

I don't have enough **FAITH**
to be an **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek **PODCAST**

Finding God's Will for Your Life with Greg Koukl

(December 10, 2021)

Ladies and gentlemen, how do you find God's will for your life? Doesn't God have one school you should go to, one job that you should find, and one person you should marry? He or she is somewhere out there, and you've got to find the signs, you've got to be led by the Spirit, because God's sheep hear His voice, right? Isn't that the way you make decisions today? Doesn't this tell us the biblical way that we ought to find God's will for our lives? Isn't that the way you make decisions? Isn't that the way I make decisions? I think most Christians agree with that. Unfortunately, I don't think that's the biblical way and neither does my guest. Now you are going to send emails to me about this, you're going to be upset because you're going to think that we, me and my guest, we're about to take God away from you. And that's not our intention. Our intention is to be biblical.

Now, there was a book written a number of years ago called, Decision Making and the Will of God. If you really want to dive deep into this subject, I highly recommend you get that book. It's by Gary Friesen and Robin Maxson. However, my friend, the great Greg Koukl, who's here with us, ladies and gentlemen, has a shorter way of getting to the same point. Greg has written three brilliant articles on this called, Does God Whisper?. They're on the Stand to Reason website STR.org. And he is my guest today. And you know, I talk about Greg a lot on this program, because his book Tactics is a seminal book that every Christian should have, every Christian should use. It's been recently updated but instead of talking about Tactics today, I want to talk about this idea of God's will. So, it's great having Greg on the show. Greg, how are you?

Greg:

Well, I'm a little overwhelmed here. It's the crack of dawn for me here on the West Coast, Frank, you got me out of bed. I didn't even get to shave and shower.

Frank:

It was God's will because he told me that you needed to get out of bed early.

**CROSS
EXAMINED
ORG**



[CLICK HERE TO LISTEN TO THIS PODCAST](#)

I don't have enough **FAITH**
to be an **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek **PODCAST**

Greg:

Well, the older I get, the less I bathe. I mean, it's one of those things. [laughing] I still brush my teeth twice a day. But it's great to see you, Mr. Frank, and glad to be part of what you're doing here today.

Frank:

Well, Greg, you have written this three-part series on the Stand to Reason website called, Does God whisper? What led you to write this particular series of articles that really annoy a lot of Christians today? Why did you do this?

Greg:

Yeah, what led me in the non-theological sense, there is a received tradition among Christians about how to make decisions and how to chart a path for their life in the important decisions of life, the ones that you mentioned, for example. And I became convinced many, many years ago. I'm 48 years old in Christ. The first time I taught on this was 1982. I became convinced that this received tradition was not Biblically sound. Alright? That's the simplest way to put it. And so, out of my conviction for what the Scriptures were teaching, as opposed to this tradition that so many just received, because it's part of the evangelical atmosphere right now. You just kind of absorb it. And then it's a tradition about, how to know what God wants you to do in different circumstances, that seems to be substantiated by biblical passages.

You cited one, "my sheep hear my voice", and another, "led by the Spirit", which is by the way, a phrase that occurs only twice in the New Testament, once in Romans eight and once in Galatians five. Then Paul uses it and he means something entirely different, as it turns out, in the context than most Christians mean when they use it. And so, since there is this kind of social environment where everybody talks this way about being led to do this, and trying to find God's will, and I put together the signs and I think God's telling me, etc., etc. People accept it as sound, because everybody else is doing it, and they think the verses support the view, and so, they try to employ this view. And the view is very simply that, first of all, God has already made the major decisions for your life, alright, who you're going to marry, where you're going to go to school, where you live, what car you're going to buy, all the kinds of things that people seek God's will on. They're seeking God's will because God has a particular will for that Christian on that thing.

**CROSS
EXAMINED
ORG**



[CLICK HERE TO LISTEN TO THIS PODCAST](#)

I don't have enough **FAITH**
to be an **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek **PODCAST**

Now we're seeing more than just that God knows what is going to happen or even that God knows, in a certain sense, what's best. We're saying that God has charted this out. That's the blueprint mentality. So, how do we find God's will? Well, we have to squeeze that information that God has from him so that once we know his decision, we could make our decision. And once we figure out who he wants us to marry, for example...which by the way, Paul never addresses that question. He addresses the question of First Corinthians seven of whether one should be married or not. And the way he addresses that is quite interesting, in light of our discussion. Maybe we'll get to that. But we just assume that, if we want to get married, we will get married. And of course, nothing wrong with getting married. But then who is it? And then we're looking around for the one God has already chosen. But the way we find this is that, basically, God is dropping hints and we have to discern the hints properly. So, this is the leading of the Spirit, or having a peace about it, or having a confirmation, or things like that. There are a number of elements to the system that allows us to cobble together the hints and then conclude, I think this is what God's will is for me, and then attempt to move forward on that.

Now, of course, people know this is fraught with difficulty, because they've run into some big problems when they followed what they thought God's will was, according to this. And what I did, in fact, a very simple thing that I did Frank in those three pieces, which are now put together under a single ambassador's guide at Stand to Reason called, The Ambassador's Guide to the Voice of God. You can get it either place. The one online is free so you might want to go there first. But all I did was take all of the passages that are used as proof texts for this method, and I looked at them closely in their context. And I think what people see when they read this is something stunning. That even on a cursory read of the passage, there is no way that this particular verse, having a peace about it from Colossians 3, My sheep hear my voice from Matthew 10, being led by this fear from Romans 8 or Galatians 5, etc., etc., etc., the still small voice from First Kings 19. There is no way that those verses can be legitimately pressed into service for this particular model. And my thinking is, once the verses, in a sense, have been resolved in people's minds, they're going to realize there is no biblical support for this methodology. And that's when they're in a position to consider a different methodology, which is taught in the Bible, which is modeled by the disciples, and which works.

Now I need to say something just by way of qualification, Frank, because my view is often misunderstood. I am not a Cessationist. I am not someone who says God doesn't work miracles,

**CROSS
EXAMINED
ORG**



[CLICK HERE TO LISTEN TO THIS PODCAST](#)

I don't have enough **FAITH**
to be an **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek **PODCAST**

God can't speak to people, there can't be legitimate prophecy, there can't be dreams and visions, which by the way, are the biblical motifs for these kinds of things. Not having nudges. That's not a biblical motif. I'm not disqualifying any of that. My standard line is this, God can do anything he wants, alright, but we can't teach anything we want, as far as what a biblical discipline or way of living is. And according to this way of looking at things, this is the standard way Christians are supposed to learn what God wants them to do. And if it's not taught in the Bible, we shouldn't be teaching that. God can do whatever he wants, and when we look in the scriptures it follows a very specific pattern that's identifiable. And this is where I differ a little bit with Gary Friesen because a Gary doesn't make room for these kinds of things. I make all kinds of room for them. But this is not what we see happening in people's lives when they're using the finding God's will technique.

Frank:

Well, how do you find God's will for your life? We're gonna get into it. We're also going to evaluate the traditional view. And the first thing we're going to look at is the passage from John 10. My sheep hear my voice. What does that mean? So, don't go anywhere. We're back with Greg Koukl. My name is Frank Turek. You're listening to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist on the American Family Radio Network. Back in two.

If you're low on the FM dial looking for NPR, go no further. We're actually going to tell you the truth here. That's our intent anyway. You're not going to hear this on National Public Radio. My guest is the great Greg Koukl, president of Stand to Reason (STR.org), and also an instructor at our CrossExamined Instructor Academy, which by the way, next year will be in July, rather than August, in Cincinnati, Ohio. Go to our website, CrossExamined.org, click on Events for details there. We're having it a little bit earlier next year because some teachers said, hey, we want to go, and we can't go in August. So, we're going to try it in July next year. Check it out there. Also want to mention that, before we get back into this, that we have a generous donor who just gave us a \$20,000 matching gift. So, any money you give to CrossExamined at the end of the year, you will be matched up to \$20,000. So, thank you to our donor and 100% of your donations go to ministry, 0% to buildings, at CrossExamined.org.

And let me say one other thing, our partner here, Greg Koukl, Stand to Reason, my wife and I give to Stand to Reason because we believe in the work Greg and his team are doing. So, if you

**CROSS
EXAMINED
ORG**



[CLICK HERE TO LISTEN TO THIS PODCAST](#)

I don't have enough **FAITH**
to be an **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek **PODCAST**

want to give to Stand to Reason as well at the end of this year, please do so. Greg, you guys are doing some wonderful work out there. I know you got Red Pen Logic, you've got the Reality Conference, which has just blown up. Tell us about the Reality Conference coming up here in February.

Greg:

Yeah, that's February 25th and 26th in Dallas. We have six of them nationally. Now we have Southern California, we have Seattle, we have Minneapolis, we have Dallas, we have Atlanta, Georgia, and Philly. We couldn't get further north into New England because we couldn't find any Christians there, so we did the best in Philly [laughing]. I'm sorry, I know you're from New Jersey, but you know it's kind of lean in that neck of...

Frank:

Fuggedaboutit.

Greg:

...yeah. You wanna piece of me or what? So, what we've done is we realized that the most important generation is the next generation, and we want to pass the baton. You made a comment there in the opening, you don't believe it now because you didn't believe it then, something to that effect. And that means Christians are leaving when they get in college because they would never one in high school and middle school. And so, this is what we're dealing with. These are middle school to high school students that we're drawing here. We don't check ID, so we get some old folk too, and youth leaders, and whatever. But in Minneapolis three weeks ago, we had 3200 students.

Frank:

That's great.

Greg:

Yeah, at Grace Church in Eden Prairie. It was magnificent. And this shows that, you know, it gives the light to people who say that young people don't care about apologetics and careful thinking about important things.

**CROSS
EXAMINED
ORG**



[CLICK HERE TO LISTEN TO THIS PODCAST](#)

I don't have enough **FAITH**
to be an **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek **PODCAST**

Frank:

Yeah, Stand to Reason (STR.org). Go on up there and look for the Reality Conferences. One coming up in Dallas in February. I think I'll be part of one with you guys in Augusta, Georgia. And that's probably April.

Greg:

That could be. Yeah, that's right. And by the way, that website just for Reality Conference is RealityApologetics.com. It's just devoted to that issue.

Frank:

Check it out, friends. We're talking about decision making and the will of God. How do you find the will of God for your life? And Greg has written three great articles on the Stand to Reason website called, Does God Whisper? You can find them up there. And the traditional view is you've got to find hints, you've got to see how God is nudging you and then make a decision based on the decision he's already made for you. You just need to discover what God wants you to do in a given situation. And the way you do that is you look for hints and nudges. And one of the verses, Greg, that people will say show that is, my sheep hear my voice.

Greg:

That's right.

Frank:

Is that really what that verse means?

Greg:

Well, this is probably the most frequently quoted verse. And when someone cites it to me, I always ask them two questions that are really important. First question: Where is that verse? And I've only had one person who has ever been able to tell me that it's in John 10. The second question is: What is going on in John 10? And no one has been able to tell me this. Now, you know, Frank, at Stand to Reason we have a principle called, never read a Bible verse. If you want to know what a Bible verse means, like my sheep hear my voice, you've got to read more than just the verse, the paragraph, at least. In this case, the full chapter, because this starts out

**CROSS
EXAMINED
ORG**



[CLICK HERE TO LISTEN TO THIS PODCAST](#)

I don't have enough **FAITH**
to be an **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek **PODCAST**

with Jesus talking about shepherd and sheep, and in verse six, John identifies that Jesus is speaking in a figure of speech. This is very important.

In other words, when he talks about, my sheep hear my voice, he is not talking about anyone hearing anything. He's talking about something that's going on. And then he's having a discussion action argument with the Jews. Jewish leadership was not believing in Him. And He says, why aren't you believing in me? Here's why. You're not my sheep. My sheep hear my voice. Now what does he mean by hear? Remember, it's a figure of speech. But he's just said, you're not believing because you don't hear. This is an evangelism passage in which Jesus is talking about the sheep that do hear are not Christians. They are unregenerate Christians on their way to becoming Christians, because of the role of the Holy Spirit in their life. Listen to what he says, my sheep hear my voice, they follow me, and I give them eternal life.

And actually, this chapter is broken into two sections, two separate discussions, and he's making the same point. So, hearing the voice of God, or Jesus, as it were, is not hearing anything, it's not getting any instructions. He's talking about some kind of move of the Holy Spirit that draws us to him. And this concept is developed in different places in John 10, multiple references to "hearing" goes all the way back to chapter 5 (two references), chapter 6, chapter 8 (two references), chapter 10 (four references), chapter 18 (one reference). This is a motif, through John, about hearing. The dead will hear his voice, etc., etc. And the spiritually dead is what he's speaking of, in that particular case. So, I think this is a misunderstood passage that does not support the notion of Christians, in an ongoing way, getting some kind of messages from God they have to decipher.

And I'll just say something that, if you look at the way the thing is worded, and in my own life, I have never heard the voice of God, in the sense that people characterize it. Alright. I have never heard that.

Frank:

I have Greg and...

**CROSS
EXAMINED
ORG**



[CLICK HERE TO LISTEN TO THIS PODCAST](#)

I don't have enough **FAITH**
to be an **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek **PODCAST**

Greg:

I'm 48 years in Christ and people have some sense of what they think the Lord is doing in my life. But on that reading of this passage, I am not a Christian. My sheep hear my voice. Why don't you hear my voice? You're not my sheep. That means I'm out in the cold. By the way, and this creates a lot of consternation for people who think they're Christians, and are, but are not hearing in that sense and then they start doubting that they're Christians at all. That's because this verse has been mischaracterized.

Frank:

I was gonna say about hearing God's voice, I have heard God's voice, Greg, and his voice sounds a lot like my wife's. [laughing] When I need to do something, I can hear her loud and clear. But no, the same thing is true for me. I've never heard an audible voice. Now, I'm not denying that if God wanted to do that he could, and neither are you. But with regard to this section of Scripture, is it fair to say, Greg, that this section of scripture is dealing with non-Christians becoming Christians, it's not dealing with Christians making decisions after they're Christians?

Greg:

Absolutely. And when people read the whole passage, that becomes eminently clear. And so, you know, it's not that God can't speak, but you know what? When God speaks, he does not mumble. There is no place in the entire scripture where God spoke and the people to whom he was speaking did not hear Him clearly. And there's a reason for this, because when God says something, he wants it obeyed.

Frank:

Right.

Greg:

He doesn't want to mumble and then expect you to obey His mumbling. And this is fraught with danger. And people who are listening know exactly what I'm talking about. They're thinking, yeah, I thought God was saying this, but it turned out that wasn't what was right, it was something else.

**CROSS
EXAMINED
ORG**



[CLICK HERE TO LISTEN TO THIS PODCAST](#)

I don't have enough **FAITH**
to be an **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek **PODCAST**

Frank:

You know, the most dangerous thing about this is when it comes to marriage. Because people think, oh, you know, our song came on at just the right time, and this verse came to my head at just the right time, and this must be confirmation from God. And then they get married, Greg, and they have trouble in a relationship because, it doesn't matter, you put two broken people in one relationship, there's going to be trouble regardless of the situation. And you know what people wind up thinking. They don't think, oh, this is just normal because two broken people in one relationship are going to have trouble. What they think, Greg is, I missed the sign. You're not right for me. Now I gotta find out the right person because I just blew the sign, I just didn't interpret the sign right. And that's the danger of living this way.

Greg:

Not only is it a bad interpretation of scriptures, but there's some practical applications here. Just think, for example, Frank, if you think God is leading you to marry one woman and you mistakenly you get the wrong woman, okay, so then you're married? Well, it's God's will to stay married. You can't say, oh, I messed up, I'm gonna find the right one, right. But you just took somebody else's first best away from them. You married somebody they were supposed to marry, and now they can't marry God's first best, so they gotta marry God second or third or fourth best. That's all that's left. But once they do that they've taken God's first best away from someone else. And so, you get one person that makes the wrong decision, it messes up the whole system...

Frank:

There's a ripple effect.

Greg:

...you know, which is crazy. And in Harry Met Sally there's a great line where Sally makes the point along this line, not theologically, but it's really the same point. I've got to spend the rest of my life thinking somebody is married to my own husband. I mean, that's crazy. This is crazy. And it's crazy because it is not sound biblical teaching.

**CROSS
EXAMINED
ORG**



[CLICK HERE TO LISTEN TO THIS PODCAST](#)

I don't have enough **FAITH**
to be an **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek **PODCAST**

Frank:

Now, ladies and gentlemen, again, we're not saying if God wanted to do it this way he couldn't. He could. We're just trying to discover if this is what the Scriptures teach. And what we're doing is, we're going through passages that people use to say, this is why I make decisions this way. And it turns out those passages do not teach what they think they teach. That's all we're saying here. So, my sheep hear my voice, does not mean what they say it means.

Now there's another passage Greg. We're gonna have to take this through the break. I'm just going to read the passage, and then after the break, you can come back and tell us why it doesn't mean what people think it means. It's from Romans chapter eight and this is in your article, Does God Whisper?. Romans 8:12-14 say this. "12 So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh— 13 for if you are living according to the flesh, you [a]must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14 For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God." So, Greg, just before the break tease us a little bit. This, led by the Spirit, why do people think this is how they should make decisions?

Greg:

Well, see, you did something uncharacteristic, but also wise. And that is, you read more than the verse. If people read just, those who are led by the Spirit are sons of God, they read into the phrase what they understand "led by the Spirit" means, and that's nudge, nudge, hint, hint. This is God pushing us in a certain way. We're subjectively feeling it. When you read the context, you see it means something entirely different.

Frank:

And we will see what that means right after the break. We're talking with my friend, Greg Koukl, president of Stand to Reason. We're talking about decision making in the will of God. And if you want to read more about this, go to Stand to Reason (STR.org) and type in, Does God Whisper? You'll find more. I'm Frank Turek. We're back in just two minutes. Don't go away.

Welcome back to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist with me, Frank Turek, on the American Family Radio Network. AFA is a great organization. Think of them at the end of the year as well. Wonderful folks, Tim Wildmon and company, down there in Tupelo, Mississippi.

**CROSS
EXAMINED
ORG**



[CLICK HERE TO LISTEN TO THIS PODCAST](#)

I don't have enough **FAITH**
to be an **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek **PODCAST**

But they have a spread all over the country. If you're listening to this on radio, you're listening to it on the American Family Radio Network. I want to mention, this weekend I'll be up at Northwest Church up in Federal Way, Washington. That's just south of Seattle. We're doing an apologetics seminar there. They tell me the Saturday seminar is sold out but there may be a few seats. There are some people that won't show up, even though they've registered, so you may want to come. It's December 11. And then I'm speaking at the Saturday night service at 5:00pm and the two morning services on December 12 there at Northwest Church in Federal Way, Washington. Check out our website, CrossExamined.org, click on Events for that.

We're talking to my friend, Greg Koukl. Here he is, ladies and gentlemen. He's still with us, all the way from Stand to Reason.

Greg:

Hey Frank, I think our own show is on AFR as well. We got an hour, maybe right after you guys.

Frank:

Oh, you do? Okay. Yeah, I think you might be on Sunday, right?

Greg:

Yeah, that's right. I think that's right.

Frank:

Yeah, you probably hear Greg on the American Family Radio Show Network as well. I do.

Greg:

I do two hours a week, and if you want to subscribe to the full podcast, you're welcome to do that. But we also air one of those hours on AFR.

Frank:

Yeah. People ask me what podcasts do I listen to? I listen to Greg's podcast. He does one at Stand to Reason. And also, he does one with Amy Hall, which is quite good as well, called STR Ask.

**CROSS
EXAMINED
ORG**



[CLICK HERE TO LISTEN TO THIS PODCAST](#)

I don't have enough **FAITH**
to be an **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek **PODCAST**

Greg:

Oh yeah, she's fabulous.

Frank:

And you can put #STRAsk and send a question on Twitter and they may take it. Amy and Greg may take it.

Greg:

I'm glad you listen to that, Frank. I appreciate that. I'm hoping one of these days you're going to learn something. [laughing]

Frank:

Oh, I'm trying man. I'm trying as best I can. You know, I'm just not predestined like you are to learn everything but I'm trying, okay. And God hasn't really sent me a sign that I should listen to every episode, so...

Greg:

Yeah right. Okay, led by the spirit. This is where we're at right now.

Frank:

That's right. Led by the spirit.

Greg:

What's interesting, as you jumped into that verse, you read some of the passage just above it and that gives us a clue as to what Paul was talking about. This is why "never read a Bible verse" is so important, because Paul is talking about the Spirit in our lives. You can start at the first line of Chapter eight of Romans. And he describes two different trajectories, one according to the flesh and one according to the Spirit. If you're in the flesh, you can't please God. Now that, in the flesh, he means there unregenerate. If you have the Spirit of God, you're not in the flesh, in the sense that he's talking about it. If you're in the flesh, you're unregenerate, you can't please God, it's impossible for you to do so. But if you're in the Spirit, then the Spirit is working in your life to put to death the deeds of the flesh. This is a progress of sanctification and holiness in our behavior that Paul is talking about, the spirit, accomplishes in our lives.

**CROSS
EXAMINED
ORG**



[CLICK HERE TO LISTEN TO THIS PODCAST](#)

I don't have enough **FAITH**
to be an **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek **PODCAST**

And then he uses that phrase, for as many. For...in other words, a preposition tying it to what comes before. For as many as are led by the Spirit, these are sons of God. In other words, the sons of God are led by the Spirit to overcome sin. Now, there's only one other place in the New Testament where, led by the Spirit like that, is used and it's also by Paul. It's in Galatians chapter five. And people can go there and look it up. And it means exactly the same thing. When Paul says, led by the Spirit, he doesn't mean people are getting nudges here and there to do certain things, he means the Holy Spirit is working in you to convict of sin and give you the power to overcome the flesh and the sins of the flesh. Okay. People say to me: But don't you believe in being led by the Spirit? I say, of course I do. I believe it in the way that Paul meant it when he wrote those statements. And that's what he had in mind.

Frank:

So, led by the Spirit, has nothing to do with who you're going to marry, making decisions about what job you're going to take.

Greg:

It has nothing to do with that. And there are ways that God absolutely sovereignly works in our circumstances to make sure things happen that he wants to happen. In fact, we can all look back on our life, we say, oh, OMG, now I know why that happened in my life, which I didn't understand. I can see how God put all of these things together to accomplish this goal I began pursuing because I thought it was a Godly goal. That's true of Stand to Reason. I'm sure it's true of CrossExamined Instructor Academy. You made decisions based on other criterion that you look back now, and you can see God's hand orchestrating. The key here is, having a confidence in the sovereignty of God to accomplish his purposes, without having to have him whisper, sometimes inaudibly, unclearly in your ear, about what you need to have done. That's the key. Trusting in God and the methods that God Himself has given.

Frank:

We're talking to Greg Koukl. We're talking about: Does God Whisper? Decision making in the will of God. There is a three-part series on the Stand to Reason website (STR.org) if you want to go further. We can't cover everything in those three articles but we're covering some highlights here. Greg, what about this idea when you're making decisions that you have a peace about it? What does that mean? Does that have to do with decision making?

**CROSS
EXAMINED
ORG**



[CLICK HERE TO LISTEN TO THIS PODCAST](#)

I don't have enough **FAITH**
to be an **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek **PODCAST**

Greg:

Yeah, it does have a role in decision making but not the way people think about it. And I articulate this and outlined this in the article. This comes from Colossians three, let the peace of Christ rule of your hearts, okay. In isolation, once again. The word rule means, to act as an arbiter. Oh, okay, so I get it. If I think God wants me to do X, and I have a peace about it, then that's the judge letting me know that that's what God wants him to do. The problem is, is when you read the larger passage, that isn't what he's talking about. In fact, there's two kinds of peace. You can have peace WITH God, and you can have the peace OF God. The peace WITH God is the fact that we're not at war with God anymore. That's Romans 5:1. But the peace OF God is a subjective peace. So, one is a lack of conflict between two people and the other one is a sense of well-being in my heart.

Now the question is: What kind of peace is Paul talking about in Colossians three? When you read about it, he's instructing that local body about conflict in the body and he's encouraging them to be of one mind, and one heart, and to not be fighting with each other. And then he says, let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts. In other words, what he's referring to is not subjective sense of peace, but rather the objective condition of peace, as you're all cooperating with each other. Is it God's will indicated by peace? Well, in a sense. It's God's will that we could be in harmony with other people, and when there's peace among us, we're fulfilling God's REVEALED will, but we are not using peace as a hint from God that we are on the right path to His perfect will. That is not what the passage is referring to.

Frank:

You know, it seems to me, Greg, that so much of this really has to do with poor biblical interpretation. It really has more to do with the fact that we think we can pull a phrase out of a verse somewhere and apply it in a way that that verse never intended us to apply it. That's really the issue.

Greg:

Yeah, let me give you a secret on this one, though, Frank. And I just want you to know, but a lot of people don't realize, you do not have to be a biblical scholar to resolve the problems with these verses. Because I've virtually never had any instance, when I went through any of the 5, 6, 7, or 8 verses that I deal with in those passages, and have them just read it and they say, oh, I

**CROSS
EXAMINED
ORG**



[CLICK HERE TO LISTEN TO THIS PODCAST](#)

I don't have enough **FAITH**
to be an **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek **PODCAST**

see that, because it's plain as day when you read the context, alright. So, this is not some trick of some theologian, you got to know Greek and Hebrew, and philosophy, and theology to figure out this detail. No, you need to read it the way the original readers read it, in its context, and you see it is not talking about that. And in fact, if you didn't have this idea in your mind about God's perfect will just for you that he cobbles together suggestions that you have to decipher in order to know as well, you wouldn't read it into these verses. You read the passage you wouldn't think of that. This isn't what God's teaching.

And it's not even the so-called still small voice. People talk about this. This comes from First Kings 19. Well, in my Bible, the New American Standard, it doesn't even have that phrase. I think it's in the King James. But people refer to it all the time as an inner kind of hint voice by God. Not really a voice, but an inner sense. And that's the still small voice. When you read the passage, God is talking to Elijah. Elijah's not up there on the mountain going, hmm, I think God's trying to tell me something. They're having a conversation. And if God is talking more quietly with him, it's because I Elijah is depressed. He just got hammered by the Queen, Jezebel, and he's all bent out of shape about it. Woe is me, I'm the only one left. And God says, listen, there's 7500 people who have not bowed their knee to Bael, we've got people on our side, here's how you deal with it. So, it's not a still small voice. It is a quiet conversation, verbally, that God is having. And Moses had verbal conversations. We know that because the people overheard some of the conversations and they said, that scares us. Go over there by the mountain and talk by yourself. Is it scary listening to God's voice?

Frank:

What about this, Greg? You have a whole section in the series of articles on the book of Acts. You went through the book of Acts, because people will say, look, the Holy Spirit told Paul to go here and not there. What do you say to that?

Greg:

Yes, that's right. Okay. There are 13 occasions that the book of Acts records that decisions were made because of some direct revelation of God. Now, that's 13 times in 30 years. That's not a lot. There's over 70 where it's clear their decision had no relation to any revelation. First missionary journey, a revelation. Probably a prophecy since there were prophets in that group that were ministering to the Lord. It says that. But the second one, Paul said to Silas, hey, let's

**CROSS
EXAMINED
ORG**



[CLICK HERE TO LISTEN TO THIS PODCAST](#)

I don't have enough **FAITH**
to be an **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek **PODCAST**

just go check things out. No indication that God told him to do anything, but it was a smart move, okay, and that's why they did it. And in those occasions, it's interesting, the times that God communicates, a couple of our jailbreaks. An angel shows up, you know.

Frank:
Right.

Greg:
And two or three of them have to do with Saul's conversion, alright. One has to do with Philip, I think in the beginning, where he talks to the Ethiopian eunuch. In other words, these are clustered together in very rare kind of circumstances. And in every case, we know the phenomenology, the motif, they were supernatural, they were clear, and they were intrusions.

Frank:
They were not hints or nudges.

Greg:
Saul, why are you persecuting me? Goes blind. There's no mistake about what God is saying. He's not dropping hints, right? So, I'm open to God saying something, but I'm thinking it ought to be a biblical methodology, motif, like a vision, or like a prophetic word, or [when] Jesus appeared to Paul by his bed in Ephesus. That's not what we hear people talking about when they feel led by the spirit.

Frank:
Alright, if you're feeling uneasy about this, and you wonder: Where do we go from here? If this is not the right way to make decisions, how do we make decisions? I've been doing this for years, what do I do? Don't go anywhere because we're gonna be back and talk to Greg about how to make decisions biblically. I'm Frank Turek. You're listening to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist. My guest is Greg Koukl. We're back in two.

Welcome back to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist with me, Frank Turek. My guest is Greg Koukl. We're talking about decision making and the will of God based on Greg's three-part article on the Stand to Reason website, STR.org. It's called, Does God Whisper? And Greg, I

**CROSS
EXAMINED
ORG**



[CLICK HERE TO LISTEN TO THIS PODCAST](#)

I don't have enough **FAITH**
to be an **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek **PODCAST**

know many people right now are listening. They're upset. They're thinking, Greg, you're taking God away from me. You're taking the Holy Spirit away from me because I've been dealing with the Holy Spirit, at least I think I have, in these hints and nudges. What is the biblical way the Holy Spirit actually interacts with us? How does the Holy Spirit do this?

Greg:

First of all, I am sympathetic to the impulse here. People are going, oh my goodness, what happened? Actually, it's split half and half. Half of your listeners are breathing a sigh of relief, and they say, wow, I'm not weird, I'm not unspiritual, I may actually be a Christian even though I'm not getting what everybody else seems to be getting. Okay. But the other half are going the other way. They get really angry about this, for the reason you mentioned. It looks like I'm taking God away from them. All I'm saying is, the way you think God has been working, this is not a biblical motif. That hasn't been God. It doesn't mean there's no Holy Spirit. But it does raise a question. If your whole theology of the Holy Spirit is that he sits on your shoulder and talks to you, and then I tell you, that's not what the Bible teaches, and then you say, well, what's the use of the Holy Spirit?, maybe you need to beef up your biblical pneumatology a little bit and find out all the things the Holy Spirit does do. He does lead us into holy living, Romans eight. He does comfort us. He does counsel us in a particular way. He illuminates the Scripture, oh, that's part of it. He convicts us of sin and righteousness and judgment. There's a lot in there, the role of the Holy Spirit and the job the Holy Spirit does in the economy of the trinity, okay.

When it comes to decision making, what God has given us is He's given us the scripture that is filled...read Psalm 119 once. Every single couplet has some reference to Scripture. Thy word I have a hidden in my heart, so I may not sin against thee. Famously a passage there in that Psalm. And so, what God has given us is, he's given us the Holy Scripture, in which he speaks to us. People say, well, I speak to God, He speaks to me, that's relationship. And where's he going to speak to me if he doesn't whisper in my ear after a fashion, nudge me, and lead me in that sense? I say, what do you think the Scripture is? That's the word of who? God. That's given for our guidance. And by the way, it's third person public. That means all our friends, and our pastor, we can all work together to help us to get it right. If it's first person, private, in our ear, what we feel the Holy Spirit is telling us to do, it is very, very hard to assess that and dissuade people of doing something foolish, okay. I heard from God, I don't want to disobey God, alright.

**CROSS
EXAMINED
ORG**



[CLICK HERE TO LISTEN TO THIS PODCAST](#)

I don't have enough **FAITH**
to be an **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek **PODCAST**

So, there's a practical liability to that approach. You go back to the Scripture, this is a very different thing, which by the way, is what we have been doing with every one of these proof texts, going back to see if the Scripture actually teaches this.

Now the Scripture teaches something else. And when you look at the phrases, this is the will of God for you, you find something different. And this is the real God for you, even your sanctification, that you abstain from sexual immorality, First Thessalonians chapter four. In everything give thanks, for this as God's will for you in Christ Jesus. When we see the phrase being used, we see the moral behavior that has been described in Scripture that we're supposed to follow. So, we know for sure the will of God is all these behaviors that we are supposed to do. So, one thing when we're making a decision is, we have to ask whether the decision we're contemplating is inconsistent with the revealed will of God, alright. And so, for example, if you want to get married, what's God's will? You got to marry a member of the opposite sex. Didn't need to use to say that but that's in there, right. You have to marry somebody who's a Christian.

Frank:

Right.

Greg:

Oh, yeah, that's another thing, okay. Notice how I'm narrowing the field down. In the first case, I just wiped-out half of the population of the world. I'm making things easier on you. The second case is even narrower, okay. And then also, if somebody has been divorced, they got to be biblically re-marriable. That's another factor that's in there. Oh, well, wait a minute. That doesn't tell us which one of those left I have to marry. You're right and it's your job to decide that, not God's. Never in Scripture does it ever intimate that God is going to choose our spouse in that way. Instead, it tells us to be smart. Okay? So, in Proverbs it says...and remember that Solomon is talking to his son, so he's using a woman as an example here. Like the gold ring, in the snout of a pig is a beautiful woman without discretion. Well, is it a sin to marry a beautiful woman without discretion? No, it's stupid. You get the gold ring, but the pig comes with it. You know what I'm saying? So, the point there is, there are wisdom considerations.

**CROSS
EXAMINED
ORG**



[CLICK HERE TO LISTEN TO THIS PODCAST](#)

I don't have enough **FAITH**
to be an **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek **PODCAST**

Now how do we get wisdom? We get wisdom from scripture, like Proverbs. We also get wisdom from other Christians who have visibility of things in our life. But the simple rule here is, we can do anything we want that is within the moral will of God and comports with sound thinking. There is tremendous freedom.

Frank:

Yes.

Greg:

In fact, Paul says that in First Corinthians seven. You want to get married, here's the pros, here's the cons, here's the moral liabilities of each side, you decide whatever will make you happy. That's broadly the system.

Frank:

Yeah, I asked people: If God's going to tell us what to do every day through special revelation, individual revelation, you know, I asked them, why is there a book of Proverbs? Why is there a Bible at all? Right? We have wisdom given to everyone. You said earlier, Greg, everybody could analyze and discover what it really means and come to write conclusions about this. If he's going to tell you what to do individually every day, first of all, that wouldn't lead to maturity. Secondly, you wouldn't need a Bible to do that. And I love what my mentor, Dr. Norman Geisler, used to say. He used to say, the will of God is never contrary to the Word of God. The will of God is never contrary to the Word of God. And yet many a pastor has heard...I was an interim pastor for a while...many a pastor has heard, God told me to leave my wife. And there's no grounds for it, right? No, God didn't tell you to do that.

Greg:

That's right. That's a negative test. But see, a lot of people are going to come back and say, okay, I get that. Whatever I think God is telling me can't be against the Scripture. My point is, the method that you're using, that you make your decisions by God telling you in that narrower group of options, that has to be tested by Scripture too. And what I'm saying here is this. That's not scriptural, because it presumes, and I mentioned this in the beginning, that God has made the decisions that we must discover, in order to make our decision. And that is the false presumption. Is there a sovereign will? Of course, there is, but he's not letting us in on that.

**CROSS
EXAMINED
ORG**



[CLICK HERE TO LISTEN TO THIS PODCAST](#)

I don't have enough **FAITH**
to be an **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek **PODCAST**

That's his own business, you know. RC Sproul says, you know, you try to look behind the curtain there of God's sovereignty. That's none of your business. What your business is, is the things that he's given you to do in general, and then the specific ways that we're to make decisions in the Scripture.

Look, when I do fundraisers, I say, I'm not going to ask you to give if you feel led, because you don't need God's permission to do a good thing. Let me just say it again. You do not need to feel led in order to do a good thing, right. Feeling led becomes an excuse not to do the good thing. Oh, I don't feel led. And so, we are free to do what we want as long as there's wisdom and it's not contrary to God's will. God Has moral will, revealed will, and God has given us and dignified us with the liberty to make decisions. Are we going to make some bad decisions? Yeah. That's how we learn how to make good decisions. God wants to train us up in maturity as wise people, he doesn't want us just to be order takers.

Frank:

And you don't need to pray about something that God has commanded you to do, like, preach the gospel. You don't need to pray about that. He's already told you to do that. I heard a missionary once at a conference...actually Dr. Geisler told me about this. He said, a guy got up and he said, I've been a missionary for 14 years and I was never called to go. And Geisler was sitting in the audience going, good night. I've heard people who were called and didn't go, but I've never heard anyone who wasn't called and went.

Greg:

Did go.

Frank:

Yeah. And he said it again. I was a missionary for 14 years and I was never called to go, I was just commanded like the rest of you. And everyone went, ohhhhh.

Greg:

You know, Frank, wow...and this brings up another point. Biblically speaking, God does not distribute ministry through calling. People are looking, where am I called? I think I'm called. All

**CROSS
EXAMINED
ORG**



[CLICK HERE TO LISTEN TO THIS PODCAST](#)

I don't have enough **FAITH**
to be an **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek **PODCAST**

this call, call call call. You look up *kaleō* in the New Testament, you're going to find hundreds of references to it. And you're going to find one, Paul called as an apostle.

Frank:

Right.

Greg:

And maybe one other. God does not distribute ministry through calling, he distributes ministry through giftings.

Frank:

Exactly.

Greg:

First Corinthians 12, Romans 12, Ephesians 4, First Peter 2 or 3, there are all these references. Take your gift, use it as a good steward of the manifold graces of God. And that's why I started Stand to Reason. I wasn't called in that sense. I had a gift and I wanted to use it more effectively, and that's what was the genesis of this organization. Looking back, I can see God's hand in all of that, sovereignly working to make things, establish things, and make it productive as we were obedient to using our gifts. But I was never called in that sense. And people waste a lot of time listening for a call instead of getting down to business with the gifts they have.

Frank:

Greg, you've cleared up a lot for many people, I hope. There are still some questions that are unanswered, so where can people go to learn more?

Greg:

Well, they can go to our website and, either get the booklet, The Ambassador's Guide to The Voice of God, which has all the material in one place. They can read the articles, there are three of them; Does God Whisper Part 1-3, or they can go and get the Decision Making and the Will of God teaching set, which is like three hours. I gave it at Biola at the Graduate School, and it is much more thorough on, not only this issue, but how people read Scripture and read between the lines. This will really help them a lot. It's right there at STR.org.

**CROSS
EXAMINED
ORG**



[CLICK HERE TO LISTEN TO THIS PODCAST](#)

I don't have enough **FAITH**
to be an **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek **PODCAST**

Frank:

Greg Koukl, ladies and gentlemen. Greg, thanks so much.

Greg:

Always great to be with you, Frank.

Frank:

Alright, that's Greg Koukl, Stand to Reason (STR.org). Check him out there. And any of you in the Seattle area this weekend, hope to see you. Check our website, CrossExamined.org. Merry Christmas everyone. And Lord willing, I'll see you here next week. God bless.

**CROSS
EXAMINED
ORG**



[CLICK HERE TO LISTEN TO THIS PODCAST](#)