

Something to Pray About

March 2013 – Cindy Sears

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

—Romans 8:28 NKJV

Just Do Something!

Are you paralyzed by the fear of making a wrong decision—especially a decision that will NOT be in God's will?

If there is one thing we have an abundance of in this day and time, it is choices. Grocery stores carry hundreds of kinds of cookies, drinks, cereals. Practically everything comes in multiple brands and configurations and prices. Unfortunately, having so many choices can make us afraid of making any choice at all. Freedom is wonderful, but too much freedom can lead to passivity, inaction, and frustration. Christians are not immune to the problem of indecision caused by all these options. There are hundreds of books on the market now about finding God's will for your life. I suggest one more—hopefully the only one you will need to read:

Just Do Something: A Liberating Approach to Finding God's Will by Kevin DeYoung.

DeYoung sites some interesting statistics. In 1960, 77% of women & 65% of men had completed all the major transitions into adulthood by age thirty. These transitions included leaving home, finishing school, becoming financially independent, getting married, and having a child. In the year 2000, only 46% of women and 31% of men had completed these transitions by the age of 30.

Many Christians have a passion for finding God's will, but often they seem to be using this desire as an excuse to opt out of maturity and out of taking risks. Previous generations did not worry so much about *finding God's will for their life*. They went to church, read and studied God's Word, prayed regularly, and obeyed His commandments as best they could. Then, they got on with the business of living.

Misconceptions about the phrase "God's will" are one problem. This term is used to mean three different things. First is "God's will of decree," which refers to what God has ordained to be. Second is "God's will of desire," which refers to what God has commanded or what He desires from His people. God's will of decree—what He has predetermined—cannot be thwarted; God's will of desire—the way He wants us to live—can be disregarded (see 1 John 2:15-17; Hebrews 13:20-21).

And third is "God's will of direction." "We want to know His individual and specific plan for the who, what, where, when, and how of our lives. We want to know His direction." But does God expect us to figure out everything He has planned for us before we make a move? No. In Romans 8:28, we are told that all things work to the good for those who love Christ and are called according to His purpose. As DeYoung explains, God is not a magic 8-ball, and His will for our lives is not a bull's eye that we have to hit dead on. God has given us brains to use, and a few rules to live by—10 to be precise; and Jesus cut those down to 2 rules (see Exodus 20:1-17; Matthew 22:36-40). These rules don't help much with figuring out which job to take, where to live, or what brand of mayonnaise to buy, do they? Still, we can

ask God for wisdom; then all we need to do is “seek first the kingdom of God,” step out in faith and take risks for Him, and believe that all the other things will be taken care of by God.

We also need to stop expecting to find heaven on earth. We are pilgrims here—travelers in another country—and as all travelers know, things are bound to go wrong and there will be unpleasant experiences. If we expect every decision we make to put us on the road to complete fulfillment and happiness, then every decision we make becomes filled with significance and terror. Failure or wrong decisions are rarely life threatening. Most successful people know that failure leads to learning, which leads to success later. So, let your children taste failure and endure the pain of bad decisions. Give yourself permission to try something new and fail at it—then try something else; just don’t give up too soon.

I believe Keith Bradford lived this way. He seemed to have exuberance, a joy in living. He obviously loved the Lord and the Church, but he loved all of life and was constantly “getting on with the business of living.” Keith always had something to do, some project to work on, which he did with gusto, and without worrying overmuch about the final outcome. I’d like to learn to live like that, too. (“I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” John 10:10b)

Remember, God is in control. He will use all of your decisions to sanctify you—make you more like Christ. You are not powerful enough to mess things up for Him. So,

JUST DO SOMETHING!

(for instance, read DeYoung’s book.)