And all we're just enslaved in a sense to our own wrong choices.

And that can happen in a sense with individuals even like with younger people, having the wrong friends. They can have these unhealthy soul ties and their soul is literally tied to that person and it's taking them away in a sense from the Lord. And really God's will for that person is to literally be delivered in a sense from that. And that's true in a sense the situation that just in regard you were alluding to in general in regard to like if it's any type of a wrong, immoral friendship, relationship or whatever. There needs to be a deliverance from that in order to truly hear God's word.

When we allow impurity in our life, we're not able to really hear the promptings of the Spirit because we're dull to it. And that brings us back to the importance of maintaining that clear conscience before the Lord. You know, within the framework of present obedience, God's guidance is given. As we walk in the light before him, He'll give us more light. But when we're unwilling to follow the guidance He's already given us, certainly the step back is what is to repent.

Now, you know, let me say this, let's say someone is hearing and they're honest enough to say, "You know I have made some wrong choices. I'm making some wrong choices." I would bring you back to a scripture we read a few classes ago that God loves you even in the midst of that discipline. He'll give you your way and it can bring great destruction to ya. But I like what an individual said to me in college, "Any time a person is surrendered to God, God is a will for their life." You can get off that road today. You can get off that road today. Don't put it off. The longer you put it off, the harder it is gonna be get off that road.

*Greg Wheatley:*

Good words and it may just be, Dr. Thrasher, that we're talking to someone today that needed to hear just that. And if that's so for you, then we trust that God, by His Spirit, will take this and use it in your life. Thanks again Dr. Thrasher for your teaching and for the clear word today. Well, we invite you to join us again tomorrow as we approach the close of our current study. Radio School of the Bible is a production of the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago.

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