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YouTube Prayer Link

What is God's will?

Judges

Chapter 18

18:24 And Micah said, Thou hast brought away all the gods and priests which I have made, and shall I have any left? Why do you still ask me what I do?

Although Dan people migrated and established their own idolatry, this does not mean that God acquiesced in their actions. Although they consulted with Micah's priests and were blessed, this does not mean that their actions were in accordance with God's will. This reminds us that God has guidance and requirements for our actions and will be held accountable for our infidelity and transgression.

God's will is a far-reaching issue of faith, religion, and philosophical reflection. Many people have different views of God's will, with diverse understandings based on differences in religion, culture, and personal beliefs.

In many religious beliefs, God's will is seen as the fundamental purpose and meaning of human life and existence in the universe. This means that following God's will can lead to moral guidance and spiritual fulfillment. People often seek and follow God's will through prayer, study of holy scriptures, and practice of faith.

However, understanding God's will is a challenging subject. Many philosophers and theologians have given in-depth thought and discussion to this topic. Some people believe that God's will is transmitted through religious scriptures and teachings, while others argue that God's will is manifested through one's conscience and moral judgment.

In modern society, the understanding of God's will has also been challenged by different ideas and scientific discoveries. Some may prefer to interpret human existence and meaning in terms of science and rational thinking rather than traditional religious views.

Knowing exactly whether something or someone represents Godhood is a rather esoteric and personal matter. Because it involves religion, belief and spirituality, everyone's views and experiences can be very different.

Many religions and belief systems claim to receive revelation from God or to have insight into the existence of divinity. For many people, God's identity is often perceived through faith, spiritual experiences, sacred scriptures, or special miracles.

In Christianity, prophets, prophets, or sages are believed to be able to convey God's will or God's message. In addition, spiritual experiences, inner guidance, and a deep sense of the meaning of life are sometimes seen as signs of God's existence.

However, identifying and determining whether someone or something represents God's identity is a highly controversial subject, and there is no single standard. There is a great diversity of beliefs and religious opinions, and there is a great deal of individuality

Knowing whether something represents God's will or not is often a matter of faith and personal experience. Here are some common ways to help people seek, understand, and discern God's will:

1. Prayer and spiritual seeking

Through prayer and meditation, people are able to connect with God and seek guidance and wise wisdom. Through this spiritual practice, many people claim to feel God's presence and guidance.

2. Study sacred scriptures and religious texts

Religious scriptures and sacred texts are seen as containing God's revelations and teachings. By studying these texts, one can find guidance for life and behavior and thus perceive God's will.

3. Listen to your inner voice and conscience

Many people believe that conscience is God's voice in the human heart, and that it can provide moral and spiritual guidance. Listening to your heart and conscience helps you to discern God's will.

6. Seek wisdom and guidance

Seeking the advice and guidance of faith and spiritual teachers, religious leaders, or wise men can sometimes help one to understand and grasp God's will more clearly.

Discerning whether something is God's will or an individual's will is a challenging subject because it involves personal beliefs, subjective perceptions, and interpretations. Here are some considerations when distinguishing between God's will and the will of individuals:

1. Alignment with belief systems

Consider whether the decision or guidance is consistent with your religious or spiritual system. Sometimes, God's will is consistent with a particular religious teaching, rather than just an individual's will.

2. Spiritual practice and seeking

Try to connect with God and seek guidance on this issue through prayer, meditation, or spiritual seeking. If you feel a clear sense of guidance or peace of mind deep down, it may be considered God's will.

3. Comparison with personal wishes

Evaluate this guidance or decide whether it is just your personal wish or willingness. Sometimes, an individual's emotions, desires, and prejudices can influence the interpretation of something that is different from God's will.

4. Moral and conscientious considerations

Ask yourself if this decision is in line with your conscience and morals. God's will is usually consistent with moral and good choices.

5. Consensus with others

Seeking discussion or consensus with others may help to understand whether something is God's will or not. If others of faith share this guideline, it may strengthen your faith.

6. Whether it has a positive impact

Consider whether the guidelines will have a positive impact and promote values such as peace, love, and justice. God's will often has a positive impact, not just for personal gain.

There are several places in the Bible that mention not to substitute the will of man for the will of God, and here are a few of them:

1. Matthew 15:8-9

Quoting from the book of Isaiah, Jesus condemned people for paying lip service to God but turning their hearts away from God's teachings. This refers to the situation in which man's traditional rules are placed above God's commands.

2. Mark 7:6-8

Jesus criticized the Pharisees and scribes for ignoring God's commandments because they kept traditions. It is pointed out that they replaced God's commandments with human rules.

3. Isaiah 29:13

This passage was also quoted by Jesus as referring to the situation in which people worship God in their mouths but turn away from Him in their hearts because they teach people to obey the rules of men.

These verses point to a common situation in which people abandon or forget God's true will because of the pursuit of tradition, rules, or self-interest. These verses urge people to pay attention to God's teachings and not to deviate from God's ways because of human traditions or rules.

We pray together:

Dear Heavenly Father, we thank You for giving us the wisdom and discernment to discern Your will from our own. Help us not to substitute your will for your own and not to stray from your ways because of our own desires or prejudices.

May our hearts be open, and may we humbly accept Your guidance and teachings. Let Your truth and love fill our lives so that we can discern Your will clearly and act according to Your will in our lives.

Give us the faith and courage to make Your path a guide for our lives. Let us not be deceived by self-centeredness or external influences, but concentrate on pursuing Your heart.

May Your Holy Spirit always guide us so that our desires are aligned with Your heart. In the name of Jesus Christ I pray, amen.

Judges Chapter 18

Ju. 18:1 In those days Israel had no king. And in those days the tribe of the Danites was seeking a place of their own where they might settle, because they had not yet come into an inheritance among the tribes of Israel.

Ju. 18:2 So the Danites sent five warriors from Zorah and Eshtaol to spy out the land and explore it. These men represented all

their clans. They told them, "Go, explore the land." The men entered the hill country of Ephraim and came to the house of Micah, where they spent the night.

Ju. 18:3 When they were near Micah's house, they recognised the voice of the young Levite; so they turned in there and asked him, "Who brought you here? What are you doing in this place? Why are you here?"

Ju. 18:4 He told them what Micah had done for him, and said, "He has hired me and I am his priest."

Ju. 18:5 Then they said to him, "Please enquire of God to learn whether our journey will be successful."

Ju. 18:6 The priest answered them, "Go in peace. Your journey has the LORD's approval."

Ju. 18:7 So the five men left and came to Laish, where they saw that the people were living in safety, like the Sidonians, unsuspecting and secure. And since their land lacked nothing, they

were prosperous. Also, they lived a long way from the Sidonians and had no relationship with anyone else. Ju. 18:8 When they returned to Zorah and Eshtaol, their brothers asked them, “How did you find things?”

Ju. 18:9 They answered, “Come on, let’s attack them! We have seen that the land is very good. Aren’t you going to do something?”

Don’t hesitate to go there and take it over.

Ju. 18:10 When you get there, you will find an unsuspecting people and a spacious land that God has put into your hands, a land that lacks nothing whatever.”

Ju. 18:11 Then six hundred men from the clan of the Danites, armed for battle, set out from Zorah and Eshtaol.

Ju. 18:12 On their way they set up camp near Kiriath Jearim in Judah. This is why the place west of Kiriath Jearim is called Mahaneh Dan to this day.

Ju. 18:13 From there they went on to the hill country of Ephraim and came to Micah’s house.

Ju. 18:14 Then the five men who had spied out the land of Laish said to their brothers, “Do you know that one of these houses has an ephod, other household gods, a carved image and a cast idol?”

Now you know what to do.”

Ju. 18:15 So they turned in there and went to the house of the young Levite at Micah’s place and greeted him.

Ju. 18:16 The six hundred Danites, armed for battle, stood at the entrance to the gate.

Ju. 18:17 The five men who had spied out the land went inside and took the carved image, the ephod, the other household gods and the cast idol while the priest and the six hundred armed men stood at the entrance to the gate.

Ju. 18:18 When these men went into Micah’s house and took the carved image, the ephod, the other household gods and the cast idol, the priest said to them, “What are you doing?”

Ju. 18:19 They answered him, “Be quiet! Don’t say a word. Come with us, and be our father and priest. Isn’t it better that you serve a tribe and clan in Israel as priest rather than just one man’s household?”

Ju. 18:20 Then the priest was glad. He took the ephod, the other household gods and the carved image and went along with the people.

Ju. 18:21 Putting their little children, their livestock and their possessions in front of them, they turned away and left.

Ju. 18:22 When they had gone some distance from Micah’s house, the men who lived near Micah were called together and overtook the Danites.

Ju. 18:23 As they shouted after them, the Danites turned and said to Micah, “What’s the matter with you that you called out your men to fight?”

Ju. 18:24 He replied, “You took the gods I made, and my priest, and went away. What else do I have? How can you ask, ‘What’s the matter with you?’”

Ju. 18:25 The Danites answered, “Don’t argue with us, or some hot tempered men will attack you, and you and your family will lose your lives.”

Ju. 18:26 So the Danites went their way, and Micah, seeing that they were too strong for him, turned round and went back home. Ju. 18:27 Then they took what Micah had made, and his priest, and went on to Laish, against a peaceful and unsuspecting people. They attacked them with the sword and burned down their city.

Ju. 18:28 There was no-one to rescue them because they lived a long way from Sidon and had no relationship with anyone else. The city was in a valley near Beth Rehob. The Danites rebuilt the city and settled there.

Ju. 18:29 They named it Dan after their forefather Dan, who was born to Israel — though the city used to be called Laish.

Ju. 18:30 There the Danites set up for themselves the idols, and Jonathan son of Gershom, the son of Moses, and his sons were priests for the tribe of Dan until the time of the captivity of the land.

Ju. 18:31 They continued to use the idols Micah had made, all the time the house of God was in Shiloh.

The Book of Judges, Chapter 18 in the Christian Bible tells the story of the tribe of Dan's search for land to settle in, and their encounter with a man named Micah and his idolatrous shrine.

The chapter begins with the tribe of Dan seeking new territory to settle in, as they had not yet received their allotted inheritance. Five of their scouts come across Micah's house in the territory of Ephraim and recognize the Levite who serves as Micah's personal priest.

They ask the Levite to inquire of God about their journey, and he tells them that God has blessed their journey and they will find success.

The scouts then continue on their journey and come to the city of Laish, which they find to be rich and peaceful. They return to their tribe and encourage them to attack Laish and take the city as their own. Six hundred men from the tribe of Dan set out to conquer Laish, and along the way, they stop at Micah's house and steal his idols, ephod, and personal priest.

When Micah realizes that his idols have been taken, he gathers some of his men and goes after the tribe of Dan. However, the Danites overpower Micah and his men, and they continue on to Laish, where they conquer the city and settle there. They rename the city Dan, after their tribe.

Chapter 18 of The Book of Judges highlights the chaos and lawlessness that existed during the time of the judges. The story shows how the Israelites had deviated from God's law and had adopted the practices of the surrounding nations, including idol worship. The Levite who serves as Micah's personal priest is a reminder of how far the Israelites had strayed from the centralized worship system that God had established through Moses. The story also shows the aggressive and opportunistic nature of the tribe of Dan, who were willing to conquer and take over a peaceful city in order to secure their own land. It highlights the lack of unity and cooperation among the tribes of Israel, who were still seeking to establish their own territories and were not working together as a unified nation under God's leadership.

Here are some key verses from Judges 18:

- "In those days Israel had no king; and in those days the tribe of the Danites was seeking a place of their own where they might settle, because they had not yet come into an inheritance among the tribes of Israel." (Judges 18:1)
- "So the five men left and came to Laish, where they saw that the people were living in safety, like the Sidonians, at peace and secure. And since their land lacked nothing, they were prosperous. Also, they lived a long way from the Sidonians and had no relationship with anyone else." (Judges 18:7-10)
- "So the Danites went their way, and Micah saw that they were too strong for him.

So he turned and went back to his home." (Judges 18:26)

- "Then they took what Micah had made, and his priest, and went on to Laish, against a people at peace and secure. They attacked them with the sword and burned down their city." (Judges 18:27)

These verses describe how the tribe of Dan, which had not yet received a portion of land in Israel, sent out five men to scout for a new territory to settle in. The scouts visited the city of Laish and reported back to the tribe that it was a good place to live. The tribe then sent 600 armed men to conquer the city and make it their own. They also took Micah's idols and priest, which had been used for worship in a nearby town.

Judges chapter 18 provides a reflection on the idolatry and moral corruption that persisted among the Israelites, showcasing the consequences of spiritual compromise and the need for genuine repentance.

The chapter begins with the tribe of Dan seeking an inheritance for themselves since they had not yet taken possession of their allotted land. They send five men to spy out the land, who come across the house of Micah and the Levite who served as his priest. These men recognize the Levite and inquire about seeking divine guidance for their journey.

The Levite assures them of success, and the men from Dan proceed to Laish, where they encounter a peaceful and prosperous people. On their return, they convince the tribe of Dan to launch an attack on Laish, claiming the land for themselves. The Danites seize the idolatrous images, the ephod, and the household gods from Micah's shrine, and install the Levite as their priest.

The reflection in Judges chapter 18 highlights the prevailing idolatry and moral decay among the Israelites during this time. The Danites' disregard for God's commands and their willingness to incorporate idolatrous practices into their worship demonstrate the extent of spiritual compromise and the erosion of faith within the nation. It serves as a warning against the dangers of assimilating the practices of other religions and compromising one's commitment to God.

The chapter also raises questions about the nature of true worship and the importance of genuine repentance. Despite the Danites' military success and acquisition of the land, their actions were characterized by disobedience and the violation of God's commands. Their pursuit of their own desires overshadowed their need for genuine repentance and a return to God's ways.

Furthermore, the story reveals the absence of strong leadership and a lack of centralized worship. The Levite's willingness to abandon his role as Micah's personal priest and serve the tribe of Dan reflects the fragmented and corrupted state of the priestly system at that time.

Overall, Judges chapter 18 provides a reflection on the idolatrous practices, moral decline, and spiritual compromise that plagued the Israelites during the time of the judges. It serves as a cautionary tale against assimilation of foreign practices, the erosion of faith, and the need for genuine repentance and obedience to God's commands. It reminds believers of the importance of remaining steadfast in their commitment to God and avoiding the pitfalls of compromise and syncretism.