

The Will of God

Acts 1:12-26

Introduction: At least five times in Acts we come across an event where the early Church was making a decision and in those events there are different ways that the early Church approached the decision that was before them.

Acts 1:12-26 - Casting Lots

Acts 6:1-6 - Election and majority rules

Acts 13:1-3 - A recognized move of the Holy Spirit

Acts 15:1-29 - A Counsel of Church officials with a leader who speaks for everyone

Acts 16:6-10 - A leader's vision

Assessment - Acts 1:12-20

Resolution - Acts 1:21-26

Casting of Lots: Exodus 28:30 & Leviticus 8:8

Why did the disciples use "lots" to discern the will of God in this situation? First, this is what they knew, this is what they believed and had likely seen in their lives as Jewish men, as members of the local Synagogue and what they may have seen in the Temple when decisions needed to be made. Second, I can see this as a marker for the end of the Old Testament law, the Old Covenant way. How the followers of Jesus seek the will of God today is through the wisdom and direction of the Holy Spirit.

Discerning the will of God: All decision making begins with the quality and character of a person's heart. A desire to know and a will to do God's will are essential to making Godly decisions.

The will of God in specific matters is clearest to those who obey God's will in general matters best.
General matters:

Decision making begins with three important questions. First, does God want it done? Second, does God want it done now? Third, does God want me/us to do it?

The attitudes and actions necessary to discern the will of God are revealed in Psalms 37.

Fretting, Trusting, Delighting, Committing and Resting

The will of God is most easily discerned under the following circumstances and conditions.

I am serving God and maturing as a believer.

I am under spiritual authority and my love for God is my most powerful emotion.

I spend consistent and meaningful time with God and hear my spouse's/other's cautions.

God is first in my life and my relationships are healthy.

The things I value most will be in heaven with me some day.