



May 4-5 2013

Numbers 9

"Discerning the Will of God"

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When the Hebrew people left Egypt and started their journey to the Promised Land, they were completely dependent upon God for guidance and direction every step of the way. God guided and directed them in unique ways. His presence would hover over the Tabernacle like a cloud during the day, and at night, the cloud would glow like fire. Whenever God wanted the Israelites to break camp and move on, the cloud would lift and move, which meant the people were to be ready to follow wherever God might lead them. And whenever God wanted them to stop and set up camp, the cloud would stop and settle. Sometimes the cloud would settle just for a night, and sometimes it would be days or weeks before the people needed to pack up and go. God's instruction was simple and easy to follow: when God moved, you moved, and when God stayed, you stayed.

It's interesting to note that the people had to be on high alert when it came to following God's leading, and it's obvious they were tuned in to God in a greater way than they had ever been before. They had a watching and waiting mentality that, in some ways, forced them to fix their eyes on God in such a way that their hearts were ready to obey him on a daily basis.

In this study, Pastor Gary shares three practical ways to help us know the will of God: the counsel of his Word, the comfort of his peace, and the confirmation of others.

The Counsel Of His Word

1. We need to inquire of God through his Word (the Bible) to give us guidance and direction in life.

2. We need to consider Scripture as the go-to source, because we will never stop being amazed at the ways God uses his Word to address the things we are dealing with.
3. **Psalm 32:8** - *"I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you."*
4. **Joshua 1:8** - *"... meditate on [my Word] day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful."*
5. **Psalm 119:105** - *"Your word is a lamp to my feet [near] and a light to my path [far or distant future]."*
 - a. We should take comfort from this Scripture, because the Lord tells us that he will help us navigate both immediate and long range plans.
6. Sometimes the Bible spells things out very clearly when it comes to what is and what isn't God's will for us.
 - a. Should I sue a Christian? No!
 - i. **1 Corinthians 6:1-11**
 - b. Should I pay taxes? Yes!
 - i. **Romans 13: 1-7**
7. We should not be discouraged about the fact that there isn't a chapter and verse for every situation in life, because God's Word speaks both directly and indirectly about everything we may encounter in life.
8. God also reveals his will as he speaks through his promises and principles found in the Bible.
9. The truth is, that the more we get God's Word in our hearts, the more it transforms our hearts and minds so that we can better discern God's will for our lives.
10. The best way to renew our minds is with the Word of God.
 - a. **Romans 12:2** - *"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - his good, pleasing and perfect will."*

The Comfort Of His Peace

11. **Colossians 3:15** - *“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts...”*
 - a. According to *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words*, the Greek word for rule is brabeuo, which means, to act as an umpire, arbitrate or decide.¹
 - b. This means that discerning God’s will is more than a gut feeling or letting your feelings sway your decision about specific matters.
12. The peace of God is an internal compass we must learn to heed.
13. When we have God’s peace about a matter, we won’t have unrest, uneasiness, or a “check” in our spirit.
14. It should go without saying that if you are about to make a major decision and you don’t have God’s peace about it, then you shouldn’t do it, no matter how wonderful it may appear to be.
 - a. Paul had no peace or literally, no rest for his soul,
 - b. **2 Corinthians 2:12-13** - *“Now when I went to Troas to preach the gospel of Christ and found that the Lord had opened a door for me, I still had no peace of mind, because I did not find my brother Titus there, so I said good-bye to them and went on to Macedonia.”*
15. Never, never, never, go against your peace!
16. Understanding the peace of God comes through prayer.
 - a. **Philippians 4:6-7** - *“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”*

The Confirmation Of Others

17. God oftentimes speaks through other people to confirm what he’s doing in your life, and many times it’s the case that they have no idea they are doing it!
18. **2 Corinthians 13:1** - *“ [Let everything] be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’ ”*

¹ Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1985.

19. [Proverbs 11:14](#) - *“For lack of guidance a nation falls, but many advisers make victory sure.”*
20. [1 Corinthians 12:8](#) - *“To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit...”*
21. Whatever we hear from others should only be confirmation, not direction!
22. Our relationship with the God is one in which we get first-hand information directly from him.
23. In the book of Acts, we read about the way God connected Cornelius and Peter.
 - a. [Acts 10:4b-5](#) - *“The angel answered, ‘Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God. Now send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter.’”*
 - b. [Acts 10:19-20](#) - *“While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, ‘Simon, three men are looking for you. So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them.’ ”*

Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.
2. Read [Numbers 9:15-23](#) to provide an overview for this study.
3. How would you answer the question: “How can I know the will of God?”
4. Spend time discussing this quote from Pastor Gary’s message: “You won’t know God’s will, until you first will to know God.”
5. What would your life look like if God guided you like he did the Israelites?
6. What would it mean to you if God hovered like cloud over the house you were to buy, the career you were to choose, the person you were to marry, etc.?
 - a. Do you think finding out the answers to questions like these is pretty much guesswork?
7. Read and discuss [Psalm 32:8](#) and [Psalm 119:105](#).

- a. Share examples of times when God gave direction and leading through the Bible.
 - b. Do you have a sense of God's near and long range will for your life?
8. Read and discuss [Romans 12:2](#).
 - a. How has the Lord transformed your mind because you've been attentive and intentional in the reading and application of God's Word?
9. Does it frustrate you when you recognize that the Bible does not have "chapter and verse" answers for every situation?
10. Share examples of times when the Lord specifically directed and guided you when you had major life changing decisions to make.
11. Read and discuss [Colossians 3:15](#) and [Philippians 4:6-7](#).
 - a. Share examples of specific times in your life when you had the "*peace of Christ*" in your heart.
12. Allow the people in your group to share examples of times when they made a decision and hoped and prayed that God would bless it.
 - a. How did the decision you made work out over time?
 - b. Do you have regrets over the decision(s) you've made?
13. Has there been a time when someone gave you direction that you followed rather than confirmation of what God was leading you to do?
 - a. How did the decision you made work out over time?
 - b. Do you have regrets over the decision(s) you've made?
14. Spend time talking about times when you found out what God was up to and where he was leading and you followed close behind him.
15. Close your time in prayer by asking the Holy Spirit to help each person: remember that they won't know God's will until they will to know God; never ever go against their peace; see the blessing and the benefit of the Word of God and how it gives counsel both directly and indirectly for every situation they face in life; recognize the confirmation of others and how God can use others to reveal his will; know the comfort of his peace (have someone ready to read [Philippians 4:6-7](#)) pray the Scripture.

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV 1984).