

From the October 4, 2008 Issue

## ***Discerning God's Will***

This may be the shortest article you will ever read on discerning God's will. Let's start with what we know. We know that the Father created us in and through the Son so that he could adopt us as his children (Eph. 1:5). So, the will of God is that we would live with him forever and share in the loving, joyful relationship that he has with the Son and the Spirit.

We know that Jesus is the accomplishment of this plan. In the incarnation of the Son the human race has been adopted into the life of the Father, Son, and Spirit (Rom. 5:18). We also know that our fallenness means that we do not see and experience this relationship for what it really is. So, the Holy Spirit has been poured out on all humanity (Acts 2:17) in order to bear witness to us that we are children of the Father in Jesus.

This helps make clear what Jesus means when he says "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." (John 10:10). The Father gave us life so that we could live. Not merely exist but really, fully live — sharing in the overflowing grace and peace of the life he has with the Son and the Spirit.

The Father gave you life so that you could care for your family and friends, serve others through your job, and experience the glory of being who you really want to be. Your Father wants you to cook, clean the house, play golf, watch TV, hang out with your friends, go on a date with your husband, and generally just live it up! The reason we have trouble living is that we don't really know how free and safe we are in Jesus. So the Father's will also includes the Holy Spirit's work to educate us about who we really are.

There you have it, the will of God: that we would live full lives by knowing the truth of our adoption.

To be specific we might ask: "What job would God have me do?" Answer: Any job that you like and that helps others (This would seem to exclude "drug dealer" and "pimp"). We might ask: "What ministry would God have me do?" Answer: Any ministry that you like and that helps others know the truth of their adoption (This would seem to exclude taking money from widows to support "faith" healing televangelists).

I'm convinced it really isn't any more complicated than this. That's why this may be the shortest article you'll ever read on discerning God's will. We know the Father. He has shown us his will that we live full lives by knowing our adoption through his son Jesus. The Spirit lives in us and is guiding us. As St. Augustine is credited with saying: "Love God and do what you want."

*~ Jonathan Stepp*