



**Acts – Can I get a Witness?
Wk. 3 Discovering the Will of God
By Pastor Jody May 08/28/2022**

Acts 1:12-26 ESV

Matthias Chosen to Replace Judas

¹²Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. ¹³And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James. ¹⁴All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

¹⁵In those days Peter stood up among the brothers (the company of persons was in all about 120) and said, ¹⁶"Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. ¹⁷For he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry." ¹⁸(Now this man acquired a field with the reward of his wickedness, and falling headlong he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out. ¹⁹And it became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the field was called in their own language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.) ²⁰"For it is written in the Book of Psalms,

" 'May his camp become desolate,
and let there be no one to dwell in it';
and
" 'Let another take his office.'

²¹So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, ²²beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection." ²³And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also called Justus, and Matthias. ²⁴And they prayed and said, "You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen ²⁵to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place." ²⁶And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.



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[INTRODUCTION] You have some hard decisions to make? Do you want to know God’s Will in making them? If you answered yes on both accounts, then you are in the right place!

We all have major decisions to make at some point in our lives:

- When to have children
- Adopting children
- Changing jobs relocating
- Going back to school
- Major purchases
- Getting married
- Oversees missions opps.
- Life changing medical care
- Retirement processes
- Senior parent care

Many of us have got some major questions that need to be answered but this topic also brings up a very big problem.

[CHALLENGE] The problem we have is that we live in a world that doesn’t recognize that God should be consulted.

As a matter of fact, the world has gone as far as persecute you if you don’t make decisions based solely on one’s wants and desires. The popular belief of today, do it **if it makes you happy** - has now **ELEVATED**. For example, if you are uptight about letting the world have their way, they will just change the verbiage to something more tasteful. Currently they are calling the sexual mutilation of children - “*gender affirming care*” as well instead of labeling someone a pedophile let’s call them “*minor attracted persons*”. Which shows the world cares not what God thinks so a consult is out of the question.

So, when people of the church want to stop and recognize that God should have the final say on things, when you want to pray and seek out His counsel, you may come under persecution. It means you have found a God outside yourself which makes people who have made themselves their own God scared. **Why does it scare people?** Because it means they may be wrong about how they have chosen to live their lives, especially if the sole determinizing factor was that it makes them happy.



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This temptation is always there, to make decisions that make you happy, I struggle with it frequently.

It reminds me of a time when Baylee was in pre-K. I remember being woke from sleep by a thought that had come to mind. “What are you willing to give up for me?” - I have only had a few of these intense times of prayer in my life, and I **ashamed to tell you what I said**. I knew there were some decisions to be made soon and my life and I knew I wanted God to be in on them, but I did not want Him dictating what I would be doing with the rest of my life. I look back on that night no longer in shame, for God **removes shame as well**, but I do view it as a lesson of grace, for I am so much better off now for if it was up to **me I would have missed my opportunity** to be here, with you.

Now you may also be wondering what on earth would one argue about with God, **outside of not wanting to be involved in ministry**? Let me give you some areas that I find people have trouble with:

- We’re ok with the teaching/command of don’t love money BUT we aren’t really ok, IF God wants to take some of His money away.
- We’re ok with God changing the community in which we live AS LONG AS He makes it look more like us, and raises the tax base.
- We’re ok with the commitment of marriage BUT we aren’t ok with *‘till death do we part’* if the spouse does A, B, or C...

We all have the same problem; we want to know God’s will for our lives **AS LONG AS it doesn’t infringe** on what **we want** for our lives.

I think Christians all like the idea of discovering God’s will, but to practice our faith, you must **practice looking at the author and perfecter of our faith**.

Hebrews 12:1-3 ESV

12 Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ²looking to **JESUS, the founder and perfecter of our faith**, who for the **JOY** that was set before him endured the



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cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. – **This JOY that was Jesus’ bullseye for His life WAS NOT the fulfillment of if it makes you happy pursuing worldly desires...**

To practice faith like Christ, it would be wise to remember when in the garden our Lord, with sweat like blood was dripping from His brow, proclaimed, **‘NOT my will be but YOUR WILL be done (Lk 22:42).’** That is faith in knowing that God’s desire for you is better than your narrow-sited wants for self. That is the picture of wanting God’s will more than your will.

The World says fleeting happiness is found in running away from God’s Will for your life, but the Gospel says **eternal joy is yours when you discover it!** Are you ready family to discover it?

Today I want you to remember this lesson that we will see laid out for us all through scripture. **Main Thought for the day:**

Discovering God’s Will is just as important as Obeying it.

Good thing we know today that God has given you the power to do this, it is the presence of the HS, He is the great helper, and you have Him eternally, He’s got you.

To get us to the point of faithful listening and obeying we are going to look at this story of picking the newest disciple in three different stages:

You have to start with the right people, you have to go off of God’s revealed will, then look for God’s concealed will and JUMP!

1. You start with people on the same page.

¹²Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day’s journey away. ¹³And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James. ¹⁴All these



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with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

These men, after the ascension, take a short walk (less than a mile) back to Jerusalem, back to the upper room, perhaps the same room where Jesus had made his first resurrection appearance to them. All the disciples are there and categorized except for Judas the betrayer. They are also there together with the women who had accompanied them on their travels, like Mary and Martha, Lazarus' sisters and more. Mary, the mother of Jesus is there along with her family, Jesus' brothers which you can find in scripture – James, Joses, Judas, and Simon (Mark 6:3).

It is time to make action plans, before they move out of that room, before they engage in the great commission, they have to be on the same page. There is a lot to be said about the power of buy-in.

It does not matter how much love and affection there exists on a team if you are not pointed at the same mark, if no buy-in, you won't hit it.

It is also worth it to say that in Christian leadership without love though among the team you will miss the mark every time, for it is part of the mark. **(Think about Marriages)**

The disciples have a perfect opportunity to get this right, they have the right people, they have the right amount of love, and they are going to pursue decision making in the right way. Then notice what they were doing before they even attempted to talk about the decision that had to be made.

¹⁴ All these with one accord¹ were devoting² themselves to PRAYER

¹ Swanson, J. (1997). [Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek \(New Testament\)](#) (electronic ed.). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc. - ὁμοθυμαδόν (*homothymadon*): adv.; ≡ DBLHebr 3480, 3481; Str 3661; TDNT 5.185—LN 31.23 **with one mind**, unitedly, in togetherness, as one (Ac 1:14; 2:46; 4:24; 7:57; 12:20; 15:25; Ro 15:6)

² Swanson, J. (1997). [Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek \(New Testament\)](#) (electronic ed.). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc. - **4674** προσκαρτερέω (*proskartereō*): vb.; ≡ Str 4342; TDNT 3.618—**1**. LN 68.68 **persist**, keep on with devotion (Ac 2:42, 46; 6:4; Ro 12:12; Col 4:2); **2**. LN 34.2 **associate closely**, join, adhere to (Ac 1:14; 8:13); **3**. LN 35.28 **serve personally**, be faithful (Mk 3:9; Ac 10:7; Ro 13:6), note: there may be overlap in verses and entries.



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Being of one accord, the original language means more than just doing the same thing. It means **the action they were participating in was matched by the heart behind it**. They all felt the same way which showed in their devotion/persistence in the discipline of prayer. So, we have people that are all on the same page, about who Jesus was, that He was not going to reestablish Israel as a physical kingdom at that time, but that He would return when the gospel spread to all the nations. Meaning, their shared love in Jesus in wanting Him to come back is what is increasing their devotion to prayer.

Starting on the same page with the right people is so important to accomplishing anything for God.

Making some hard decisions? Who is it you are friends with, do they see Jesus in the same light as you, are they devoted to Him, would they be **willing to challenge your views** when your views may oppose those of Christ? Yes, it is important to do business with, to share life with, and to befriend those that are lost in Christ, **BUT** if those are your only friends, your majority of friends, your best friends, then you have a problem, you are ALREADY out of the will of God.

The calling is to spread the Gospel, the calling is to pray for Jesus' return, and if you are not doing that with people you love then you have missed the first part in discovering God's will for your life. Remember, **Discovering God's Will is just as important as Obeying it** and the Book Acts is about the church coming together as the church, empowered by the prayer of the saints to take the gospel in to the world to propel the return of Christ. Do you have the right friend group are they doing this!?

If you answered yes for point one, then you are ready to proceed to the next step in discovering God's will.

2. You go off of God's **revealed will**.

¹⁵In those days Peter stood up among the brothers (the company of persons was in all about **120**) and said, ¹⁶"**Brothers**, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the **Holy Spirit** spoke beforehand by the mouth of David concerning



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Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. ¹⁷For he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry.” ¹⁸(Now this man acquired a field with the reward of his wickedness, and falling headlong he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out. ¹⁹And it became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the field was called in their own language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.) ²⁰“For it is written in the Book of Psalms,

“‘May his camp become desolate,
and let there be no one to dwell in it’;
and
“‘Let another take his office.’

Peter, since his reinstatement as the leader of the disciples, surrounded by the right group of friends stands up and makes a bold proclamation. *Brothers, the scripture had to be fulfilled about Judas, what’s is that he’s doing?* Well as the leader he is emphasizing what he was just taught over the 40 days w/Jesus, that God had intended for Judas to be there so that His will would be accomplished. **He cites Psalms 69:25 & 109:8** just as it was done unto those who opposed King David, we have the ultimate fulfillment of it in the life of Jesus.

This demonstrates to us that the **Bible is to be taken very seriously when seeking God’s will** for our lives. Jesus had started this tradition of looking at many of the Psalms and saw Himself as the fulfillment of the pictures they were portraying making them out to be actual prophecies. On the night of His betrayal, he actually quoted another Psalm, “*He who has dipped his hand in the dish with me will betray me.*” (Mat. 26:23) pointing to Judas – “*Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted his hand against me.*” (Psalm 41:9) **Peter is modeling** for the disciples what he has been handed as a tool for determining their next step, **God’s revealed will in the Bible.**

So there in the quote of Psalm 109:8 he makes a decision, “**Let another take His Office.**” Jesus had originally chosen 12 disciples to represent the 12 tribes



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of Judah, one has fallen and now another should take his place. Before they leave the upper room to carry on, prophecy must be fulfilled.

We learn from this family that the revealed will that you see in scripture is **to be taken seriously. All of the Bible, every Word of it reveals to us God's character, God's plans, and His desires for our lives.** That's why as a church we have such a high standard on God's Word, it is because Jesus had such a high standard on it, the Apostles did too, the early church was built on it, and we should take that to be the same for us.

There are things that you will have to make decisions on soon in your life, are you willing to let God's Word tell you what to do. Please don't get sucked into **THE LIE** - that **as culture changes so does the interpretation of God's Word.** Please remember culture always operates with this edict, **do what makes you happy,** the Bible reveals to us what makes God happy and that is the **revelation of Jesus as His Son,** and that all would be conformed into His image not the world's (Rom 8:29).

Heather and I are constantly confronted with family and friends that know not God and it is always a challenge to love them and then be called judgmental by them, when we don't accept their ways. We take very serious **Joshua 24:15** our family verse - **Choose this day whom you will serve, but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.** I am not asking people to change to be loved by us, but I will not allow certain things in my house or around my family, because of God's revealed will in scripture. Are you willing to do the same?

Family, to be effective Christian witnesses, people have to take the church seriously and if you treat God's Word as non-authoritative then how can you expect them to believe in it? To be an effective witness in people's lives we must show that **along with Discovering God's will it is just as important to obey it.** Now if you are there you have the right group of friends that see Jesus the same way, you are seeing rightly the revealed will of God in His Word, then you are ready for this final part.

3. When we discover His revealed will, you JUMP!



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²¹So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, ²²beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection.” ²³And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also called Justus, and Matthias. ²⁴And they prayed and said, “You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen ²⁵to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.” ²⁶And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

Accepting God’s revealed will Peter takes the first step towards discovering God’s hidden will by being obedient. He breaks this down into steps ok step one is qualifications:

- Had to be with us since that time when Jesus was baptized by John, since the beginning of His min.
- They had to see the resurrection.
- Then they brought forward the ones that made the cut.

Step 2 is the procedure:

- Then they do the same thing they had been doing they prayed.
- Then comes what seems like to us a rolling of the dice, this casting of the lots. This was an OT practice, and this is the last time it is recorded in scripture as a practice for a God believer. Again, Peter sees the plan form from scripture: (Prov. 16:33)

The lot is cast into the lap,
but its every decision is from the LORD.

The Spirit has not come yet, so Peter sees again in scripture how to go about doing this. If Jesus was the one interacting with our people in the OT and this is how He communicated, then He’s going to do it now. They prayed admitting their lack of knowledge and gave it to God, and then they JUMPED! It fell on Matthias, and they ran with it, and never looked back.

What this all teaches us is, “We must make our decisions in view of God’s unfolding plan of redemption.” – Tony Merida.³

³ Tony Merida, *Christ Centered Exposition/Exalting Jesus in Acts* (Nashville, Tennessee: Holman, 2017), 15.



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We don't have to cast dice even when we are unsure, for now the **HS** is with us, our decisions are empowered by a living and sovereign God, you just have to be willing to JUMP once you make a decision.

For example, here are a list of things you already know in the Bible to be true that is the will of God in redemption:⁴

- We should be making disciples
- We should be praying
- We should be living holy lives
- We should be bearing fruit
- We should be loving people who aren't lovable
- We should be faithful in our marriages
- We should be caring for orphans & widows

This is just a small list of things we know we should be doing. It is God's revealed will that is dictating to us what our next steps should be. It is His plan for redemption are you ready to JUMP?

[CHALLENGE/APPLICATION]

- **Have you found the right group of friends for the Mission?**

Contrary to what you might think making friends is harder than you think. It means you have to think about who you spend time with, why you spend time with them, and are you socially adept. The first thing you have got to keep in mind is do you have a group of people that think the same way about Jesus as you do? That's a hard thing to find now a days.

It starts in the church, that's one of the reasons this community-minded church exists. We know that this needs to be a place where relationships can form in order for you to live for God. Here's one practice I want to leave you. In today's world everyone expects to be liked before ever trying to befriend someone well. ***You make good friends by trying to be a good friend first and that means talk less, listen more, and offer to pray with people in this room.***

- **Have you put the effort in knowing the revealed will of God?**

⁴ Ibid., 16.



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Discovering God's will means, a **commitment to reading God's Word**. It means a steady diet of constant taking in the scripture so that over time your mind begins to pick up on the ebbs and flows that are happening before your eyes. You will begin to remember themes, names, and you will begin to see this over-arching theme of redemption throughout the Word. Then you will begin to see how God might want you to pray, how He is inviting you to join Him in taking the Gospel to the nations. ***If you want to know God's hidden will you must first commit to ingesting God's revealed will over the course of extended amounts of time.***

- **Have you trusted God with the given answers, did you JUMP?**

Last thing here, **Discovering God's Will is just as important as Obeying it.** There is most likely something in your life, that you have been putting off, and the reason you may be putting it off is because it might cost you something. The promise of the world is - *go for happiness now and have fleeting happiness* **OR** embrace the promise of the Gospel and know *eternal joy is to be found in obeying God's call in your life.* **JUMPing** off of a high dive is always a high-risk venture, you can be always find some relief by never climbing the ladder, you can always find some relief by not going through the sheer terror of looking down and stepping out into emptiness **BUT IF** you don't jump you will never know the exhilaration or joy of making a **SPLASH**, coming out of the water **VICTORIOUSLY** and experiencing wanting to make that choice again.

The more you test yourself and follow God's will through incorporating the right friends, and the right diet of God's word, the more you will want to **JUMP** into your own part of God's redemptive story in this world.

The more jumps you take brings the Lord back all the quicker, family be obedient and Jump with the rest of us and discover God's will for your life!



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[PRAYER]

[COMMUNION]

[BENEDICTION]

Go in the name of the Father, that has revealed Himself to us in His Word so we would know what He wants.

Go in the name of the Son, that showed us what it looks like to obey God's will and by doing so, we have been saved.

Go in the name and power of the Holy Spirit, that helps us to make the hard decisions to live for God, displaying to the world Jesus is worth it.