

How to Know God's Will

#0209

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—August 20, 1976

I want you to answer a question or two. If I am a Russian and God wants to speak to me, what language will He use? Suppose I am Chinese, what will God talk? Can God talk Chinese? He can talk Russian. Now I've said that, to say this. In a sense, everybody here speaks and understands a separate language. Now don't get afraid of what I'm saying. I'm telling you the truth. Words are only the signs of ideas; that's all they are. And really deep down in the heart and mind, each one of us has a different language. But thank God, He's infinite and He can talk every language in the universe. And in the end result, you and God must be able to understand each other. God knows how to get through to you, and He wants you to learn how to get through to Him. So don't be surprised if sometimes you say something, that to you is pretty clear, and your brother who talks Russian, doesn't understand what you're saying at all. Don't let that upset you. Now I'll leave that, and I want to ask you another question.

If there was a machine that you could go and put a nickel in and get an answer to the question that's perplexing you this morning, would you go? You know, there are times when the toy, (if I may speak of them as toys) that have the greatest sales in the US is the Ouija board. Do you know what the appeal of the Ouija board is? It isn't just for fun; it's to get an answer. And so with all this horoscope and astrology business, the mediums. People want an answer. Could God send an angel down every day, with my program written on a golden card? Could He do that? Is He short of the gold? No. Is He short on angels? No. Why doesn't He do it, would it save me a lot of trouble? Well, that's the point. That's the point.

Now think about that for a little, and I want to read you a little statement here. This one is from *Volume 6*, page 192.

"Mistakes will often be made, but every error lies close beside the truth. Wisdom will be learned by failures..."
Testimonies for the Church, Volume 6, page 192.

Did I read that right? Somebody thinks I didn't read it right. Look at it, I read it just like it says. *Volume 6*, page 192. I don't think I want to go to that school, where you have to learn things by failures.

"Mistakes will often be made, but every error lies close beside the truth. Wisdom will be learned by failures..." *Ibid.*

The dear women who did much of our bookkeeping at Wildwood for many years, she's now laboring in Africa. One of the student assistants, a few years ago said to her, as she was helping her find some mistakes in the students' bookkeeping. She'd said, "Sister, it seems wonderful to me that you can find these mistakes so easily, how do you do it"? She said, "Because I've made so many."

Now dear ones, we take a goal for ourselves that is utterly unrealistic, when we assume that there is some method, whatever the method is another subject, but that there is some method, which you think if we could only get hold of it, we would never make any mistake of any kind. I say, we take a goal for ourselves that is utterly unrealistic. And anybody who takes that goal and holds to it will end up either a fake or utterly discouraged: one or the other. Well you say, "Aren't there promises of guidance"? Sure, we have heard some of them quoted. There are promises of perfection too.

Let me tell you dear friends, when we become perfect in our character, we will have a lot more; we will have nearly an infallible guidance system. But the only way that God can teach me certain things in my poor character so that I'll correct them is to let me make mistakes, and not only make mistakes but reap the results of it.

And so I'm going to school. I've been in school several years; I haven't graduated yet. I'm working on my degree—my master's degree. Master of science is the science of *knowing* what to do. And the promises of God are wonderful. *Volume 5*, page 512, gives us some of the great channels of guidance: God's Word, His Spirit, His providence. Let me say simply that there are two kinds of things that we desire to know. One, are things that we can be *infallibly* certain about. The seventh day is the Sabbath, from Friday sundown to Saturday sundown. How many of you are infallibly certain about that, may I see your hands? Yes. Well, how do you know it? Well, the Bible says so, that's the Ten Commandments. God said so. And man's words, if of any value, echo the words of God.

There are a number of things that I *know*, and I haven't the slightest question about, I'd be willing to die for. Sabbath-keeping is one of them. But there are numerous other things in life that I cannot read the answer out of the Bible. I cannot read the answer out of the Bible, whether I should attend the Oak Haven convention this year or whether I shouldn't. Well you say, "Brother Frazee, how did you dare come unless you were sure the Lord wanted you"? I will say simply, "I *believe* God wanted me to come, but I'm not *infallible* about it." God is infallible about the Sabbath, and thank God I can stand for that. But all the wisdom I need to come to the Oak Haven convention this year is that as I weigh the evidence, the weight of evidence seems to indicate that. Do you see what I mean? That's all I need, and that's all God has promised. And we must clearly distinguish between those two things.

Oh, but somebody says, "I know the Holy Spirit told me." Listen: if you forget everything else I read this morning, don't forget this, friends. *Volume 8*, page 296:

“Beware of how you follow impulse, calling it the Holy Spirit. Some are in danger in this respect” *Testimonies for the Church, Volume 8, page 296.*

Now this, by the way, was written to our ministers, 70 years ago. Let me read the sentence before.

“I appeal to our ministers to be sure that their feet are placed on the platform of eternal truth. Beware how you follow impulse, calling it the Holy Spirit. Some are in danger in this respect” *Ibid.*

The Holy Spirit is infallible, but every time I get an idea, that’s not necessarily the Holy Spirit. Somebody says, “Well, how do you tell?” The way you *don’t* tell is to go ask the Ouija board. [Audience laughter] That’s not the way to tell. And the way to tell is not to flip up a coin, heads I go and tails I stay home. No! Somebody says, “Pray about it.” Yes. Pray about it. But you know God has given us several billion brain cells up here. And just as God will not even move the stone that covers Lazarus’ grave by angel hand, but He’ll let human muscle move that stone, right? In the same way, God wants to use our brain cells, the same God that made the muscle cells made the brain cells, and He wants us to use them. The only way on earth our muscles develop, is by what? Using them, and by using them, with the increasingly more difficult task, right? Our brain cells develop the same way, brethren. And so if you’re having more difficulty now in knowing God’s will than you did, say, three years ago, take courage.

Most schools I know of set their grades harder than the first grade, isn’t it? And the seventh grade is harder than the third grade. So if your problems are getting harder, you’re getting promoted. But it’s a challenge to *study* and to *think*. And remember, remember, it doesn’t mean that you’re going to get a hundred percent, in every nickel paper. Do you know what a nickel paper is? Well, when I was a student at Loma Linda, every morning, the teacher in the chemistry class wrote one or two or three questions on the blackboard, and we were supposed to answer them. They called them “five-minute papers.” Some of the boys called them “nickel papers.” And I want to tell you something friends, it’s more important to pass the final examination than it is to simply know the answer in the daily quizzes.

The great purpose of the daily quiz is to find out what you don’t know, so that you can *find out* what you don’t know. That’s what these experiences in daily life are all about. And so thank God He’s using our brain. We’re not to set our brains aside and expect some hunch or some miraculous sign in the sky, as a substitute for it. God occasionally uses miraculous signs. He sometimes uses deep impressions of the Holy Spirit, but may I tell you something, friends? The thing that God delights to use, and that He longs to use, is sanctified judgment, surrendered to the Holy Spirit. This is the great thing. God could have made us, as one of the brethren said, “robots.” I don’t want to be a robot, and I don’t want to be a rebel, I want to have my mind under the control of the Holy Spirit. Not like the Devil controls the minds of his mediums in slate-

writing and in mouthing his deceptions, but a mind that is controlled by the Holy Spirit, so that the human and the divine blend together, in thinking through things. And remember, in this process, I may make an error of judgment. I've made a lot of them. Not that we *intend* to make any. No, no. We aim at perfection, but thank God, from every error, every mistake, every failure, we what? We learn something. And it's the development of the mind that is most precious. *Volume 7, page 278:*

“Disappointment is a great trial, but Christian love can turn the defeat into victory. Reverses will teach caution. We learn by the things we suffer. Thus we gain experience”
Testimonies for the Church, Volume 7, page 278.

Someone has said that good judgment is the result of experience, and experience comes from exercising poor judgment. If you've lived very long, you'll agree with it. But oh brethren, the saddest thing in the world is people that never learn from experience. They keep making the same mistake over and over and over again. There are so many new mistakes up the road, we ought to get the old ones out of the way as fast as possible. There's so much to learn, and so as we study the word and the testimonies on our knees, as we counsel together, following all these good principles, that others have mentioned in the other references, let us thank God, that our Teacher never forsakes us, never gives up on us, and unless we leave Him, be sure, we're still in school, and He's guaranteed to graduate us with honors.

[The Second side of tape begins here.]

Do you think I'm a happy man? You have it right. Are Suzie and Paul Rappel here? Will they stand up? Where's your sister? All right, their father and mother and the rest of the family have established a little country outpost near Ardmore, Oklahoma, and they send greetings to us here, they used to be with us here. Come, Suzie, we are glad to have you. They are baking a hundred loaves of bread a day in their home and using it as a missionary agency.

[Suzie corrects Elder Frazee] More than that now!

They have been featured in the daily newspaper at Ardmore, and also in the Daily Oklahoman, and Paul Harvey has featured their work on his broadcast. If there are any families that are interested in learning how to make bread making a means of missionary activity, this would be an opportunity to learn. Thank you, folks, very much for coming up.

Now we're going to spend just a few minutes together in meditation. We've heard reports, and every one brings us new joy, doesn't it? But my heart goes out to the man or the woman, the young person here today, who, as you hear these reports, is thinking, "I wish I could do it." "I wish I could do it." Maybe somebody that has tried and failed. Maybe somebody who has never tried it, because you were afraid you would fail.

I have good news for you, friends. It's found in the 13th chapter of Isaiah, and the 12th verse.

"I will make a man..." Isaiah 13:12.

The crowning work of God's creation in the beginning of this world was the making of a man. He's still in that business, and whenever God makes a man, He makes him as He did Adam, to reflect His image. He makes him as He did Adam, after a new pattern, never any two alike. And as you hear these experiences, my dear friends, that might be a bit discouraged and might be a bit uncertain, let me assure you. God is not trying to make you after the pattern of anybody that has spoken from this platform. He has a specific work for you to do. Through the sacrifice of Christ, He has made arrangements for every man to do a special work.

How does God make men?

"Trials and obstacles are the Lord's chosen methods of discipline, and His appointed conditions of success"
Acts of the Apostles, page 524.

In *Volume 3*, we find this interesting statement that I want to share with you.

"It is obstacles that make men strong. It is not helps, but difficulties, conflicts, rebuffs, that make men of moral sinew"
Testimonies for the Church, Volume 3, page 495.

That's what Beautiful Valley is all about. That's what Silver Hills is all about. That's what Castle Valley is all about. That's what Beautiful Way in New York City is all about, and I might go on with a long list. These are laboratories in which God is helping to develop men. And when I say, "men," I mean, of course, women also. *People* that are able to tackle problems and solve them by the grace of God. Did anybody ever learn mathematics without having problems assigned to them? Impossible! And God, I say it reverently, God knows no way of making men on this planet, without giving them problems as a laboratory course.

The Bible is full of precious examples of this fact. That the fact that men have failed does not mean that they cannot be used. Did Peter fail? Oh yes. But Jesus got Him right back in the harness. Is there a brother or sister here who has failed? My friend, God has a work for you, believe me, He has a work for you. The truth of the matter is, we may learn from our mistakes. *Volume 3*, 495:

"If it is apparent that you have made mistakes, it is your privilege to turn these failures into victories by avoiding the same in the future" *Ibid*.

I call your attention to the fact that the great lesson we're to learn *from* mistakes is how to avoid making them. But friends, not all of us learn the first time, nor the second time, or the third time. Kettering stated a great truth when he said that "The only time that it's fatal to fail is the last time you try." So no matter how many times you've tried and failed to get some victory in your own life, or to do a work for God, God is calling you back to the vineyard. God has grapes for you to pick; you are needed in this 11th hour. Do not stand idle because of the memory of failure, or the fear of failure. God has a work for you to do. I know it. Remember, I am not talking to the folks who are buoyant, carried on the waves of success. I'm talking to someone here that wishes you were into this thing. My friend, God has a special work for you. I know He does, there's no question about it.

Now one of the great lessons that God is seeking to teach those that He calls to His work is how to work together. This is not a necessary evil, this is necessary to joy—the fullness of joy, the most complete fulfillment. Through the ages of eternity, we shall be working with God and with our brothers and sisters. God wants us to learn it here, friends. But do you know, the very traits of character, good or bad, view them as you wish, the varied traits of character that make people interested in what is called self-supporting work, those varied traits of character, bring together quite a combination, quite a combination! And never think, that by merely getting together, this person with this talent and this one with that talent, and another with this talent, and putting them together on one campus, that you have established a self-supporting institution. You may have a laboratory. A laboratory.

The greatest thing that is learned in self-supporting work is not anatomy and physiology; it's not how to teach cooking classes or a temperance talk; it's not even how to give Bible studies. It's how to live together and work together, and team together on earth as it is done in Heaven. Have you had some problems along that line? Is there anybody here that's gotten discouraged because you couldn't work with your brethren? Or maybe I ought to put it in your words, "Because your brethren couldn't work with you." [Audience laughter]

Well, I'll read you some wonderful counsel here from the book, *Acts of the Apostles*, page 279. And notice how your peculiar talents, God has planned shall be fitted together with others, not that you are to become molded just like them, not that they are to be molded just like you, no. But you're to be fitted together. Sometimes I liken a self-supporting institution to vegetable soup. There are the potatoes, and the carrots, maybe somebody likes a little cabbage, and I could go on with a list. I mustn't forget the onions. [Audience laughter] Because some people wouldn't have the soup if it didn't have onions in it, and others are allergic to it. [Laughter] Whatever your contribution is, friends, be willing to have it *blended* with all the rest.

"God has placed in the church, as His appointed helpers, men of varied talents, that through the combined wisdom of many the mind of the spirit may be met. Men who move in accordance with their own traits of character, refusing to

yoke up with others who have had a long experience in the work of God, will become blinded by self confidence, unable to discern between the false and the true. It is not safe for such ones to be chosen as leaders in the church; for they would follow their own judgment and plans, regardless of the judgment of their brethren. It is easy for the enemy to work through those who, themselves needing counsel at every step, undertake the guardianship of souls in their own strength, without having learned the lowliness of Christ” *Acts of the Apostles*, page 279.

The next sentence strikes me as very important.

“Impressions alone are not a safe guide to duty” *Ibid.*

Beware, dear ones, the expression, the Lord told me to do this, the Lord told me to do that.

“Impressions alone are not a safe guide to duty. The enemy often persuades men to believe that it is God who is guiding them, when in reality they are following only human impulse. But if we watch carefully, and take counsel with our brethren, we shall be given an understanding of the Lord’s will; for the promise is, ‘The meek will He guide in judgment: and the meek will He teach His way’ Psalm 25:9” *Ibid.*

One of the best alibis I have heard of to avoid seeking counsel is this: “Well, I know what he’d say anyway, so there’s no use to ask.” My dear friends, those who say that, overlook the fundamental purpose of counsel. If there is somebody that I need to go for counsel, it is not that they may give me their opinion, it is that they may help me to find references that I haven’t *noticed*, that they may call my attention to principles, that I have overlooked, that they may help me to discover facts which I have not yet found, and that they may help me to weigh those things in the scales of judgment. Good counsel, the wise man says, is like deep waters. And a man of understanding will draw it out.

You know, as we approach the great final crisis, instead of their being more independence, in the bad sense of the term, there will be seen, there *is* being seen, thank God, a pressing together, a drawing together. Not to destroy individuality, but to harness it in a team, a team of many teams, joined together, to finish the work of God on earth. Now one of the most interesting aspects of this is brought to our attention in the 3rd chapter of John’s Gospel. Here we hear John the Baptist speaking. You’ll remember that Christ Himself said of John, that there had never been anyone of women born greater than this man. One of the greatest things he ever said is in John the 3rd chapter and the 30th verse. Here is John, speaking of Jesus:

“He must increase, but I must decrease” John 3:30.

Seven words, a perfect expression of a most beautiful truth. Will you repeat these words with me?

“He must increase, but I must decrease” John 3:30.

Once again.

“He must increase, but I must decrease” John 3:30.

Did you know this was the recipe for happiness? I’ll read it to you. It’s found in *Desire of Ages*, page 182.

“God calls a man to do a certain work; and when he has carried it as far as he is qualified to take it, the Lord brings in others, to carry it still farther... From time to time the Lord will bring in different agencies, through whom His purpose can best be accomplished. Happy are they who are willing for self to be humbled, saying with John the Baptist, ‘He must increase, but I must decrease’” *Desire of Ages*, page 182.

Now, this verse applies first of all to this: that each one of us should be seeking to direct people to Jesus, rather than to ourselves. But the application is not alone, between the human and the divine, as I have read here. From time to time in the development of His work, God brings in different agencies. He keeps adding different vegetables to the vegetable soup. Why? He has a certain flavor He wants to develop; only a blend can bring about. Are you willing to make your contribution, even though it isn’t the whole soup?

Another question. Are you willing when there is a certain ingredient in that soup that some brother or sister supplies, that you like very much, are you willing for God, the Master soup maker, to bring in other ingredients that you haven’t thought about? Other human agencies that He wants to use. Oh friends, I’m a happy man this evening. And one of the reasons I’m happy, I see a work developing that’s bigger, *far* bigger than these little hands could get around. I see a work developing that is bigger than any man or any set of men can get their arms around. It is being fulfilled that God is taking the reins in His own hands.

Speaking personally, can you imagine something of the great joy that fills my heart, as I see men that I’ve had the privilege of training in the last 30 or 40 years, bearing the burden of great responsibility in this work? Can you imagine the added joy I get, as I see the people *they’ve* trained, carrying the heavy responsibilities in the work? And can you imagine the joy, as I see the great-grandchildren coming along? This is a wonderful hour, friends.

“He must increase, but I must decrease” John 3:30.

God grant us all that joy, is my prayer, for Jesus’ sake.

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