Love God
Love Others
Share the Good News

SUMMIT CHURCH

Being Jesus Christ to the World

Theme: What is God Thinking?
Making Sense of Suffering and Grief
"The Will of God"

We have a great new way for you to get these Meditation Moments each day directly to your phone. Just text "**med moments**" to **970-426-0700** to receive the **daily Meditation Moment** each morning and start your day grounded in faith and peace.

Weekly Memory Verse:

> [2] ***Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.*** – Romans 12:2

Meditation Moments for Monday, November 2 – Read **Proverbs 3:1-7.** Proverbs 1:20-21 depicts divine wisdom as a woman teaching in the public square who speaks in today's text. She pledged God-given well-being in verse 2, which is Hebrew *shalom*, to those who fully trust God to guide them. "Don't consider yourself wise," in verse 7 is not a critique of healthy confidence. It's a reminder that the opposite of trusting God is trusting only in oneself. Trusting only in our own understanding can take down a dangerous path. Proverbs 26:12 invites us to lean into the arms of God to find strength and guidance.

- Scholar Paul Koptak wrote, "Proverbs 3:5-6 speak more about guidance in ethical behavior than particular choices such as career or mate." Why do you believe God invites us to partner with him in making specific choices that shape the course of our lives? Wouldn't it save us a lot of hard thinking about life choices if God simply told us exactly what to do in all cases?
- Some writers suggest that "Trust in the LORD with all your heart" carried a sense like "bet your life" on God's goodness and wisdom. In what areas do you

actively trust that God's way really is the best way to live? Have you seen evidence of that in your own life or the lives of people close to you? Are there parts of life where you want that trust to grow?

Prayer: *All-wise God, you gave me a brain, and you expect me to use it. But your wisdom forms a framework within which I can make the best choices for my life. Keep my mind always attuned to your wisdom. Amen.*

Tuesday, November 3 – Read **Colossians 1:9-14.** The apostle Paul prayed fervently for believers in Colossae to "be filled with the knowledge of God's will." He gave them a model for understanding God's will. Paul's prayer also clearly gave a picture of what living out God's will looks like in real lives when he wrote, "by producing fruit in every good work and growing in the knowledge of God; by being strengthened through his glorious might so that you endure everything and have patience; and by giving thanks with joy to the Father."

- Scholar William Barclay in his commentary on Colossians wrote, "Wisdom is *sophia*… knowledge of first principles. Spiritual understanding is *sunesis*, which the Greeks described as… the ability to APPLY first principles to any situation which may arise in life. So, Paul is praying that his friends may understand the great truths of Christianity and… apply them to the tasks and decisions which meet them in everyday living." How did Paul's prayer for deep knowledge of God's will differ from praying, "God, show me which job offer (or other specific option) to accept"?
- Paul's prayer for Christians to know God's will dealt with the big picture, not lots of specific details. "Producing fruit," in verse 10 pictured a new, wholly different lifestyle. In what ways do many of your specific choices grow out of your larger decisions about lifestyle? In what ways will a lifestyle shaped by God's will create a different life from one built solely around pleasing yourself?

Prayer: *Dear Jesus, this day I come to you, "asking that I be filled with the knowledge of God's will, with all wisdom and spiritual understanding." May my thoughts, words and actions all be consistent with your will. Amen.*

Wednesday, November 4 – Read **2 Timothy 1:5-7, 3:10, and 14-17.** The apostle Paul told his young friend Timothy that the Bible which for him was mainly the Hebrew scriptures, or our "Old Testament," was a key tool for learning God's will. Those writings were useful, he said, "for teaching, for showing mistakes, for correcting, and for training character, so that the person who belongs to God can be equipped to do everything that is good." He did not suggest that the holy books would answer all of Timothy's specific historical, scientific, relational or financial questions.

- Paul said the Bible is to "help you to be wise in a way that leads to salvation through faith that is in Christ Jesus." In which of the ways Paul listed ("teaching, showing mistakes, correcting, and training character") have you found the Bible to have the greatest saving impact on your life? In what ways do you want to apply the Bible's principles more fully in your day-to-day living?

- Bible reading appears to have been a lifelong habit for Timothy, passed on by his devout mother and grandmother. Were there key people whose example and influence played the largest role in making you want to read the Bible? Are there factors that create for you a certain inner resistance to Bible reading? How do you process and deal with that resistance?

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, I'm aware that I need all the things Paul said the Bible can do. I also know that many times I don't want what I need. Keep drawing me to my Bible to hear you speak to my heart. Amen.*

Thursday, November 5 – Read **Acts 15:1-2 and 22-30.** As early Christians shared the good news of Jesus to all the world, there came the inevitable day when some of them said, "You're teaching what? We don't agree with that." Yet most of them did not split into estranged factions, blasting each other. Acts 15 said they worked together to discern God's will, trusting that the Holy Spirit was at work in all of them. The idea is that God speaks through other believers to us so we might be better together.

- Instead of "going to war" as competing sides, what do you think moved the early Christian leaders to come together to work through their differing views and agree on major principles, if not every detail and emphasis? It wasn't always easy, and Philippians 3:2 tells us there were some holdouts. How did that honor Jesus' prayer we read last Saturday from John 17:21? When has the wisdom of others helped you to discern God's will more clearly in your faith journey?
- The Bible also tells of people who, at times, challenged, or even defied, other voices in their faith community. This included Jeremiah and most of the Old Testament prophets, John the Baptist and even Jesus. What guidelines can help clarify when you should let agreement and unity with other believers guide you, and when you should stand firmly for what you perceive to be right? What do we lose when we try (or let others force us) to make our spiritual journey alone?

Prayer: *Lord God, my culture sometimes glorifies "rugged individualism." But I'm glad you didn't call me to follow you all alone. Give me the ability to listen and value the discernment of others who love and serve you. Amen.*

Friday, November 6 – Read **Romans 12:1-8.** Today's reading and 1 Corinthians 12:1-11 tell us that Paul wanted his readers in Rome and other communities to offer themselves "as a living sacrifice," and to "figure out what God's will is." That did not have to involve mystical rituals. Instead, Paul described a process of honestly assessing who you are, and what gifts and talents you have that can be used in God's service. Then, he said that God's will is that we serve God and others in the ways God has gifted us to do!

- In the ancient world, most people had made a sacrifice to some god. As a rule, that meant killing an animal on the right altar at the right temple or shrine. What shift in thinking and acting did Paul's call to "present your bodies as a living

sacrifice" point to? In what ways are you willing to put your life, yourself with your distinctive mix of gifts, "on the altar" to live daily for God?

- Have you looked in what Paul called a "reasonable" way at what gifts and talents you have? Which of your gifts and talents do you currently use in service to God or others? Are there any that are currently idle that you might start using in service? For an idea of ways to serve, go to volunteer page on our website.

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, "my" abilities and resources aren't, in fact, just "mine" to hoard and use only for myself. Guide me to know how best to use them to bless others and build your kingdom. Amen.*

Saturday, November 7 – Read **Matthew 7:12 and 22:34-40.** Scholar William Barclay in his commentary on Matthew noted that there were two schools of thought among rabbis. Some believed "there were lighter and weightier matters of the law… great principles which were all-important to grasp." Others "held that every smallest principle was equally binding." Similarly, some of us want God's will to specifically direct every smallest decision, while others see God's will as focused in the "weightier matters," the great principles that shape our lives. Jesus wasn't unsure about that—he saw some principles as central to understanding God's will, far more vital than others. Loving God and loving your neighbor, Jesus said, are the greatest commandments, pivotal expressions of God's will.

- The words Jesus quoted from Deuteronomy 6 were sweeping: "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your being, and with all your strength." Jesus added to it, "with all your mind," which didn't leave much out. Then he added, from Leviticus 19, "You will love your neighbor as yourself." He also put the Golden Rule in Matthew 7, to do unto others as you would have them do unto you, in this same category of summarizing the law and the prophets. How can those two great commandments and the Golden Rule form the foundation of making choices that keep us in the center of God's will, whether about your finances, your work, your place of residence, your relationships or any other parts of your life?

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, sometimes I want what I want so much that it's hard to even think about what you want. Please keep me growing in my willingness to live in to your will, which is, ultimately, what I want when I'm aware of what is best for me. Amen.*