

# THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

*Ephesians 5:15-17*

*Lesson #33*

*Walking in Wisdom*

*03/18/2018*

*Jeremiah 29:11*

"I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord.  
"Plans for welfare and not for calamity, to give you a future and a hope."

The question  
is, how can  
we know  
God's will?



Two popular assumptions.

#1

**God has a Perfect plan for my life.**

1. God has a **perfect and detailed** will for every person in this life.
2. Discipleship involves **finding** and walking in that will.
3. A key to spiritual **blessing** is finding and staying in the center of God's plan for us.

2

Two popular assumptions.

#2

**Spiritual sign language**

1. Did God "**speak to me**" about this matter?
2. Did God "**give me a verse**" on this?
3. Did I feel inner "**peace**" in doing it?
4. Did **circumstances** align?
5. Did the **counsel** of others affirm it?
6. Did I like the **results**?

3

## Consider

1. **Assumption:** God has a particular person I should marry. I need to find that person if I am to be happy.
2. **Reality:** Is it possible that I might make the wrong choice and miss God's perfect will? **YES**
3. **Results:** If and when I do miss the bullseye, the whole system falls apart.
  - I am doomed to a difficult marriage,
  - I blocked my (mistaken) choice from finding their ideal mate.
  - I messed up the life of the one God had for me.



4

*Ephesians 5*

"<sup>15</sup> Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise, <sup>16</sup> making the most of your time, because the days are evil. <sup>17</sup> So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is."

***Walking in Wisdom***

- **Watch your step** - because it is critical.
- **Seize the day** - because the time is short
- **Stand your ground** - because the days are evil.
- **Find the way** - because God's will is clear.

5



### Ephesians 5

“<sup>15</sup> Therefore be careful **how** you walk,”

#### Watch your step.

1. It's **not where, or what** so much as **HOW** we live that is God's concern.
  - We too often think of God's will in terms of **WHERE** and **WHAT**.
  - A “paint by the numbers” life is:
    - superficial, lacking depth, and authenticity.
    - for beginners not the mature?



6

### Ephesians 5

“<sup>15</sup> Therefore be careful **how** you walk,”

#### Watch your step.

2. It's **not what we achieve or how much we accomplish** so much as **HOW** we do it.
  - The Kingdom of God has a simple business model - ministering **TRUTH IN LOVE**.



Bell Hooks

“Love is moving toward another person's soul with a commitment to help them reach the deepest desire of their heart.”

(which is reconciliation with God, self, & others)

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2. It's **not what we achieve or how much we accomplish** so much as **HOW** we do it.
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  - A “measurable goals” view of life is:
    - superficial, lacking depth, and authenticity.
    - for beginners not the mature?



8

John 15:1-11

God controls the ends (fruit).

**We focus on the means**  
(abiding in the vine).

For us,  
the ends don't justify the means.

**The means are the ends.**

1 Corinthians 3:6

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## Illustrations

1. **Marriage** — 1 Cor. 7:39 “A wife is bound as long as her husband lives; but if her husband is dead, she is free to be married **to whom she wishes, only in the Lord.**”
2. **Giving** — 2 Cor. 8:13 “For this is not for the ease of others and for your affliction, but **by way of equality**”
3. **Sabbath** — Rom. 14:5 “One man regards one day above another, another regards every day alike. Let each man be fully convinced **in his own mind.**”

10

**Acts 6:2-4** “And the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, ‘It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables. **But select from among you, brethren, seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom,** whom we may put in charge of this task. But we will devote ourselves to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.’”

**Acts 15:28-29** “For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these essentials: that you abstain from things sacrificed to idols and from blood and from things strangled and from fornication; if you keep yourselves free from such things, you will do well. Farewell.”

11



*Ephesians 5*

“<sup>16</sup> **making the most** of your time”

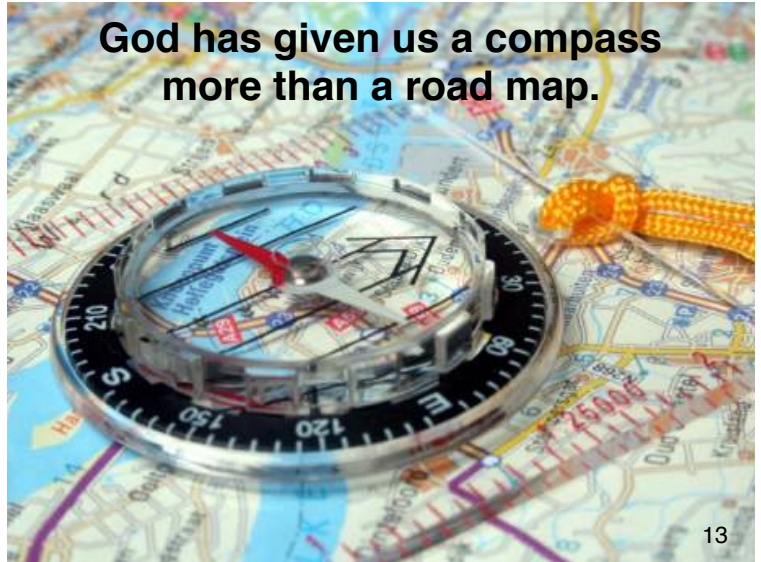
**Seize the day.**

3. We are not to let life “come to us” but rather **SEIZE THE DAY** without being obsessive.
- We too often take a **PASSIVE** role in God’s work.
  - A “waiting on the Lord” view of life is:
    - an Old Covenant posture.
    - for those without the Spirit.
  - We have our marching orders. vs.14 “Awake, sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”



12

God has given us a compass more than a road map.



13

Most of our decisions are in **response** to a circumstance

(need, mistake, opportunity, etc.)

Our response is governed by **perspective, priorities, and preparation.**

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*Colossians 4*

“<sup>2</sup> Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving; <sup>3</sup> praying at the same time for us as well, that God may open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; <sup>4</sup> in order that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak. <sup>5</sup> Conduct yourselves **with wisdom** toward outsiders, **making the most of the opportunity.** <sup>6</sup> Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned, as it were, with salt, so that you may know how you should respond to each person.”

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“We got our butts whipped. That was not even close. That’s first a credit to the job Ryan did, coach Odom. Their offense was very hard to guard. They shot it well. We kept getting broken down and did a poor job.”

“I told the guys, this is life. It can’t define you. You enjoyed the good times and you gotta be able to take the bad times. That’s the job.”

“I have great things in my life – my love for my wife, my love for coaching, my love for basketball.

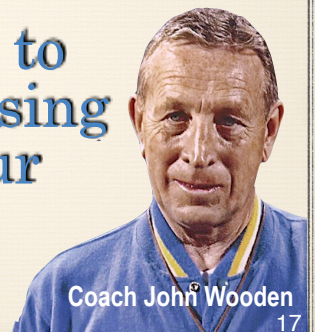
Those are wonderful things, but when you line them up in comparison to Christ and the relationship you have with him, with what he’s done for you and with what he’s given you, they don’t compare. That’s the greatest truth I know.”



Tony Bennett 16

“Winning & losing will reveal your ability, effort, and perhaps good fortune.

Your response to winning & losing will reveal your character.”



Coach John Wooden 17



*Ephesians 5*

“16 . . . the days are **evil**.”

**Stand your ground.**

4. We make **CHOICES** in the face of competing **FORCES**.

- This calls us to **RESIST** strong impulses coming from our culture.



“It’s not hard to make decisions when you know what your values are.”

**Roy Disney**

Nephew of Walt Disney 18

*It’s much easier to find your way when you start, facing in the right direction.*



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*Ephesians 5*

“17 . . . understand what **the will of the Lord** is.”

**Find the way**

5. We are to seek **WISDOM** not special revelation.

- Pentecost moved God’s navigation system from outside to **INSIDE** our heart.
- Before the indwelling of the Spirit - Law, Leaders, Prophets, Signs, etc.
- After the indwelling of the Spirit - Priorities, Principles, Convictions, etc.

**Acts 1:23-26**  
“prayer”  
“cast lots”



**Acts 15:6,7,22**  
“debate”  
“it seemed good”

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*James 1:5*

“But if any of you **lacks wisdom**, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.”

*James 3:17*

“But the **wisdom** from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.”

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*Colossians 1:9*

“For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will **in all spiritual wisdom and understanding**,”

*Colossians 4:5*

“Conduct yourselves **with wisdom** toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity.”

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**Wisdom** is acquired by:

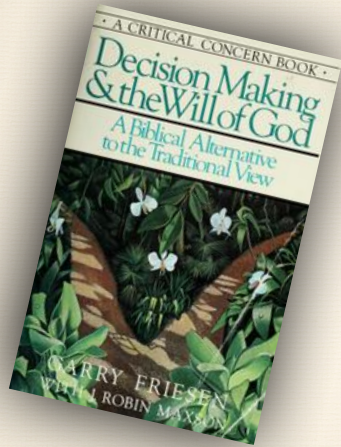
**Revelation**  
(special and general)

**Experience**  
(personal and others)

**Faith**  
(courage and prayer)

23





Garry Friesen

apptoteach.org Theology #306, #704

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## St Thomas Aquinas' three issues in moral decisions

### Principles

sensitivity to  
Scripture

### Motive

sensitivity to  
the Spirit

### Circumstance

sensitivity to  
the situation



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"Lord, today, may  
**Your heart**  
be my heart,  
**Your thoughts**  
be my thoughts,  
and **Your deeds**  
be my deeds."

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