

29 March 2015

Discern the Lord's will by doing what you purpose, and proving whether it be of God or not (Purposed Pt 3).

Introduction.

This is our third study of the word "purposed" in the Holy Scriptures.

Previous points covered.

1. Purpose that your mouth would not transgress the Lord.
2. Purpose in your heart not to defile yourself in the sight of God.

Three points are established from the Scriptures for this study.

1. Purpose in your spirit to go or do.
2. Then start walking, or doing, to fulfil what you have purposed,
3. Then as you walk or do, purpose to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Our three points in more detail.

1. Purpose in your spirit to go or do.

Supporting Verse.

Acts 19: 21 "After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome."

Context and meaning of our verse.

* This is a time during the first century church when great miracles were being done through the apostles, because Jews require a sign and the majority of the early church were Jews. Verse 11 points out that "God wrought special miracles by the hand of Paul." In verse 13 vagabond Jews (exorcists) tried to command the evil spirits to come out of a man, but they did not recognise the Jews (verse 15), and so the evil spirit left the man and came upon the vagabond Jews. And with such miracles fear fell on those who witnessed the event, and the men that believed came and confessed and showed their deeds (verse 18). And "many which used curious arts brought their books and burnt them" (verse 19). Consequently, the word of God grew and prevailed (verse 20).

* Then afterwards the name of the Lord Jesus Christ was magnified (verse 17). And after these things were ended, "Paul purposed in the spirit, when he has passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem", and also to Rome.

* We know that to purpose something is to think to do something (see Is.14: 24-27), hence Paul purposed, planned, determined, or thought about going to Jerusalem.

Other scriptural support.

Acts 20: 3 & 16.

Scriptural examples.

Acts 15: 1 & 2.

Application of our verse today.

* In our verse from the Scriptures we see that believers are required to purpose, to plan, or determine to go, and to do. It doesn't say: purpose to go for only the important decisions of our life, but says that we are to purpose in the spirit to go.

* The difference between a man of the world and a believer in their following through with this instruction, is that it would be reasonable that believers' actions that they purpose, would be in agreement with the Scriptures. And it would be reasonable that they would ask counsel of God.

Illustration.

* When a man decides to go into the army, he talks with his family, and weighs up the risks, and the benefits of such a life-style. Hence, he purposes, plans, thinks, and determines to go before making a move. He does not simply make an impulsive decision one day to join the army, and neither would a believer one day decide to preach the gospel without seeking counsel or training.

Learning from our Illustration.

* Our illustration may be of a milestone decision in a man's life whether it be a man of the world or a bible believer, he would think about his options for his career.

* For a believer, who may seek advice from the family, he would naturally seek the counsel of the Lord as part of his thinking process. So, why not get into this habit where you think or purpose in the spirit to do something or go somewhere, regardless of how big or small the decision.

Challenge & or encouragement.

* Let us ask the Lord to remind us whenever we need to make a decision at work, school or home, that we would take time to purpose, to plan, or think about going, and not just impulsively doing something because we feel like an adrenaline rush. Let us first purpose in our spirit to go, or do.

2. Then start walking, or doing, to fulfil what you have purposed.

Supporting Verse.

Acts 20: 1 & 2 "Paul called unto him the disciples, and embraced them, and departed for to go into Macedonia."

Context and meaning of our verse.

* Following on from our first point where Paul purposed to go, in the next chapter (20) we see that some of what he purposed to do, he did.

Acts 20: 1 he departed to go to Macedonia, then verse 3 he purposed to return through Macedonia, and in verse 22, he says "behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there." Hence Paul, purposed to go, he went bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, perhaps totally committed to completing what he had begun.

Other scriptural support.

Acts 20: 22.

Application of our verse today.

* Today we do not have a prophet to visit when we want to enquire of the Lord, and the Lord does not speak to individuals as he did directly with Abraham, Moses, David and Solomon. But we do have the completed Scriptures.

* Paul's example in the book of Acts is applicable to believers as we are required to "live by the faith of the Son of God" (Gal.2: 20). We are to walk in the Spirit (Gal.5: 15 & 25), and to do so, we first need to purpose to go, then start walking.

Illustration.

* I know brethren that straight after they got saved purposed to preach, so went out and preached (no doubt after praying to the Lord and receiving some training). For me the time between when I purposed to go into full time study and actually moving forward was several months. Hence, my starting to walk began with making phone calls to the various colleges and praying as I went, not knowing what the Lord wanted me to do, and not having much in the way of counsel on what to expect.

Learning from our Illustration.

* If what comes into your heart, or your spirit to do, is what you desire to do (1Tim.3: 1), and it seems right in accordance with the Scriptures, then ask the Lord and start **doing** something.

Whether the action be something that is a life changing move, or whether or not you should buy something, or go somewhere. Once you have had the thought and discerned it is Scriptural, then **do** something.

Challenge & or encouragement.

* Act on what you have purposed. The only way that men of God will ever do what the Lord God in heaven requires them to do today, is if they one day stop continually planning to do something, and actually begin the journey. It is only then that a man can prove if it is the Lord's will for him to go, or do something. To have a thought, to purpose an action and do nothing would seem similar to knowing "to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (Jam.4: 7).

3. Then as you walk or do, purpose to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Supporting Verse.

Rom.1: 13 "Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles."

Context and meaning of our verse.

* Paul is writing an epistle to the Gentile church at Rome. In Rom.1: 9 Paul sites God as his witness to praying for the believers in Rome, and in verse 10 he points out that he made requests of the Lord, "at length" that he "might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you." Why did he seek the Lord to go to Rome? Verse 11 "For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift". Verse 12, "that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me." Then you have our verse where Paul points out that he did not want them to be ignorant of his desire to visit them, and in this example, he "oftentimes...purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,)". The meaning of the word "let" is to "hinder", and "hitherto" means "even now", "while", or "to come". Hence the Spirit had prevented Paul from going to Rome for a while.

Other scriptural support.

Our verse from Rom.1: 13 is also referenced in Rom.15: 22.

Scriptural examples.

- i) When Paul purposed to go to Jerusalem (Acts 19: 21) God opened the door (Acts 21: 15 & 17).
- ii) In another example "the Spirit suffered them not", to go to Bithynia (Acts 16: 7).

Application of our verse today.

* Paul is writing to the Gentile church at Rome and as such his letter is directly applicable to the church today. This is one example where the Holy Spirit hindered Paul from going, as we saw earlier under "Scriptural examples" where the Spirit opened the door for Paul to go to Jerusalem.

Illustration.

* Continuing on from our illustration in point 2 where I had purposed to go, I then prayed, made phone calls to the various Colleges, and one door opened whereas all the others closed, so I went through the door that opened. Likewise when it came to further study after my degree, I purposed to carry on, so I began the course, and asked the Lord to show me if **He** wanted me to go, by giving me the grade I needed, and so when I failed I withdrew.

Learning from our Illustration.

* Purpose an idea, pray about the idea, and walk being sensitive to the door closing or opening, and minding our attitude on whether the door closes or opens. But keep focused on obedience to the will of God. Ask Him to make it clear to you with the doors opening and closing, if you are anything like me, it takes a while to recognise if it is the devil closing the door or the Lord. But remember that the Lord knows your heart and if you truly desire to obey **His** will, and not your own, then He, through His Spirit **will** open or close the doors so that you can see them.

Challenge & or encouragement.

- * I have been learning that the more I ask the Lord's counsel or direction for the small everyday things the more He answers, and the more He helps me to be in tune with the leading of His Holy Spirit.
- * So let us all ask the Lord weekly, daily, hourly to show us what He wants, to ask Him if we should go, spend time here, speak to that person, buy this item, or do anything during the course of our day. Then assay to go, by walking, doing, and finally purpose to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit of God whether the doors open or close.

Summary of our three points.

1. Purpose in your spirit to go or do.
2. Then start walking, or doing, to fulfil what you have purposed,
3. Then as you walk or do, purpose to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit.