

THE CHALLENGE OF DISCERNING GOD'S WILL

By Rick Boxx

Have you ever played the team-building exercise where someone stands behind you and challenges you to free-fall into their arms? Your willingness to trust them usually depends partly upon their strength and partly on your perception of their desire to catch you. No matter how strong they are, however, they cannot catch you if you are not willing to trust them.

Interestingly, a similar process is involved in seeking to discern God's will for our lives and work. Many people say they want to know what God's will is for their careers, or for their companies, but are not comfortable in taking the first step of trusting God for the result.

Proverbs 3:5-6 teaches important principles for people seeking to know God's will for whatever circumstances they are confronting: *"Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight."* So the first step is if you desire to know God's will for your work or some other area of your life, have confidence that God is strong enough to catch you, and He desires your best. You can trust to let go and fall back into His arms.

The second step, as Proverbs 3:5 tells us, is *"to lean not on your own understanding."* Admittedly this can be difficult. We want to know, to understand, what is going to happen, and how, and why. Not being able to rely on our understanding can be a frightening proposition. But that is what we are instructed to do.

If you have ever taken part in a brainstorming session, you discovered each person brings their own experiences and ideas to the table. Imagine how many ideas the Creator God can add to your career plans. In Isaiah 55:8 God declares, *"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways."* If we truly want to know His will, we must stop trying to "figure out" what He is doing.

Romans 12:2 instructs us, *"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will."* To know God's will for your career or a critical business decision, renew your mind and lean on His understanding – and not your own – through prayer and by studying God's Word.

The final step in this process is something else that is difficult for many of us: "submitting everything to God." For years I proceeded steadily toward my goal of

running my own bank, and then someone offered to fund my dream job. By that time, however, through prayer, God had made it clear His plan for me was different. His desire was for me to launch a marketplace ministry. Admittedly this was a daunting, even scary, prospect for me, to leave what I was comfortable with and enter an entirely new, different realm of endeavor. Despite not knowing what the future held, I submitted to God's will. I have had no regrets.

In reading the Old Testament book of Job, we find his friends consoling him and then offering counsel. Although Job's friends gave him bad advice for the most part, one of them wisely told him, "*Submit to God and be at peace with him; in this way prosperity will come to you*" (Job 22:21).

As difficult as it may seem, it is also very simple: If you are trying to discern God's will, all you have to do is trust God, gain His understanding, and then courageously submit to His plan.

Copyright 2015, Integrity Resource Center, Inc. Adapted with permission from "Integrity Moments with Rick Boxx," a commentary on issues of integrity in the workplace from a Christian perspective.

CBMC INTERNATIONAL: Jim Firnstahl, President
2850 N. Swan Road, Suite 160 ▪ Tucson, Arizona 85712 ▪ U.S.A.
TEL.: 520-334-1114 ▪ E-MAIL: mmanna@cbmcint.org

Web site: www.cbmcint.org Please direct any requests or change of address to:
jmarple@cbmcint.org

Reflection/Discussion Question

1. For your career, or key business or workplace decisions, is knowing God's will important to you? Why or why not?
2. How do you respond if or when you hear someone say, "I am praying for God's will on what I should do about...?"
3. When you think about knowing "God's will" about some important matter, does it seem like searching for a needle in a haystack, or do you expect to receive an answer that is direct and readily apparent? Explain your answer.
4. Think of a time when you were actively seeking to know God's will about a specific concern or need. What kind of response did you receive – how did you reach a conclusion about what God's will actually was for that situation?

NOTE: If you have a Bible and would like to read more about this subject, consider the following passages:

Psalm 27:8, 37:4-5, 63:1; Isaiah 40:31; Luke 22:42; John 7:16-18