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*"Christ caring for People
through People"*

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Keys to Discerning God's Will: Relationship, Prayer, Scripture, Circumstances.

When we turn to the scripture to discern God's will we must be careful of how we approach this. I am reminded of the mislead fellow who thought he could get results by the 'point and read' approach. Feeling despondent one day he closed his eyes, opened his bible, pointed, then opened his eyes and read: "Judas went and hanged himself." Not satisfied with this advice he again closed his eyes, turned to another page, pointed, and read: "Go and do thou likewise." Not exactly the desired results! I guess he forgot to begin with prayer. (chuckle)

What we have in scripture is a long series of stories, poems, hymns, history, prayers, and revelations which record how God has dealt with his people over generations. It is an account of faith and rejection, of hope and despair, of insight and blindness, of dreams and goals and of striving and trust, above all of a God who wants a loving relationship with people.

As we read this long and detailed document we need to consider the various situations and conditions which were the background to these events. Then we need to ask, 'If God said and did that for people in those conditions and with that understanding and behaviour, then what is He saying to me in my circumstances.'

To know God's will we first must know God. We must come to know him as Father, Creator, Sustainer of all that is, who desires right, but still forgives wrong out of love. We must come to know Him as one who loves us and seeks our love in return, not because he needs it but because it enables Him to love and help us even more. Out of this relationship He acts. This is what we see in scripture and this is what we can come to experience. As we continue on this quest to know God more and more, we will also come to understand how He works in and through his people. As we come to know God more fully we will understand his will and join with the psalmist David in saying:

***"Bless the LORD, O my soul; And all that is within me, bless His holy name!
Bless the LORD, O my soul; And forget not all His benefits:
Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, Who redeems your life
from destruction, Who crowns you with loving kindness and tender mercies, Who
satisfies your mouth with good things, So that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.
The LORD executes righteousness and justice for all who are oppressed.
He made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the children of Israel.
The LORD is merciful and gracious, Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy.
He will not always strive with us; nor will He keep His anger forever. He has not
dealt with us according to our sins; nor punished us according to our iniquities.
For as the heavens are high above the earth, So great is His mercy toward those who
fear Him;
As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us.
Bless the LORD, O my soul!"*** Psalm 103 (New King James Version)

Amen.

(Rev.) John McGurrin