

*"Making Decisions In Light of
God's Calling and Your Passion"*
Rom 15:23-33

We sometimes experience extremes in our decision making. Sometimes we tend to Spiritualize everything, making it nearly impossible to make a practical decision. *"God told me to take the train instead of the bus."* At other times we operate in the flesh on our own. *We don't pray, seek the Lord's will.*

Philippians 4:6 *Do not be anxious about anything, but **in everything**, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.*

Let's learn from Paul's example so that we can make decisions in light of God's calling and our passion.

Discover God's Call

A Call to be SAVED.

Acts 2:21 *And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'*

1 Timothy 2:4 *who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.*

2 Peter 3:9 *The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.*

A Call to be SANCTIFIED.

1 Thessalonians 4:3 *It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality;*

1 Thessalonians 4:7 *For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life.*

2 Timothy 1:9 *who has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time,*

A Call to SERVE.

Romans 15:27 *They were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in the Jews' spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings.*

A **Word change** indicates the **significance of the gift** that the Gentiles **shared** with Jerusalem. 15:27.

Jerusalem *shared* their spiritual blessings (konionea)

Gentiles *ministered* (KJV)

Romans 15:27 *For they were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have come to share in their spiritual blessings, they ought also to be of service to them in material blessings.*

Greek **leitourgos**. (Liturgy) “In classical Greek the root word leitourgos referred especially to **persons performing public duties**, or works of public use and so to **perform religious or charitable functions** (worship, obey, relieve). It meant to render special formal service, and thus leitourgeo can literally describe a priest who officiates or

2 Timothy 3:12 In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,

1 Peter 4:19 So then, those who suffer according to God’s will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.

A Call to SUBMIT

Parental authority. Ephesians 6:1 *Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.*

1. **CHILDREN and TEENS:** much of the question concerning God’s will would be answered for you if you followed this clear teaching from God’s word!

Employment authority. Ephesians 6:6 *Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart.*

Church authority. Hebrews 13:17 *Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.*

Civic authority. 1 Peter 2:15 *For it is God’s will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men.*

A Call to be SEPARATE. 2 Corinthians 6:17 *“Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you.”*

Many questions about our choices in entertainment, the choosing of friends and activities would be answered if we followed this clear and simple principle from God’s word!

Jimmy is a professional fisherman. He makes his living fishing on the BASS (Bass Angler Sportsman Society) circuit. He is also a devout Christian and belongs to the FBC Keys, Oklahoma.

This year, BASS made a ruling that to be eligible for the fisherman of the year award (\$100,000), you had to wear the patch and decal of a prominent sponsor--Busch Beer!

Jimmy Houston refused to do it, thereby forfeiting his chance at the \$100,000. A fellow Christian fisherman on the circuit asked him, "Jimmy, have you prayed about that?" Jimmy replied, "I don't have to pray about it. There is no decision for me to make. God has already made the decision in His Word when He said not to do anything that would damage our testimony as Christians."

A Call to SUFFER.

2 Timothy 3:12 *In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,*

1 Peter 4:19 *So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.*

Discover Your Passion

Into the above framework, The apostle Paul established his plans

Short Term Goals. Romans 15:23-27. Jerusalem, then Rome (briefly to "raise support"), then Spain.

Paul's decisions were framed by his priorities

The reason he wrote "Romans"

To provide spiritual ministry to the Roman believers. Romans 1:11 *For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you—*

To further establish and encourage the church in Rome. Romans 1:12 *that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine.*

To receive encouragement from them. Romans 1:12

To win unbelievers to Christ. 1:13 *I want you to know, brothers, that I have often intended to come to you (but thus far have been prevented), in order that I may reap some harvest among you as well as among the rest of the Gentiles.*

The reason he had to go to Jerusalem first.

The need of the poor saints

The unity of the Body of Christ

The Situation in Jerusalem.

15:26 *"the **poor** among the saints in Jerusalem."* Greek, ptochas. "situation of extreme need." Classical Greek used the ptochos to refer to **a person reduced to total**

destitution, who **crouched in a corner begging**. As he held out one hand for alms he often hid his face with the other hand, because he was ashamed of being recognized.

Ptochos describes **not simply honest poverty**, and the struggle of the laboring man to make ends meet but also **describes abject poverty**, which has literally nothing and which is in imminent danger of real starvation. (Bruce Hurt, PreceptAustin.org)

Paul's goals held the **BODY of CHRIST** in high regard!

The **Mission field** gives back to the Sending Church.

Jerusalem = the origin of the gospel (Acts 1:8)

From Jerusalem to Antioch (Acts 11:19-23)

From Antioch to Macedonia and Achaia! (2nd MJ)

Are we ready to **receive a blessing** from the mission field?

1 Corinthians 12:20-21 "As it is, there are many parts, but one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!"

*When we treat missions as a **one way street**,*

1. we communicate to national believers that we are **superior** to them.
2. We create **un-ending dependency**

Long Term Goals. Romans 15:28-29

Paul **did not move on** to a new project until he had done all that he could humanly do to fulfill his calling!

Paul was purposeful in all of his activities!

Paul was ambitious! He dreamed of a **LIFETIME** of service that he wanted to give to the **LORD**.

Maybe that's why Christ's **Kingdom is 1,000 years**

Maybe in the Kingdom we will complete the things that we dreamed about doing for him during our lives!

Those who dream of accomplishing great things for God will have 1,000 years to do them!

It would be a shame to get bored 3 weeks into the Kingdom because that was as far as you dreamed for God during this life!

Fervent Prayer. Romans 15:30-31

"Struggle" **sunagonizomai** from sun = *together* + agonizomai = strive, contend for victory, as in **public games** ... means **to struggle or fight together with another (on your side not against)**. To struggle in company **with**. This Greek word group gives us the English word **"agonize."** (Bruce Hurt, PreceptAustin.org)

The analogy here is taken from an **athletic contest**, specifically a wrestling contest, a wrestling in prayer. Paul asks the Roman saints to contend with him in prayer against the opposition of the hosts of wickedness, contending with him as athletes would do with one another, with intensity of purpose and in perfect cooperation. Paul asked that the saints at Rome exercise the ministry of prayer in restraining evil. That is what prayer is so oftentimes -- a way of putting a barrier around someone and protecting them in their ministry.

This is not "God bless the missionaries!"

Four Requests:

Rescued from disobedient in Judea

Rescued = rhuomai.

Different from "sodzo"

*Compared to "save" (sozo), "rhuomai" is more the idea of **rescue or draw to oneself** whereas "sozo" (save) is more the idea of **preserve from**. (Precept Austin)*

*Colossians 1:13 For he has **rescued** us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves,*

service to Jerusalem be acceptable to the saints

might **come to them in joy**

might find rest in their company. (Bruce Hurt, Preceptaustin.org)

Sometimes we can't pray or hear God's "still small voice" because there is so much **background noise** in our lives.

TV

Cell phones

Radios

Calendars

We need QUIET TIMES with God

Daily

Special "wilderness times"

Contentment in God's Will. 15:32-33

Paul was "hindered" (15:22)

Life's inconveniences are God's Appointments

For Paul:

Imprisonment in Jerusalem

2 years in Caesarean jail

Shipwrecked a winter on Malta

In prison in Rome

"Paul's transportation from Palestine to Rome was provided courtesy of Caesar, who also furnished a military escort for his protection. And the period of imprisonment was used by Paul to pen a major portion of what was to become the New Testament." (Garry Friesen, "Decision Making and the Will of God, 238)

Did **Paul** fulfill God's plan?

Acts 9:15 *But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. "*

How can You fulfill God's plan?

1. Study God's written Word
2. Obey His commands

3. Consider Your unique part in His plan
4. Establish your priorities
5. Trust the Lord and accept that His control supercedes your plans
6. The result: His Reward!

GOD'S WILL IS GOD'S WORD