

## Hearing God and Acting on His Word

I have experienced moments of concern about spending my years pursuing my own goals and in the process bypass God's will for my life. There were times that I could not discern exactly what God's plan was when I needed to take steps in a particular direction.

I do not have a formula for knowing God's will for every step or decision you may need to take or make. Knowing God's will and having the grace and courage to follow it gladdens God's heart, blesses others and brings glory to God. I will not venture to say that doing God's will means the road will be smooth as it may not always be so.

### **Moses: Exo. 2:11-12 and 3:7-10**

Let us draw from Moses' experience in Exo. 2:11-12 and 3:7-10. With hindsight we know that it was God's will for Moses to lead his people out of bondage in Egypt. But when Moses took matters into his hands, his best intentions transformed him into a fugitive as he committed murder. The situation changed when Moses had an encounter with God. God did not ask Moses about his dreams for the future. God simply told Moses what he was about to do.

On hearing God's agenda, everything else made sense to Moses. He understood why he was saved as a baby from certain death; his deep burden for the oppression of his countrymen; and for the rest of his life Moses focused on God and God's plans. At the end of Moses' life no one marvelled at Moses' excellent career choices; no one praised Moses for discovering his gifts and developing a ministry for God but everyone glorified God.

I learnt from this story that when God's will is lived out in an individual's life, an ordinary person can do extraordinary things. I also learnt that in addition to knowing God's will I need to allow God to present his agenda and control the timing of activities (that can be hard sometimes!!!).

If you are having challenges about knowing God's will for your next career step, ask God for his agenda for your life and grace to understand his heart as you may be the "Moses" of your home, local church, organization or country.

### **Jacob: Gen. 30:25- 31:18**

There is no indication as to when Jacob gave notice of his intention to leave to Laban. But it can be assumed that it was at least after he had fulfilled the 14-year labour-for-wife contract conditions in order to have Rachel as his wife. It is commendable that Jacob fulfilled his part of the contract in spite of the trickery of Laban in giving him Leah instead of Rachel for the first seven years.

The lesson for us is that God expects us to fulfill our side of any contract that we enter into as long as we have the means to do so even when it hurts or the other party fails to uphold the contract terms. Knowing this as God's expectation we need to exercise reasonable caution in entering into any agreement. It means we need to always consult God before we enter into an agreement with anyone whether he/she claims to be a Christian or not.

The response of Laban is important to note. He said he found out by divination that his blessings were because of Jacob. This makes it clear that unbelievers know that our God's blessings follow His children. Canada today is also experiencing the blessings of God because of the presence of God's children. Every person seeking to do the will of God carries a divine presence that brings blessings, deliverance and prosperity to wherever he/she is. Job 22:23-30 speaks of the power that is in our words for we can declare a lifting up of people that are downcast (depressed or sick) and bring forth salvation and deliverance to those living in disobedience by our activities as they become drawn to God.

In spite of Laban's recognition that he was blessed by God because of Jacob, he did not consider it important that he should bless Jacob until Jacob spoke out. Jacob in Gen. 30:29-30 told Laban that knowing that God he was blessed because of him, Laban should have thought about his needs also. Many employers behave like Laban in dealing with their employees.

Most employees are paid only 33% of their value. It is when the employee is frustrated and about to resign and leave the company that the realization that the employee's needs have not been met strikes home. In many situations it is too late to stop the employee for he/she may have secured another employment with better conditions. Then the employer has to incur more costs to replace the employee that has just resigned. This is also applicable to friendships that are one-sided in terms of investment of time, energy and resources.

This is a story that speaks to the quality and degree of intimacy of Jacob with God. Here is a man who has served for 14 years without any material wealth to show for it. He did not start by bemoaning his fate and begging for financial and material support from Laban. He did not accuse God of being unfair by using him to bless Laban who has tricked him and was not trustworthy while he that is righteous is without material wealth. He did not consider paying Laban back in his own coin but served faithfully in spite of it all. All he wanted was a release to go back to his father's house with his wives and children as he had fulfilled his part of the contract. He was confident that his father would have left something for him and he could start his life all over again.

Jacob is not like many of us who sit and complain about God blessing unbelievers in a measure that is beyond ours. Jacob is not like some of us that are afraid to start life all over again; fearful of changing location, jobs or friends; and life style in obedience to God's bidding. Jacob did not want Laban to be able to say in the future that he was the one that made him rich so he proposed the plan in Gen. 30:31. The key to Jacob's plan and its success was that it was from God (Gen. 31:10-13) and he acted in faith (Gen. 30: 32-39; 31: 8-9). Laban got the short end of the stick that he thought Jacob will end up with (Gen. 30:42-31:2). Laban and his sons did not find this funny and became jealous in spite of the blessings Jacob brought to them (Gen. 30:27, 35).

God wants to speak to us just as He spoke to Jacob, Joseph (Mary's Husband and Jacob's Son), Paul, Samuel and Nehemiah to mention a few. Are you acting in faith? You can only act in faith if you can hear God? Are you hearing Him? If you are finding it difficult to say God told me or impressed it upon my spirit, it is time for you to re-examine how you spend your time with God and degree of intimacy that you have with Him.

If you are asked to write what you remember about your relationship with God what will you say? Is God playing a role in your decision making, plans and activities like He did for Jacob? God wants to play a role if you will just ask and wait upon Him and He will speak to you in the manner that you will understand. Let today be a day of memorial of divine visitation.

Below you will find various ways of knowing God's will that we cannot fully explore in a newsletter but we will do so in a new e-book we will publish this year.

## Ways of Knowing God's Will

### A. The Ways of the Word

1. Personal Application of the Word
2. Jumpy Words
3. Reference Passages
4. Spirit-led Preaching and Teaching
5. Anointed Counseling
6. Spirit-led Interaction
7. Anointed Music
8. Meditating on God's Word

### B. The Ways of Spiritual Signals

1. State of Spirit
  - a. *Negative State*
  - b. *Positive State*
2. Conscience
3. Burden
4. Idea – Signals
5. Intuition (The Knowing Signal)
6. Understanding
7. The Inward Witness

### C. The Ways of Voices

1. The Inner Voice
2. The Outer Voice (Deut. 4:12, 36)
3. Spirit-Audible Voice (1 Sam. 3:3-10)
4. Headphone Voice (1 Sam. 9:15)

### D. The Ways of a Renewed Mind

1. Sanctified Imagination
2. Spiritual Reasonableness

### E. The Ways of Dreams

1. Perfect Dreams (Gen. 20:2-10)
2. Parable Dreams (Gen. 41:14-35)
3. Nightmares
4. Business Dreams (Eccl. 5:3)

### F. The Ways of Gifts of the Holy Spirit

1. Word of Wisdom (1 Cor. 12:8)
2. Word of Knowledge (1 Cor. 12:8; 2 Kgs. 5:20-27)
3. Discerning of Spirit (1 Cor. 12:10)
4. Prophecy
5. Tongues and Interpretation

### G. Circumstances

1. Favourable Circumstances
  - a. *Favorable and positive circumstances - Gen. 24:7-67*
  - b. *Favorable Circumstances but against the will of God – Gen. 13 - Choice of Sodom and Gomorrah by Lot*
2. Difficult Circumstances (Deut. 8:1-20)

### H. Other Ways

1. Conclusive Evidence
2. Lots
3. Fleece
4. Signs and Wonders
5. Natural Observation