

# The Parchment

Volume 2, Issue 12  
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April 18, 2010

## Is it God's Will or Not?

A few years ago, one of my friends faced difficulties at his job. At the office he felt unspoken expectations and third-party criticism. He also found out that people hired after him received higher salaries. At first he thought God had led him to this position. He had prayed that God would "open the door" for an opportunity to work at this company. Now he wondered if God was moving him on. He asked me, "Do you think it is God's will for me to go to another company?"

As Christians, we may have similar questions. They might sound like: Which college should I attend? What career does God want me to pursue? Who does God want me to marry? Should I make this large purchase or save my money? It's hard to know if the Holy Spirit is trying to get our attention or if our own desires are getting in the way.

The first question I asked my friend is whether or not he has chosen to do God's will—whatever it may be. What good is it for us to know the truth of God's will if we have not first decided to follow Him? My friend did not like the atmosphere of his company and wanted to leave. But what if it is God's will for him to stay and grow personally there? Should he stay?

At the Feast of Tabernacles Jesus stood up and began teaching. The Jews were not sure if Jesus' teaching truly came from God. They would not follow just anyone's teaching. How could they find out? Jesus told them, "If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own" (John 7:17). The Jews, God's chosen people, wanted to know what was from God first, then decide to follow it or not. But God wants us to choose first to follow Him—then God will reveal His direction for our lives.

When Jesus taught the disciples how to pray, He taught them to desire God's will: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, *your will be done on earth as it is in heaven* (Matthew 6:9-10). To ask God for His will to be done on earth is first to ask His will to be done in my life. The prayer teaches us to first desire to follow God's will by daily handing God the control of our life in prayer.

I asked my friend to take a step back from his decision making process to consider submitting to God while he was still on the job. He could spend some time there learning contentment, patience, and thankfulness which would make him more like Christ. Then he could prayerfully submit to God's will regarding his work situation.

In the next couple of issues I will continue to address the issue of God's will in our lives. If you have any feedback, or any specific situations you are going through and would like to share, please let me know.