

Knowing God's Will

By Dave Arch

All page numbers refer to the New International Version of The Bible as published by Zondervan Publishing as their Thinline Bible. It is available at all Christian Book Stores and many others too.

Have you ever been around someone who didn't communicate? They're the type we refer to as "the silent type." There are those who seek to maintain power and control by not sharing with you what they're thinking, what they're feeling, or what they're expecting from you. We all become a little uneasy around people like that.

God is not that way. God seeks to communicate.

HIS WORD is the primary source of His communication. Here we find God speaking in specific passages in the Bible through His commandments as well as in other verses where He gives us principles that help give our lives direction. Since this is the method of God's most objective method of communication, we need to use it to test all of the other ways in which God also speaks to us.

THE COUNSEL OF OTHERS helps to guide me. Oftentimes, the most valuable counsel I've ever received came from those who knew me well and knew the Bible equally well. As I speak and share with such people, they can often point out passages of Scripture that I didn't even know existed or share with me an insight about myself that I had yet to discover.

INNER PEACE is given quite a prominent place in Colossians 3:15 (pg. 996) where it says "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts." The word "rule" means in today's language to "act as an umpire" in our hearts -- telling us when a decision we make is a bad decision. It is much like the internal conviction we receive when we know we've done wrong. Although I have experienced God giving internal peace or taking away internal peace based upon decisions I make, I quite often need to begin moving in a certain direction (with little

steps) before I can discern that peace or lack of peace in my life.

I encourage anyone who is seeking to determine God's mind on a given issue to begin taking small steps in the direction they believe best. As they begin to move in that direction, quite often God often either confirms the selected direction or makes it clear that the direction is not what He had in mind.

CIRCUMSTANCES also can give us guidance as God places certain opportunities in our lives. The Bible often speaks of these as "open doors." However, it is also equally clear that just because a circumstantial door stands open we should not automatically assume that we should go through it.

Therein lies the danger. Anytime we take one of these four methods of God communicating and use it solely for decision making, we run into problems. Relying on ourselves alone to correctly interpret the Bible has its problems. We can oftentimes read into a passage what we want it to say or not be aware of other portions of the Bible that shed more light on our situation.

If we only listen to the counsel of others, we never know if some advice they give us might be contrary to the Bible. Peace and circumstances can oftentimes be so subjective that without the more objective nature of the Bible and the counsel of others, we are prone to misinterpret what peace and circumstances might be telling us. Each acts as a check and balance with the others.

I'm so glad that God communicates!

For additional reading on this subject, please seek to find the book entitled *Decision Making And The Will Of God* by Garry Friesen (Multnomah Press, 1980) .