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### Confidence and Divine Guidance

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## CONFIDENCE AND DIVINE GUIDANCE

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF 1 JOHN  
NUMBER 35  
1 JOHN 5:14-16

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1 JOHN 5:14-16 "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him. If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it."

The word for "confidence" used here is not the word elpis which means "hope" but is rather the word parresia and this means courage. It actually means moral courage. "This is" is a present, active, indicative of eimi and this means "it keeps on being." Next we have the word echo which means to have and to hold. So in this verse we have "We keep on possessing the moral courage that we have and hold, face to face with him."

Next we have "if we ask" and this is a third class condition and it means maybe we will ask and maybe we won't. The word "ask" is a present, middle, subjunctive of aiteo. This will be the word used for asking in prayer until we get to the end of verse 16 and there it changes to erotao. Aiteo means to ask for something that is given in grace and something that you do not deserve. Then we have kata thelema and this means "according to the standard of his will." This leads to the doctrine of divine guidance.

### THE DOCTRINE OF DIVINE GUIDANCE

#### 1. THERE ARE THREE CATEGORIES OF WILL IN HISTORY

- a. The will of God--divine will.
- b. The will of angels--angelic will.
- c. The will of man--human will.

#### 2. THE CARDINAL PRINCIPLE OF THE DIVINE WILL IS FOUND IN

1 JOHN 3:23 "And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment." This refers to the doctrine of divine decrees. To do the will of God the unbeliever must believe in Christ and the believer must be filled with the Holy Spirit.

#### 3. CHRIST HAD FREE WILL IN HIS HUMANITY

MATTHEW 20:22 "But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able."

MATTHEW 26:42 "He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O My Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done."

HEBREWS 10:7 "Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God."

HEBREWS 10:9 "Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second."

No free will in mankind would mean no free will in Jesus Christ. No free will in Jesus Christ would mean no salvation. Behind the fact of divine guidance is the idea that man has a volition and is free to choose. A man is free to be a part of the plan of God or not to be a part of the plan of God. The humanity of Christ forms a very important key in this doctrine.

4. WE HAVE THREE BASIC TYPES OF THE WILL OF GOD

a. The direct will of God. (Numbers 22:12)

b. The permissive will of God. (Numbers 22:20)

c. The overruling will of God. (Numbers 23:5, 12 and 26)

In Numbers 22:12, God told Balaam not to go to Moab and curse Israel. But Balaam was a real pro and he cursed for a high price and he wanted to gain this fee very much. But God told him not to go. This was the direct will of God. But when Balaam made up his mind to go, he did so upon the act of his own volition and God did not kill him. God let him go, operating upon what we call the permissive will of God. God permitted him to go, even though he was operating under the actual disobedience to the direct will of God. Then when Balaam went, God put the brakes on him and would not let him curse Israel. This is the overruling will of God. God filled Balaam with the Holy Spirit and every time he tried to curse Israel, he blessed them. In this way Balaam uttered some of the greatest prophetic statements about Israel we have in the Bible, like Numbers 23:8-9. Therefore, Balaam was overruled.

5. THE ACADEMIC PRINCIPLES OF GUIDANCE

a. Knowledge. This is doctrine in the human spirit. No one can know the will of God apart from knowing the Word of God. They both go together.

ISAIAH 58:11 "And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not."

PSALM 32:8 "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye."

ROMANS 12:2 "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. Knowledge is very vital and doing the will of God.

b. Yieldedness.

It does not mean human effort in yieldedness. It is a technical word for the filling of the Holy Spirit. This is taught in Romans 6:13. "Yield yourself unto God" means to be filled with the Holy Spirit. This is also taught in Romans 12:1-2. Romans 12:1-2 is not a one shot dedication but it involves rebound (using 1 John 1:9) leading to the filling of the Holy Spirit. The mechanics for attaining this is 1 John 1:9 and you flip the coin over and you have Ephesians 5:17-18.

c. Growth.

2 PETER 3:18 "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever."

Growing in grace is the erection of an edification complex in the soul.

So we have three underlying principles--Knowledge, yieldedness and growth.

No one can do the will of God just because he desires to do the will of God, or is sincere and makes a one shot dedication to do so. It is rather the accomplishment of God in the life of the believer and God does it through knowledge, yieldedness and growth.

6. WE HAVE SOME CATEGORIES OF THE WILL OF GOD.

This has to do with your experience in carrying out the will of God in your life.

a. The viewpoint will of God. What does God want me to think?

This involves taking in doctrine and storing it in the human spirit.

b. The operational will of God. What does God want me to do?

Not something like, "I'll go downtown, God willing!" That's really stupid. Put your life in God's hands and get up and move out. Use your brain and trust the Lord. Your whole objective in life is to do the will of God, and the more doctrine you know, the more you will know what that will is. The Holy Spirit will give you power to carry out God's will, once you know it.

c. The geographical will of God. Where does God want you to be?

As you learn the Word of God and prepare yourself for life, God will throw doors open before you and say, "enter!"

7. THE MECHANICS OF THE WILL OF GOD.

A good illustration of this is in Acts 11:5-16.

a. God guides through prayer.

Verse 5 "I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me:" (But remember this--fervent prayer will not take the place of knowledge of the word of God. Prayer won't cover for your laziness in refusing to go to Bible class and learn the Word of God.)

Don't pray for God to give you some "sign" so you will know what to do. That is totally out in this dispensation. You have the whole Canon of Scripture, you don't need a sign.

b. God guides through thinking.

Verse 6 "Upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air."

c. God guides through his word.

Verses 7-10 "And I heard a voice saying unto me, Arise, Peter; slay and eat. But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth. But the voice answered me again from heaven, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. And this was done three times: and all were drawn up again into heaven."

(This is the basic principle of divine guidance.)

d. God guides through providential circumstances.

Verse 11 "And, behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was, sent from Caesarea unto me."

e. God guides through the Holy Spirit.

Verse 12 "And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house:"

(The guidance of the Holy Spirit always follows perfectly the plain teaching of the Word of God.)

f. God guides through fellowship with others.

Verses 13-15 "And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved. And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning."

This is talking and praying with other believers who are anxious and willing to do the will of God.

g. Guidance through the recollection of Scripture.

Verse 16 "Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost."

So we have the words "if we ask" and this is a third class condition, maybe we will and maybe we won't pray. Then we have "according to his will and plan." Then we have "He heareth us." God answers prayer according to his will. Often prayer is not answered because of carnality.

EPHESIANS 6:18 "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perserverance and supplication for all saints;"

PSALM 66:18 (Sin in the life) "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:"

JAMES 4:2-3 (Selfishness) "Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts."

PROVERBS 21:13 (Lack of compassion) "Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard."

1 PETER 3:7 (Lack of domestic tranquility) "Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered."

JOB 35:12-13 (Pride and self-righteousness) "There they cry, but none giveth answer, because of the pride of evil men. Surely God will not hear vanity, neither will the Almighty regard it."

1 JOHN 5:15 "And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him." This "if" is a first class condition and it means the statement is true. The word

for "know" is the perfect tense of oida. This means absolute assurance, absolute confidence. "Whatsoever we ask" is the present, middle subjunctive of aiteo. The subjunctive mood means this is potential, and it may be answered or may not be answered, because God is perfect and he knows whether it is best to answer or not to answer it. Then we have the word "we have" and this is from echo and it means to have and to hold. The word "petitions" refers to the personal requests we make for ourselves. "We desire" is aiteo again and it simply means to ask and have it answered. "Of him" is apo and this means the ultimate source so it should be translated "from him." God the Father is the ultimate source of the answers of all prayer. If you are a believer, you have the right to have this confidence.

1 JOHN 5:16 "If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it." This verse now makes a transition. He now begins to focus on the sin unto death. If a believer has committed such gross sin that he gets himself under maximum discipline from God, and God is going to administer the sin unto death to him, then there is no use for a believer to pray for that person. (Judas Iscariot is a good example of this.)

"If" is a first class condition, so this means this is true and these conditions do sometimes exist. The word "see" is the aorist, active, subjunctive of horao and it means a panoramic view. It doesn't mean you go around looking for this kind of a person, but you can't help but see what goes on in his life. The word "sin" is the present, active, participle of hamartano and this means this is the habitual way he lives and never confesses his sins and rebounds.

Next we have the words "a sin not unto death" and this is pros and thanatos, which means physical death. This is the believer who is out of fellowship, has not rebounded and is definitely not yet under the sin unto death. (A good illustration of a man who finally keeps on going against God and his will until he gets himself under the sin unto death is King Saul. He kept on being jealous, would not repent, and kept on trying to kill David. Finally God took all of it he could stand and he let King Saul die the sin unto death.)

The next words in this verse are "He shall ask" and this is aiteo again. We pray for this wayward person and prayer can acutally keep him from slipping under this terrible punishment.

Then John makes a statement that there is such a thing as the sin unto death and when this occurs, we need not pray for this.

#### THE DOCTRINE OF THE SIN UNTO DEATH

##### 1. THERE IS A SIN UNTO DEATH.

This is maximum discipline from God.

We see this in our passage 1 John 5:16 and Ezekiel 18:21-32 and Psalm 118:17-18.

##### 2. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SIN UNTO DEATH.

a. An unconfessed sin or the state of being constantly out of fellowship. No use of 1 John 1:9.

b. It is a state which causes a believer to have no concern at all for the Word of God. Negative toward doctrine.

(Like King Saul in 1 Chronicles 10:13-14)

c. Maximum scar tissue on the soul.

d. Mental attitude sins and drug addiction.

3. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SIN UNTO DEATH.

- a. A sin which is confessed.
- b. A sin which is isolated and buried and forgotten.  
(Hebrews 12:6 and 12:11-15)
- c. Growing in grace always cancels out the sin unto death.

4. CASE HISTORIES OF THE SIN UNTO DEATH.

This is not just one specific sin. It can be caused by a number of different things.

- a. Lying to the Holy Spirit. (Acts 5:1-10)
- b. The Corinthian incest. (1 Cor. 5:1-5)  
This terrible sinner was turned over to Satan, but he repented, confessed and came out from under this sin and was restored to fellowship.
- c. Persistent carnality at the Lord's table. (1 Cor. 11:30-31)  
Be sure you are in fellowship when you take the Lord's Supper.
- d. Disobedience to Bible Doctrine. Like King Saul.  
(1 Chronicles 10:13-14, 1 Samuel 13:9-11)
- e. The Hezekiah type of sin unto death as told in Isaiah 38.  
Hezekiah had an immoral foreign policy. Hezekiah was put under this sin, but he confessed and prayed and God restored him out from under this sin.
- f. A believer involved in apostasy. (1 Tim. 1:19-20, Num. 31:8)

5. THE CANCELLATION OF THE SIN UNTO DEATH.

(1 Cor. 11:31) This is the same principle in Isaiah 38 and 1 Cor. 5:1-10. God in these instances gives the believer another chance to recover and take in doctrine.

The last phrase of verse 16 says it is useless to pray for a dead person. It is too late then.