

SEEKING THE LORD'S DIRECTION

Is it wrong to seek the Lord's direction for the day-to-day questions of our lives? Is it wrong to seek His will on matters of vocation, marriage, and the like? Is it wrong to pray about these things and expect some kind of an answer? It is certainly not wrong to pray about the decisions that we have to make in life. The Scriptures everywhere encourage us to do that. Jesus invites us to do that with boldness and confidence, perhaps most beautifully when He teaches us His own prayer as we have as part of our Gospel for today, Luke 11:1-4, and in Matthew 6:9-15. St. Peter tells us, "*Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you*" (1 Peter 5:7).

But when we pray, we are not asking God to make His will known to us apart from the Scriptures. Instead, we are bringing our every concern to Him in the confidence that He will hear us as He has promised. We give Him thanks for the choices He has given us in our everyday lives, and we pray for His blessing as we strive to make those choices in the light of His Word and to the glory of His name. Thus, we pray for God's blessing on a decision about our vocation in life. We weigh our options. We consider what the Scriptures have to say about working as for the Lord. We weigh what the Scriptures say about the use of earthly wealth for the support of our family, for aiding the poor, and for supporting the work of spreading the gospel. We call to mind the Bible's warnings against greed, the love of money, and pride. We think about how we shall balance work time, family time, and leisure time with time to help others and to serve the church. And then we make our decision. The decision often will not be one between good and evil, but between good and good. Whichever choice we make, we seek the honour of God and the well-being of those around us. We commend our choice to God and ask His blessing on it; but we do not torment ourselves trying to guess what lies hidden in the mind of God. God has revealed His mind in the Scriptures. The Scriptures are sufficient.

In the same way we pray for God's blessing on all our earthly choices. And we strive to live so that in our choices we follow the Word of the Lord through St. Paul: "*Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God - this is your spiritual act of worship*" (Romans 12:1). In the remainder of Romans 12 the apostle gives us an excellent summary description of just such a life of worship. St. John tells us, "*This is love for God: to obey His commands*" (1 John 5:3). That is exactly what Jesus Himself tells us, "*If you love Me, you will obey what I command*" (John 14:15). Our goal is to live in such a way that we glorify God in all the choices for which we seek His blessing. That is what St. Paul is speaking of when he says, "*So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God*" (1 Corinthians 10:31). Yes, even when we seek the counsel and advice of others, something altogether appropriate and proper, we weigh what they advise in the light of God's Word. Indeed, the best counsel that we can get from others is exactly that counsel which has its roots in God's Word. It is no small blessing from God when we have friends or family members, pastors or teachers who can help us make decisions with God's Word as the ultimate guide.

In sum and again - God's Word is sufficient. Those who seek some other guide for doctrine and life are looking for God where He has not promised to be. It makes no difference whether the something else is a church, human reason, emotions, will, or even a conscience uninformed by the Word of God. Anything that competes with the Scriptures ultimately replaces the Scriptures, which are "*useful so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work*" (2 Timothy 3:16-17).