

Taking Opportunities- Lesson 5
(Series: **Making Wise Decisions**)

I. Introduction:

➤ **Review:**

➤ **Today:** Should circumstances be viewed as God's revealed will for our lives?

- How do we determine if an open door is God's providential leading or not?
- How are we to view closed doors, when our desires are right and we prayed, but yet the door remains closed?
- What if we face hardship after we make the decision; should we interpret that as having made the wrong decision?

II. Determining the will of God through our circumstances

A. God's providential care over us

➤ Westminster Confession of Faith ch 5- Of Providence, sections 1-3&7

"God the great Creator of all things doth uphold, direct, dispose, and govern all creatures, actions, and things, from the greatest even to the least, by His most wise and holy providence, according to His infallible foreknowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of His own will, to the praise of the glory of His wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and mercy. Although, in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God, the first cause, all things come to pass immutably, and infallibly; yet, by the same providence, He ordereth them to fall out according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently. God, in His ordinary providence, maketh use of means, yet is free to work without, above, and against them, at His pleasure."

"As the providence of God doth, in general, reach to all creatures; so after a most special manner, it taketh care of His Church, and disposeth all things to the good thereof"

➤ Our heavenly Father has a special care for us, His children (Eph 1:3ff,14; Luke 12:7)

Luke 12:6-7

6 Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before God. 7 Why, even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows.

➤ Throughout scripture we see the Lord's providence in the Life of His people (i.e. Ruth & Esther)

B. Interpreting open and closed doors

"Although circumstances are a factor in nearly all decisions, it is important that we not let circumstances dictate the decisions you make.." (1)

a. Rightly interpreting open doors

- 1) Does it contradict clear commands in scripture? (1 Samuel 24:6; 26:8)
- 2) Will it affect other priorities in my life, like church and family?
- 3) Does it go against biblical wisdom and godly counsel?

Luke 14:28-29

For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? 29 Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, 30 saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.'

- 4) Do you have the support of the elders and the church on this decision?

b. Rightly interpreting closed doors

Psalm 84:11

For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD bestows favor and honor. No good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly.

- 1) Closed door could mean that it is not in God's time and you need to wait (Rom 1:13,15:22ff)

Rom 1:10

10 always in my prayers, asking that somehow by God's will I may now at last succeed in coming to you.

Rom 1:13

13 I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that I have often intended to come to you (but thus far have been prevented), in order that I may reap some harvest among you as well as among the rest of the Gentiles.

2) Closed door may be for our protection (2 Cor 12:7; Prov 30: 7-9; James 4:2-3)

2 Cor 12:7

7 So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited

3) Closed door may be the Lord redirecting us in another path (Acts 16:6-7, 9-10)

Q: Should circumstances confirm or deny the legitimacy of our decision?

➤ Your hardship is not the result of your lack of faith- "The just will live by faith"

1 Peter 3:17

"For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil."

1 Cor 16:9

"for a wide door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many adversaries."

"The best decisions can be the hardest decisions. Going God's way will often lead us into risk, trouble; even your process of decision making will not be easy- It requires the hard work of evaluating your motives, biblical study, and wisdom gained from experience." (1)

➤ A word about guidance and our obedience

Psalms 37:23

The steps of a man are established by the LORD, when he delights in his way;

Prov 3:5-7

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. 6 In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. 7 Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord, and turn away from evil.

Bibliography:

- (1) Decisions, Decisions (Dave Swavely, P&R)
- (2) Finding the Will of God (Bruce Waltke, Eerdmans, Regent)
- (3) Guidance and the Voice of God (Jensen & Payne, Matthias Media)