

## What to Do in Order to Know God's Will Philippians 4:4-7

### Introduction:

#### A. God's Breathtaking Promises on Prayer

1. Is it not breathtaking to hear Jesus say, "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you" (Matthew 7:7).
2. Isn't it breathtaking to hear his brother James say, "You do not have, because you do not ask" (James 4:2)!
3. Don't you get excited when you hear God say to you, (Jeremiah 33:3) "Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known."
4. This is astonishing: God acts in response to prayer.
5. The all-knowing, all-seeing, all-knowing, all-powerful God wills for your prayers to be the reason for His action!

#### B. Questions Answered

1. "How can you know you are in the will of God?"
  - a) That question is asked over and over all around the world!
  - b) It is probably the single most asked question in my ministry.
2. For years I have bounced all around this passage on prayer.
3. Too often we take parts of these verses out of context and use them.
  - a) They are true out of context.
  - b) But they are much more profound when taken as a whole.
4. I came to see this clearly while in China this year.
5. Let's look at Philippians 4:4-7 together:

#### Philippians 4:4-7 (ESV)

<sup>4</sup> Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.

<sup>5</sup> Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand;

<sup>6</sup> do not be anxious about anything, 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 understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

### *What to Do in Order to Know God's Will*

#### I. Rejoice in the Lord! v. 4

##### A. Want What He Wants – v. 4

1. If you want to know God's will, then you need to: "Rejoice in the Lord always" and rejoice!
  - a) But someone will say, "but you don't know my circumstances."
  - b) Paul didn't say rejoice in your circumstances always, he said to rejoice in the Lord always.
  - c) If you want to know God's will, then you need to rejoice in Him.
  - d) You need to want what He wants so much that you rejoice in Him always!
2. Does the Lord ever cause you to lose joy?
  - a) Does what the Lord wants for you cause you to lose joy?
  - b) Of course not! What He wants for you is always the best and will always bring you the most joy, so you should rejoice in the Lord, always!
  - c) People become unhappy in life because their happiness is dependent upon their circumstances rather than upon the Lord.
  - d) When you want what the Lord wants in your life, then you will know His will and He will give you His joy, for it is "the joy of the Lord" that is true joy in our lives.
3. Paul had a supernatural resource and so do we!
  - a) His joy was in the Lord and the Lord doesn't change, no matter what our circumstances.
  - b) When you know that the Lord is there with you, working His will in your life, then your circumstances can not trouble your joy.

**B. Act Like He Acts – v. 5a**

1. Let your reasonableness (gentleness, moderation) be known to all. (v.5)
  - a) moderation = "gentleness"
  - b) Paul spoke of the gentleness of Christ in 2 Corinthians 10:1
  - c) Jesus was gentle with sinners and prostitutes.
  - d) Gentleness is one element of the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22.
2. One of the nicest things anyone has ever said to me was in Japan several years ago.
  - a) One of my Japanese Dow hosts said I was a "gentle man".
  - b) I corrected him and said "Gentleman", but he said, "No, not gentleman, but a 'gentle man'."
  - c) What he was seeing in me was not Dan Baugh, but Jesus Christ!
3. Anytime you see different translations with a different word, you can be sure there is something interesting going on in the original language.
  - a) The word translated, "gentleness" or "reasonableness" or "moderation" is the Greek word *epieikes*.
  - b) Compound word:
    - (1) *epi* = "from"
    - (2) *eiko* = "being like" (icon)
    - (3) *epieikes* = literally "from being like"
  - c) What Paul is saying is "Let your being like the Lord be known to everyone"!
  - d) We are to rejoice in the Lord always and the Lord is at hand, so "Let your being like the Lord be known to everyone"!

**C. Know That He Is There – v. 5b**

1. "The Lord is at hand."
  - a) That is why we are not to be anxious about anything.
  - b) The Lord is right there with us, always.
    - (1) Matthew 28:20 "And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."
    - (2) Deuteronomy 31:6 (ESV)
      - <sup>6</sup> Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the LORD your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you."
    - (3) Romans 8:38-39 (ESV)
      - <sup>38</sup> For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers,
      - <sup>39</sup> nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.
  - c) He has the supernatural resources and power that you need to do what He wants you to do in every situation, so call on Him.
  - d) The troubles in our lives are actually great opportunities for God to display Himself to others through what is going on in our lives!
  - e) That is certainly a reason to rejoice always in the Lord!
2. The Lord is at hand, no matter what happens in your life.
  - a) He is there with you.
  - b) That is why we should pray for everything with thanksgiving, because He is already there with us and He is seeing and taking care of things already!
  - c) He has the supernatural resources and power that you need to do what He wants you to do in every situation, so call on Him.
  - d) The troubles in our lives are actually great opportunities for God to display Himself to others through what is going on in our lives!
  - e) That is certainly a reason to rejoice always in the Lord!

**II. Anything and Everything – v. 6**

**A. Do Not Be Anxious about Anything**

1. God's will is that we trust fully in His Sovereignty over our lives and everything in the world.
2. Once you understand this in your life, then there is no attribute more comforting than His sovereignty.
  - a) Under the most adverse circumstances, in the most severe trials, we can believe that God's sovereignty has allowed our afflictions.
  - b) His sovereignty overrules them.
  - c) His sovereignty will sanctify them.
    - (1) Romans 8:28 "we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."
    - (2) Philippians 2:13 "it is God which works in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure."
      - (a) We call that grace!