

## Do I Seek God's Protection or His Permission?

**Romans 12:2: (NASB)** *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.*



How often do we as Christians look at our experiences, determine what God's will is for us, and then notice it just happens to coincide with what we want? It is far too easy to fall into the trap of looking for God's permission to do or act or respond when we really should be seeking His providential guidance. This is tricky - how do we tell the difference? How do we uncover what God would have us do in contrast to what He often allows us to do? There is no easy answer here, as God does not set up flashing neon signs showing us the way. And no, He will not tweet you, send you an Instagram or message you on Facebook either.

Discouraged? Don't be, because there is an answer! The key to following God's will is knowing what to look for and knowing where and how to find it.

Let's clearly define the difference between seeking God's protection and asking His permission. Which comes first?

### Seeking God's protection:

**James 4:13-15: (NASB)** <sup>13</sup>*Come now, you who say, Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit.* <sup>14</sup>*Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow...*

Translation: I will do what is in my mind because it is clear and good - God surely will be with me.

### Seeking God's permission:

<sup>15</sup>*Instead, you ought to say, If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that.*

Translation: I have in my mind what to do and it is clear and good. If it is God's will for me, I will do it, and if it is not His will, I will change my direction.



**The power of objectivity, *The Simple Hack to Make the Best Decision*, Mel Robbins**

- So, what I want to teach you is the power of objectivity. Researchers at the University of Waterloo and the University of Michigan have studied how people make decisions, and they've discovered something really interesting. If your friend is facing a problem, when you have to make decisions on behalf of your friend, you tend to think from multiple perspectives, you think about multiple outcomes, and ultimately you make a much better decision. What they found in research, though, is if they put you in the exact same situation, facing the exact same thing that your friend is, you're not able to be so objective because you're emotional, and you don't make that great a decision. What's the conclusion? Well, when you make decisions for other people, you're great. When we make decisions for ourselves, decisions that can be emotional, we're not so good at it. That's where the power of objectivity comes in. It's the ability to make a decision from a third party's perspective.



It is the power of the third party - it is the power of what God's will is for us when making decisions.

When making decisions, we can get into a difficult spot because we might easily misread and misapply Scripture.

**Jesus made it plain what *the cost of walking in his footsteps* was to look like:**

Luke 9:23: (NASB) *And he was saying to them all, If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me.*

John 15:18-20: (NASB) <sup>18</sup>*If the world hates you, you know that it has hated me before it hated you. <sup>19</sup>If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you. <sup>20</sup>Remember the word that I said to you, A slave is not greater than his master. If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they kept my word, they will keep yours also.*

The cost is high, the cost is complete and the cost is ongoing. Jesus let us know what it would be like to be a Christian.

**Jesus also made it plain what *the privilege of walking in his footsteps* was to look like:**

John 14:12-15: (NASB) <sup>12</sup>*Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father. <sup>13</sup>Whatever you ask in my name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. <sup>14</sup>If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it. <sup>15</sup>If you love me, you will keep my commandments.*

The privileges are high, the privileges are generous, and the privileges are abundant.

## **Power of Permission**

### **Principle:**

**All that we are called to  
is purely a gift from God.**

**We therefore must conclude that  
walking where HE gives us permission  
to go is our best life option.**

**What are some practical scriptural examples of  
running ahead of God's permission that we can learn from?**

Many biblical stories show us the stark contrast between good and evil. The examples we want to examine are more subtle in their lessons. Next, we have a powerful account of how easily we can go off the deep end and fool ourselves into abandoning God's permission.

The people wanted a king and made their request to Samuel. Samuel asked God what to do and God told him to give them a king but let them know how things would go wrong.

King Saul humbly began his reign as the first king of Israel. Over time, he lost his way and disobeyed God's command to utterly destroy the Amalekites. God's *protection* was with him in battle, but he spared the Amalekite king and many spoils of war and now would have to face the consequences.



1 Samuel 15:10-23: (NASB) <sup>10</sup>Then the word of the LORD came to Samuel, saying, <sup>11</sup>I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following me and has not carried out My commands. And Samuel was distressed and cried out to the LORD all night. <sup>12</sup>Samuel rose early in the morning to meet Saul; and it was told Samuel, saying, Saul came to Carmel, and behold, he set up a monument for himself, then turned and proceeded on down to Gilgal.



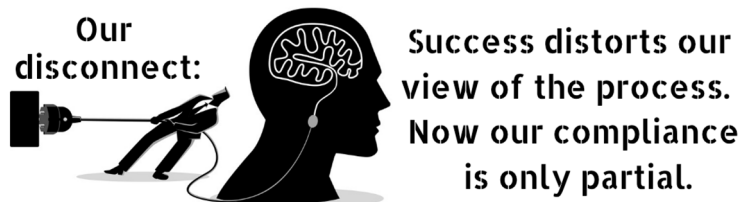
**FIRST indicator of OVERRIDING God's permission:** Saul did not stay within God's permission. He ran head of God seeking to bring God's protection along with him. *The victory was about Saul instead of God.* God gave him the victory over the enemy, but Saul *set up a monument to honor himself.*



<sup>13</sup>Samuel came to Saul, and Saul said to him, Blessed are you of the LORD! I have carried out the command of the LORD.



**SECOND indicator of OVERRIDING God's permission:** *Saul framed the victory as God's, and his self-willed actions as those of obedience.*

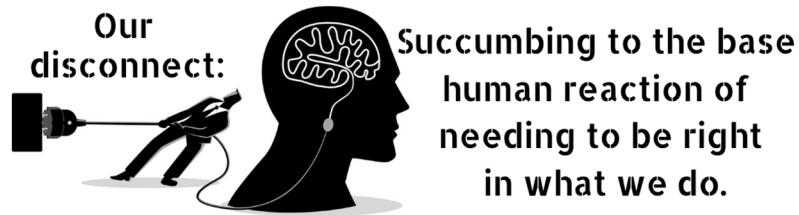


<sup>14</sup>But Samuel said, What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear? <sup>15</sup>Saul said, They have brought them from the Amalekites, for the people spared the best of the sheep and oxen, to sacrifice to the LORD your God; but the rest we have utterly destroyed.



**THIRD indicator of OVERRIDING God's permission:** *Saul recounted the experience with conviction with no regard to the disobedience.*

Saving anything of the Amalekites was not God's will. Saul ran ahead of God's permission.



 Pick a third party, *The Simple Hack to Make the Best Decision*, Mel Robbins

- *This is when the power of objectivity is really important. Pick somebody that you really admire. I mean it could be somebody like a Bill Gates, or a Richard Branson, or an Oprah Winfrey or maybe you have a mentor. And stop yourself and ask what would Oprah do in this situation? What would Richard Branson do in this situation? What would your mentor do in this situation? Bringing that level of "third party objectivity" will yank you out of your body and your emotions, and it will help you give yourself the perspective that you need, and the distance from your emotions so that you can actually assess your options and make the best decision for you.*

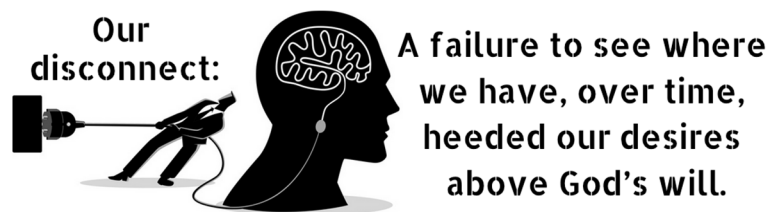
We should look around us for good examples or at others who have gone before us and say, "What would they do?"

<sup>16</sup>Then Samuel said to Saul, Wait, and let me tell you what the LORD said to me last night. And he said to him, Speak! <sup>17</sup>Samuel said, Is it not true, though you were little in your own eyes, you were made the head of the tribes of Israel? And the LORD anointed you king over Israel, <sup>18</sup>and the LORD sent you on a mission, and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are exterminated. <sup>19</sup>Why then did you not obey the voice of the LORD, but rushed upon the spoil and did what was evil in the sight of the LORD?

Samuel put it in perspective and told Saul he did not fully follow the will of God.



**FOURTH indicator of OVERRIDING God's permission:** *Saul needed Samuel to plainly and forcefully point out his actions of disobedience.*



Our desires can be strong voices in our heads.

<sup>20</sup>Then Saul said to Samuel, I did obey the voice of the LORD, and went on the mission on which the LORD sent me, and have brought back Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. <sup>21</sup>But the people took some of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the choicest of the things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to the LORD your God at Gilgal.

Instead of telling Samuel he was right, Saul tried to justify what he did.



**FIFTH indicator of OVERRIDING God's permission:** *Saul rationalizes away the ungodly results of his disobedience as circumstantial. He made excuses.*



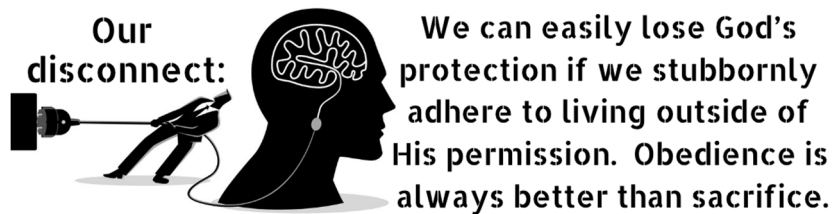


<sup>22</sup>Samuel said, Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams. <sup>23</sup>For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He has also rejected you from being king.



**SIXTH indicator of OVERRIDING God's permission:** *Saul was stripped of the honor of his standing before God based upon the simple principle - to obey God is always better than to sacrifice to Him. Obedience is the key.*

Saul felt he could obey God in a convenient way rather than obey Him in a complete way.



## Power of Permission

### Principle:

**Claiming God's protection when we step outside of His permission is often a result of a growing focus on my thoughts and a diminishing focus on godly principles.**

**How do we counterbalance this dramatic example of abandoning God's permission with something good?**

The Bible is amazing in how it always seems to show us what is wrong and then compares it to that which is right in God's eyes. Not surprisingly, the opposite of Saul's arrogance and disobedience can be easily seen in the responses of David to Saul who would replace him as king.

Saul lost his objectivity and began to see David as his enemy.

### David was mercilessly pursued by King Saul:

**1 Samuel 24:1-4:** (NASB) <sup>1</sup>Now when Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, he was told, saying, Behold, David is in the wilderness of Engedi. <sup>2</sup>Then Saul took three thousand chosen men from all Israel and went to seek David and his men in front of the Rocks of the Wild Goats.

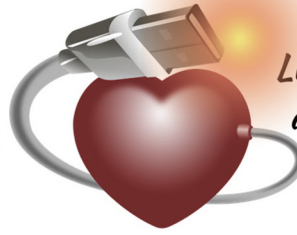
<sup>3</sup>He came to the sheepfolds on the way, where there was a cave; and Saul went in to relieve himself. Now David and his men were sitting in the inner recesses of the cave. <sup>4</sup>The men of David said to him, Behold, this is the day of which the LORD said to you, Behold; I am about to give your enemy into your hand, and you shall do to him as it seems good to you.

David's men tell David that God has brought his enemy to him.



**FIRST indicator of thoroughly ADHERING to God's permission:** Clear and "obvious" evidence of God's "providence" is revealed. David has a golden opportunity to act in a justifiable self-preserving way.

Our Godly  
Connection:



*Listen carefully to the clear  
and obvious evidence, and  
then consider carefully.*

#### **Pursuing God's Permission Building Block:**

**Romans 12:1:** (NASB) *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.*

Our lives, and therefore our wills, are NOT our own - we must acknowledge our highest allegiance.



**You cannot know, How Do I Know if it's GOD'S VOICE or MY THOUGHTS, Jon Jorgenson**

- Welcome to another episode of Coffee Time. So, here is a question that I get all of the time. How do I know if I'm hearing God's voice or just my own thoughts? That's why I wanted to tackle it today. First things first, to answer this question - you can't. You just can't. There is no way outside of God Himself coming down to earth and looking you in the eyes. There is no way to know 100 percent for sure if it is God speaking to you. However, there are different places or different resources that we can go to, to receive guidance. And the first one, very obviously, is God's word.*

Too often in the lives of many Christians, the voice in our head is interpreted as God speaking to us. The "prosperity gospel" is an example of this.

**For more on this topic, please search our archives for Episode #960 "Is Christianity a Greedy Religion?"**

The thought that "if an idea comes into our heads then it must be from God" is not correct.

**1 Samuel 24:4-5:** (NASB) *<sup>4</sup>Then David arose and cut off the edge of Saul's robe secretly. <sup>5</sup>It came about afterward that David's conscience bothered him because he had cut off the edge of Saul's robe.*

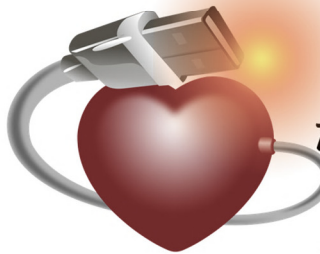
David wanted to follow the permission of God and not run ahead and drag God's protection with him.



**SECOND indicator:** *David responded cautiously and allowed his godly conscience to temper "that which was obvious" with that which was noble.*

Just because something is obvious does not mean it is right!

Our Godly  
Connection:



*Rash action does not reflect  
heeding God's permission.  
Thoughtful consideration based  
on our spiritual mind gives us  
an open door to godly wisdom.*

**Pursuing God's Permission Building Block:**

Romans 12:2: (NASB) *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.*

Daily strive to continue to spiritually transform into the image of Christ.

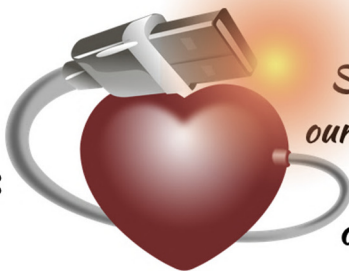
1 Samuel 24:6-7: (NASB) *<sup>6</sup>So he said to his men, Far be it from me because of the LORD that I should do this thing to my lord, the LORD'S anointed, to stretch out my hand against him, since he is the LORD'S anointed. <sup>7</sup>David persuaded his men with these words and did not allow them to rise up against Saul. And Saul arose, left the cave, and went on his way.*

David's character was so noble that he would not raise his hand against the Lord's anointed. Just because David had the opportunity did not mean he had to take it.



**THIRD indicator:** *David was convinced by his allegiance to God to stand down in the face of this golden opportunity. He authoritatively convinced his men to do the same.*

Our Godly  
Connection:



*Stand firm in the courage of  
our highest spiritual convictions,  
even at the expense of  
convenience or opportunity.*

**Pursuing God's Permission Building Block:**

Romans 12:3: (NASB) *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.*

Transforming your mind + humility = sound and godly judgment.



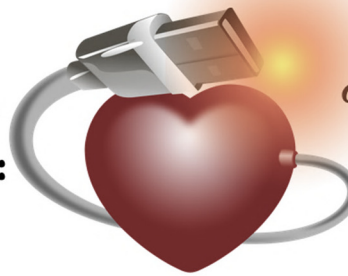
**1 Samuel 24:8-11:** (NASB) <sup>8</sup>Now afterward David arose and went out of the cave and called after Saul, saying, My lord the king! And when Saul looked behind him, David bowed with his face to the ground and prostrated himself. <sup>9</sup>David said to Saul... <sup>10</sup>Behold, this day your eyes have seen that the LORD had given you today into my hand in the cave, and some said to kill you, but my eye had pity on you; and I said, I will not stretch out my hand against my lord, for he is the LORD'S anointed. <sup>11</sup>Now, my father, see! Indeed, see the edge of your robe in my hand! For in that I cut off the edge of your robe and did not kill you, know and perceive that there is no evil or rebellion in my hands.

David boldly tells Saul that he spared his life because *he is the LORD'S anointed*.



**FOURTH indicator:** *David stood in the results of his loyalty to God and used them to witness to God's providence. He took the golden opportunity to wait on the Lord and not to run ahead of Him.*

**Our Godly Connection:**



*We too must stand with conviction in God's permission even when the results would keep us in a disadvantaged position.*

#### **Pursuing God's Permission Building Block:**

**Romans 12:4-5:** (NASB) <sup>4</sup>For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, <sup>5</sup>so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

Remembering that I play but a small role along with others helps to keep the focus on God's providence and not my preference.

#### **Power of Permission**

##### **Principle:**

**Remember the insignificance of your personal role in relation to the massiveness of God's Plan.**

**Always following His permission is the only sensible way.**





## How do I talk myself out of personal preferences that override God's permission and lead me to need His protection?

Sometimes we face decisions that *should* have the "objective" of doing the unadulterated will of God, when in fact we can easily make them with the *object* of our personal comfort in mind. How do we fight the complacency of our human desires to always walk in the permission of God?

We need to put our emotions, thinking, reactions (and therefore our lives) in order. How do we do this?



I used to look to see God's will in Him showing me three different answers in order to know it was not my preference, idea or way. Over time, that has changed and I have learned to see His will differently. I think it is my maturity that has caused me to have a better handle on it.

I have shared many times on this podcast of the experience of having my mom and dad live with us. I was at a Bible conference and was sharing an experience of what my parents were going through, and the listener could see things very clearly. This person said, "Your parents need a hero. They need you to go rescue them and bring them out of their situation." This was not the answer I wanted to hear at the time, but it was the right thing to do. I said, "Thank you, because I think I need to do this." Other people discouraged me and said, "You're going to do *what*? Oh no, that is going to be too hard, your dad has Alzheimer's, it is going to take your time away from serving the Lord..." I was listening to all of these different pieces of advice, but my conscience said, "I have to do this. They have no other option."

It was not necessarily in Jonathan's mind until somebody placed it there. But once it was placed there, even though it was not comfortable or convenient, there was clarity. Jonathan was given opportunities to back away, and even though there was no comfort, he did it anyway. It would have been easier not to, but his conscience said, "You must do this." This is a huge example of what we are trying to discuss today. If our consciences are tuned to godliness, even if other opportunities come up, we are going to really try to do the highest thing, not the most convenient thing.

We have to put our emotions in order.

**EMOTIONS: Know the consequences and privileges of what you choose to follow:**

**Romans 8:13-15:** (NASB) <sup>13</sup>For if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. <sup>14</sup>For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. <sup>15</sup>For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, Abba! Father!

To receive God's Spirit is to become an adopted son of God. But to receive God's Spirit is also to be listening to what your Father says. This is difficult. If you have a good dad, everything he says does not make you happy. We are to learn the lessons of life that will make us strong, mature and good contributors to the world. It may not make us happy, but it makes us better



and stronger. It will make us capable now and later. The consequence of following fleshly thinking is that our spiritual life is not going to go well. The consequence (or privilege) of following spiritual thinking is a blessing, even if it is difficult.

We are very attuned to what we want, but we have to be careful not to run ahead of God's permission.



**Bible-based mentors, *How Do I know if it's GOD'S VOICE or MY THOUGHTS*, Jon Jorgenson**

- Now obviously the Bible doesn't speak to absolutely everything that we're ever going to deal with in our lives, but it is an incredible source of wisdom and a great place to start. And the second place we can check is with wise mentors, counselors, or pastors. Proverbs 15:22 says, "Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed." I'm willing to guess that there are a few people in your life who have been following Jesus longer than you have - who have perhaps a little more experience and a little bit more wisdom when it comes to discerning God's voice. And so, I would encourage anyone to go to those people and say to them, "Hey, this is what I think God is saying to me; this is where I feel God is leading me. Does that sound right to you? Does that sound like it aligns with His word and with His heart? Will you pray with me and help me discern this?"*



He brings up an important point about mentors - someone to actually talk to. I have mentors. There are a couple of brothers in Christ I call when I feel I need perspective. Often the experiences of life cannot be explained to them because they involve other people, but I give them the concept about what I am thinking and doing. I ask for their perspective. It is a wonderful thing to have a spiritual dad. I am an old guy, already a grandfather four times over, and yet I need that mentor sometimes to help me stay stable. In a lot of my own experiences in dealing with other individuals, I talk a lot with my wife, Trish. By venting to her the issues of life, it creates stability, because she can see things and understands me. She can give me a sense of clarity just by repeating back a few things or making an observation here and there. She gives me more strength. We need the wisdom of others.

If we are going to follow God's will and not run ahead of Him, our thinking needs to be kept in check.

**THINKING: Know God's word and walk away from the empty chatter of the world around you:**

**2 Timothy 2:15-16:** (NASB) <sup>15</sup>*Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.* <sup>16</sup>*But avoid worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness.*

The more you know and apply God's word wisely, the more easily you will discern His providence. There is a huge connection between knowing the word of God and being able to discern His providence. God's will more often than not comes through the written word of God, rather than the thoughts in our heads. The thoughts in our head can get easily skewed. Our thinking needs to be guided by Scripture.



**REACTIONS: Realize the wisdom of the brotherhood being a sounding board and being involved:**

Proverbs 15:21-23: (NASB) <sup>21</sup>*Folly is joy to him who lacks sense, but a man of understanding walks straight.* <sup>22</sup>*Without consultation, plans are frustrated, but with many counselors they succeed.* <sup>23</sup>*A man has joy in an apt answer, and how delightful is a timely word!*

In Jonathan's experience, he received that "timely word" that cost him dearly, but how delightful it was! Jonathan has the privilege of honoring his mother and father.

Hebrews 10:24-25: (NASB) <sup>24</sup>*And let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds,* <sup>25</sup>*not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.*

As the body of Christ, we are supposed to be passionately responsible for each other - this responsibility is where providence can flourish. Following the will of God means that if I am walking along with others, and we are sharing in the experiences, I will be able to see God's providence so much better. Two heads are better than one. We really need to look around us, responding through the gift of others being involved in our lives as we try to follow God's permission.

**LIVES: Apply the peace of God liberally and daily to your experiences to hold anxiety at bay:**

Everybody has anxiety to some degree or another. The peace of God is what can help put that in order.

Philippians 4:4-7: (NASB) <sup>4</sup>*Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!* <sup>5</sup>*Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near.* <sup>6</sup>*Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.* <sup>7</sup>*And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

It is easy to say *be anxious for nothing*, but in some cases it feels impossible. But it also says *with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God*. If we are free in being vulnerable before God, we can be free in the receiving of His peace in exchange for our vulnerability. The only way we get God's peace is if we give Him our vulnerability. Rejoicing, having a gentle spirit and a prayer-filled existence all lend toward following God's permission.

**CONCLUSION: Know that God's providence is ALWAYS for your highest and eternal GOOD:**

It is there so you can be "the best you" in God's eyes. Do I want to be "the best me" in MY eyes or in GOD'S eyes?

Romans 8:28: (NASB) *And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.*

It does not mean that God designs everything and then everything that happens to us is by God's design. It is by God's *permission*. Sometimes when we walk ahead of God, He will still work it out for our good. We could have probably gotten there a lot quicker if we would have waited. But He can overrule that for us, if we continue to look for Him first.

## Power of Permission

### Principle:

**To live in God's providence  
is to submit to it  
on every level.**

It is pretty simple - it is every part of all of your life because following His permission is the only way to spiritual growth. It is so easy to undermine God's permission, and when we do, we really do not have His protection, either.

**Sometimes we get impatient while waiting  
for something to happen! What should we do then?**

By now it is obvious that the battle for God's providence to rule in our lives is long and arduous. The temptation to try and drag God's protection along with us as we make our own decisions is great and unfortunately does not go away easily. Let's face it...this is the battle for our spiritual lives.

Will I follow God's providence, overruling and permission, or am I going to walk through life doing whatever I think is good - like King Saul?



Luke 21:19: (KJV) *In your patience possess ye your souls.*

**While patience is such an asset, we also must remember that decisiveness is one as well:**

1 Kings 18:21: (KJV) *And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.*

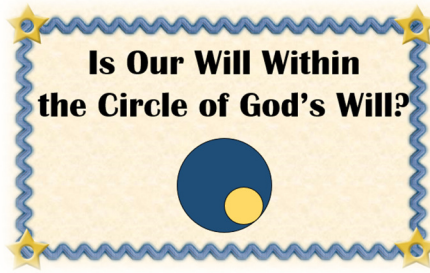
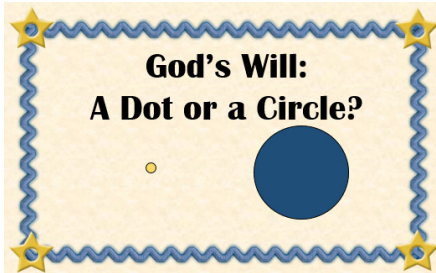
How do we balance these two seemingly opposing processes? Patience says "take your time," but Elijah's example says "make a choice."





For more on the topic of discerning God's will, please search our archives for Episode #916 "How Do You Know What God Wants You To Do?"

We do not imagine God's will as a pinpoint; rather, it is more like a circle. There are a variety of decisions that would be blessed. We want to stay within that circle. Trouble happens when we get too close to the edge or are outside of the circle.



**There are two sides of this issue. First, the selfish and hurried approach:**

James 3:13-18: (NASB) <sup>13</sup>Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom. <sup>14</sup>But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. <sup>15</sup>This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. <sup>16</sup>For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing.

*Bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart* - often, these manifest as impatience, because "I have a desire in my heart, and I am sure it is God's will. I want to do this, and I am sure God will bless it as I go." This tends to push decisions faster than they should be made. "What I want and what will soothe me" is usually our first choice. We have to be careful with our own preferences in decision-making. Sometimes we need to pause and consider, especially when emotions are high.

**Now comes the wise and patient approach:**

<sup>17</sup>But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. <sup>18</sup>And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

It takes time to develop that which is important.



Do we hurry through decisions, and therefore rely on *how we feel about the situation* to conclude it, or do we pause and consider wisdom from above to see *how we serve God with the situation*?



When I was younger, I made business choices to get into a position to be able to serve God more fully. Looking back, I see I rushed into that decision. I was not ready for it and had a lot of hard lessons to learn because of my choices. After a long time, God blessed the decision and gave me an opportunity to serve after I grew into what He really wanted me to do.



 **Woman with cancer, Trust God First Your - Whole Life Will Change, Lion of Judah**

- A couple in our church came to see me. She is probably in her late 30s; he is the same age. She has been diagnosed with stage four cancer. She's by now lost all of her hair through the treatments. They have two small children. Here sat her husband, here sat this lovely woman, his wife, as they spoke to me in the most encouraging manner. I'm in tears; they're smiling. What an interesting reversal of roles. I'm the guy who's supposed to have the answers. And they sit here, and they minister to me as I've rarely been ministered to, talking about what God is teaching them in the midst of the loss.*

**Finally, we come back to the text we began with:**

**James 4:13-17:** (NASB) <sup>13</sup>Come now, you who say, Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit. <sup>14</sup>Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. <sup>15</sup>Instead, you ought to say, If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that. <sup>16</sup>But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil. <sup>17</sup>Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin.

This gives the comparison of running ahead of God and hoping His protection follows you, versus waiting and saying, *If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that.* If we know we should be patiently waiting for His providence and run ahead, it is sinful.

**Psalm 27:14:** (KJV) *Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.*

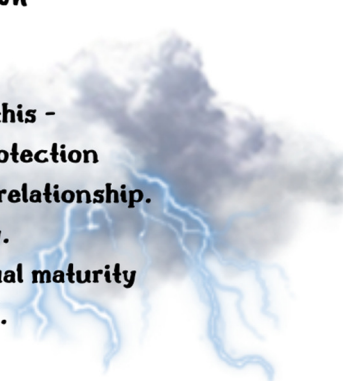
It is hard to stop. It is hard to wait. It is hard to sit still. Everything today is instantaneous. But a Christian's life is not typical. Christian abundance is not compared to worldly standards. It is an abundance of spirituality, wisdom, maturity, fellowship, scriptural understanding - this is where our abundance is.

Waiting does not mean sitting and twiddling our thumbs. Waiting means engaging in appropriate activity, waiting for God's will to become apparent.

### **Power of Permission**

#### **Principle:**

**The final conclusion of the matter is this -  
When I choose to try and drag God's protection  
along with me, I have become the god in the relationship.  
This is nothing less than idolatry.  
If I wait for God's permission, I reap spiritual maturity  
and can then sow blessings to all.**





We do not want to be idolatrous and need to learn to wait for God's permission in our lives. This is about stepping back and being decisive only when we can see the will of God unfolding before us. We must use scriptural principles in making decisions.

*So, do I seek God's protection or His permission?  
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...  
Think about it...!*



Join us next week for our podcast on April 1, 2019:  
Ep. #1067: Do Christians Need Hope in Their Lives?

### Bonus Material!

*Do not plant your dreams in the field of indecision, where nothing ever grows but the weeds of "what-if."* — *Dodinsky*

### Significant reasons to be living within the permission of God:

Romans 8:18-21: (NASB) <sup>18</sup>For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. <sup>19</sup>For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. <sup>20</sup>For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope <sup>21</sup>that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

**So, even though life is more difficult due to the trials of faith, its end result is life for all:**

Romans 8:22-25: (NASB) <sup>22</sup>For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. <sup>23</sup>And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. <sup>24</sup>For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees? <sup>25</sup>But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.

### Significant checkpoints regarding our thinking when it comes to waiting on God's providence:

Philippians 4:8-9: (NASB) <sup>8</sup>Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things. <sup>9</sup>The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.



## One of the direct benefits of this spiritual approach is learning how to thrive in any circumstance:

Philippians 4:10-14: (NASB) <sup>10</sup>*But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned before, but you lacked opportunity. <sup>11</sup>Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. <sup>12</sup>I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. <sup>13</sup>I can do all things through him who strengthens me. <sup>14</sup>Nevertheless, you have done well to share with me in my affliction.*

## A strong reminder of the context of our struggles and the true source of our inspiration:

2 Timothy 3:12-17: (NASB) <sup>12</sup>*Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. <sup>13</sup>But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. <sup>14</sup>You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them, <sup>15</sup>and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. <sup>16</sup>All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; <sup>17</sup>so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.*

## What is motivating me? How do I know? The heart wants what the heart wants:

1 John 2:3-6: (NASB) <sup>3</sup>*By this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. <sup>4</sup>The one who says, I have come to know him," and does not keep his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; <sup>5</sup>but whoever keeps his word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in him: <sup>6</sup>the one who says he abides in him ought himself to walk in the same manner as he walked.*

Jesus was motivated by knowing and doing God's will - by being a son. In contrast, Satan was self-motivated towards being like God. Whose motivation best describes our desire? Parts of each?

## What is motivating me? How do I know? The following is a great reminder of where to live:

2 Corinthians 6:14-16: (NASB) <sup>14</sup>*Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? <sup>15</sup>Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? <sup>16</sup>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.*

## If we have strayed in our thinking and associations, we need to come back to our true center:

2 Corinthians 6:17-18: (NASB) <sup>17</sup>*Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate, says the Lord. And do not touch what is unclean; and I will welcome you. <sup>18</sup>And I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to Me, says the Lord Almighty.*

To be different and to be separate are very difficult tasks, especially in a society that more and more expects everyone to be politically correct and comply with the prevailing ideas that everything is good and acceptable. These are not the borders that God has set for our decisions.

How willing am I to look in the mirror and be completely honest with myself regarding my motivation? Am I being self-serving and cloaking it with spiritual words to make myself look good to myself and others?





## David AGAIN has an opportunity to put an end to his tormentor Saul:

**1 Samuel 26:5-12: (KJV)** <sup>5</sup>And David arose, and came to the place where Saul had pitched: and David beheld the place where Saul lay, and Abner the son of Ner, the captain of his host: and Saul lay in the trench, and the people pitched round about him. <sup>6</sup>Then answered David and said to Ahimelech the Hittite, and to Abishai the son of Zeruiah, brother to Joab, saying, Who will go down with me to Saul to the camp? And Abishai said, I will go down with thee. <sup>7</sup>So David and Abishai came to the people by night: and, behold, Saul lay sleeping within the trench, and his spear stuck in the ground at his bolster: but Abner and the people lay round about him. <sup>8</sup>Then said Abishai to David, God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day: now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear even to the earth at once, and I will not smite him the second time. <sup>9</sup>And David said to Abishai, Destroy him not: for who can stretch forth his hand against the LORD'S anointed, and be guiltless? <sup>10</sup>David said furthermore, As the LORD liveth, the LORD shall smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall descend into battle, and perish. <sup>11</sup>The LORD forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against the LORD'S anointed: but, I pray thee, take thou now the spear that is at his bolster, and the cruse of water, and let us go. <sup>12</sup>So David took the spear and the cruse of water from Saul's bolster; and they gat them away, and no man saw it, nor knew it, neither awaked: for they were all asleep; because a deep sleep from the LORD was fallen upon them.

