



Paul's Theology – Lesson 31

Guidance and Discerning God's Will

Biblical-Literacy.com

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How do I know what
God wants me to do?
That's easy. My wife
tells me.



How do I
decide what
God wants me
to do?



Remember the “Magic 8-ball”?



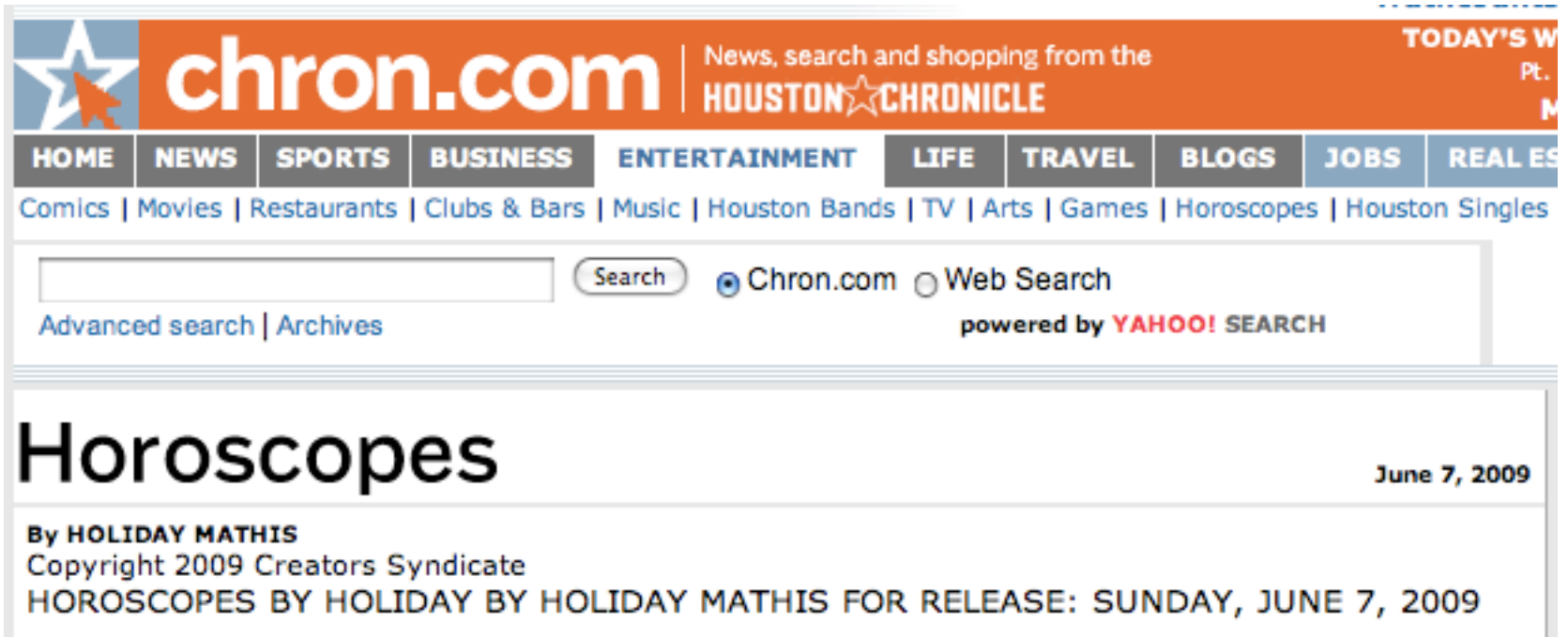
Remember Ouija boards?



Chinese Fortune Sticks?



Horoscopes?



The screenshot shows the top navigation bar of the chron.com website. The main header is orange with the chron.com logo and the text "News, search and shopping from the HOUSTON CHRONICLE". Below the header is a dark blue navigation menu with links for HOME, NEWS, SPORTS, BUSINESS, ENTERTAINMENT, LIFE, TRAVEL, BLOGS, JOBS, and REAL ESTATE. A secondary navigation bar lists various categories like Comics, Movies, Restaurants, Clubs & Bars, Music, Houston Bands, TV, Arts, Games, Horoscopes, and Houston Singles. A search bar is present with a "Search" button and radio buttons for "Chron.com" (selected) and "Web Search". The text "powered by YAHOO! SEARCH" is visible below the search bar. The main content area features the word "Horoscopes" in a large, bold, black font. To the right of the title is the date "June 7, 2009". Below the title, the author is listed as "By HOLIDAY MATHIS" and the copyright information is "Copyright 2009 Creators Syndicate". At the bottom of the section, the text reads "HOROSCOPES BY HOLIDAY BY HOLIDAY MATHIS FOR RELEASE: SUNDAY, JUNE 7, 2009".

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Horoscopes

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Do you remember?



When the moon is in the 7th
house

And Jupiter aligns with Mars

Then peace will guide the
planets

And love will steer the stars
This is the dawning of the
Age of Aquarius!

Aquarius!

Do you remember?



Harmony and understanding

Sympathy and trust abounding

No more falsehoods or
derisions

Golden living dreams of visions

Mystic crystal revelation

And the mind's true liberation

Aquarius!

Aquarius!

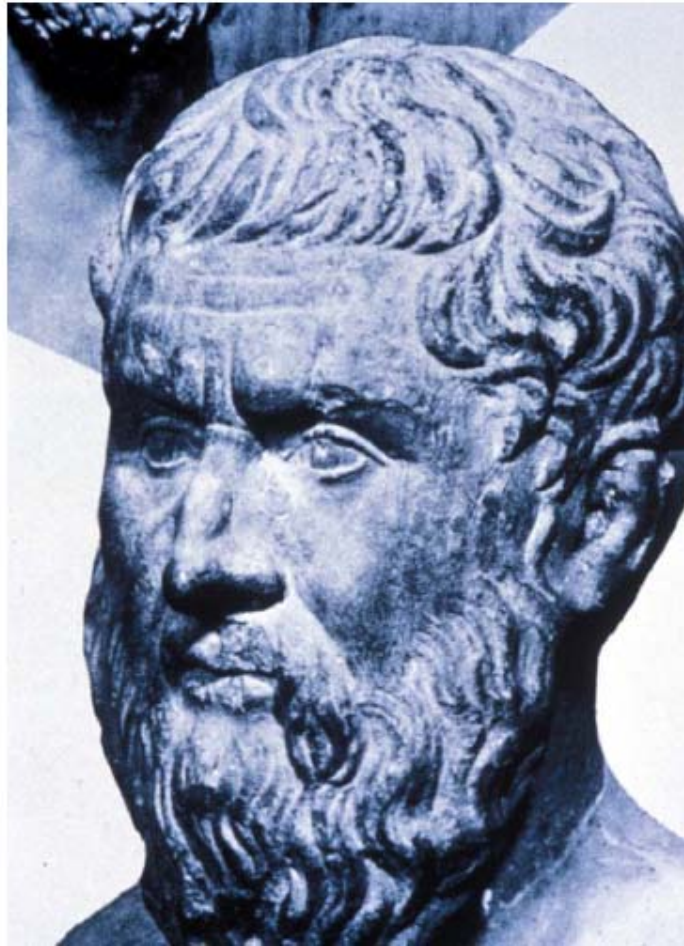
How do we discern God's will?



Do you want
supernatural
answers and
guidance?



Herodotus (c 484 – c. 425 BC)



The Magos today: The Adoration of the Magi



The word “Magic”



Do we want God to be our personal
Fortuneteller?





Early Greek Papyri



Magicians would not seek the will of the deity in a matter, but would invoke the deity to do precisely as they stated.







How do I
decide what
God wants me
to do?





1. Prayer



- For God's will
- From others

2. Thinking

“The disciplining of the
mind”
- Alister McGrath



3. Study and meditate on Scripture



This is not Scripture/Chinese Fortune Sticks



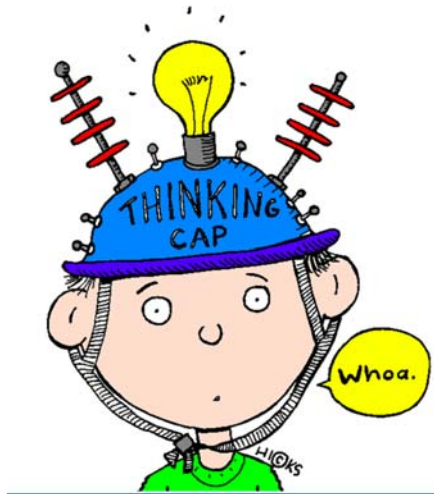
4. Getting Godly Counsel



5. Keep your eyes and ears open



Deciding God's Will: a case study



Counsel

Random thoughts...

1. Although we would never consider prayer in the same category as magic, it seems to me that there are many Christians whom seem to treat it that way. They are convinced that if they pray for something hard enough (or get enough people praying hard enough) that somehow that forces God's hand into answering their prayer **in the way they want it answered.**

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I especially appreciate your teaching on the "thinking" aspect of discerning God's will. Following Jesus doesn't mean that we "check our brains at the door." But, we are not talking about the unregenerate mind or even the undisciplined mind, which is not capable of spiritual thought and insight. We need the mind of Christ. 1 Cor. 2 is some powerful

I've learned (and try to remember) that knowing God's will for my life is a by-product of my relationship with Him. He doesn't tell me what to do so that I can run away and do it. I am only able to discern what God is up to as I walk with Him and watch for His activity in my life. Jesus set the pattern: John 5:17, 19-20 " 17Jesus said to them, "My Father is always at

A present day illustration not mentioned and might not need to be are the people who come to me and say, "God has spoken to me to tell you this..." I sweat that one..."what if God did speak? Am I to listen?" or sometimes I have said even though facetiously "God has given me the opposite message." Anyway, just a thought.

An illustration I received a long time ago which I have used with regard to God's will is two circles, one within the other. The smaller one is us, and we have the freedom to pick and choose whichever direction to go. Moving into the larger circle is God's will. Whichever way we move takes us into His providence.

Mark,

You have tackled a very difficult subject. Looking for "open doors" is very important. Sometimes I have a tendency to avoid open doors I don't like, and force my way through doors that are not open.

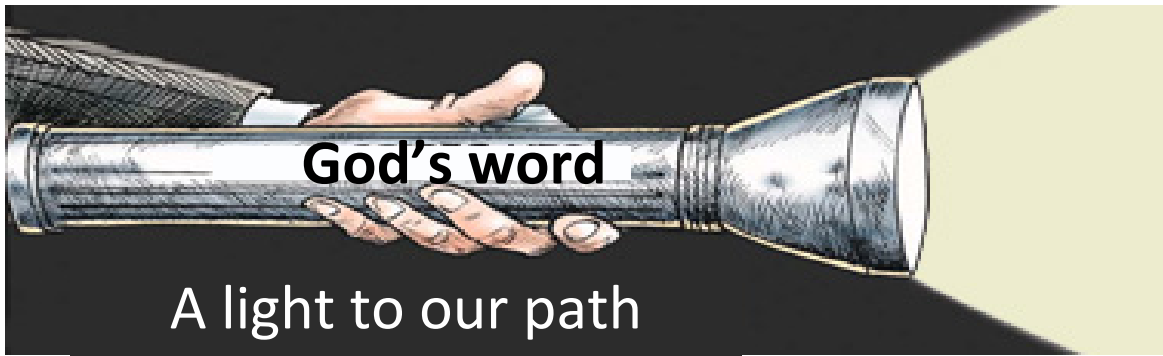
Some interesting notes from scripture on the divination end:

highlights the word of God as our counselor, director, and guide. My personal opinion is that people want the will of God apart from a thorough understanding of the Word of God and, thus, without the work that it requires to know the word of God. And because of that desire and, yet, laziness- they spend lots of time on other methods to discern the will of God- such as the ones listed in your lesson.

And, by testing you may know- (# 3 Points for Home) There is a Biblical test, a character test and an eternity test to think about- How does it mesh with scripture's teachings, how does it conform me to the image of Christ, and finally what kind of eternal impact is there??? (These are my personal criteria for choices that come my way)



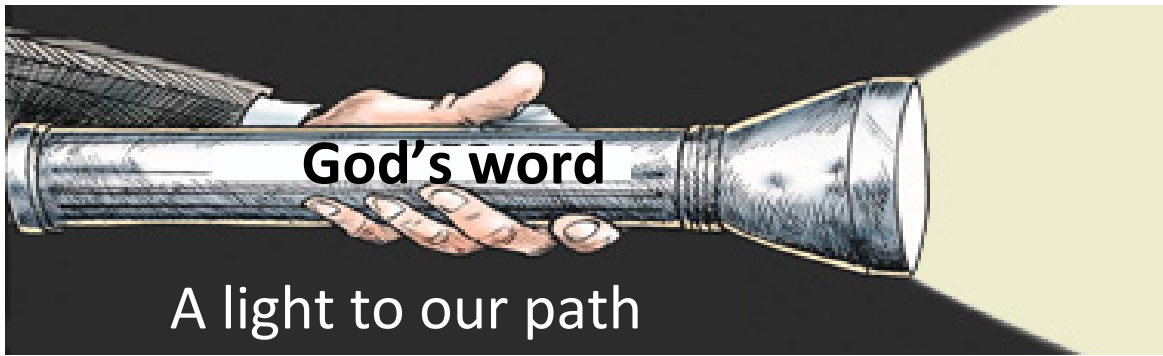
Ethics!



Points for Home



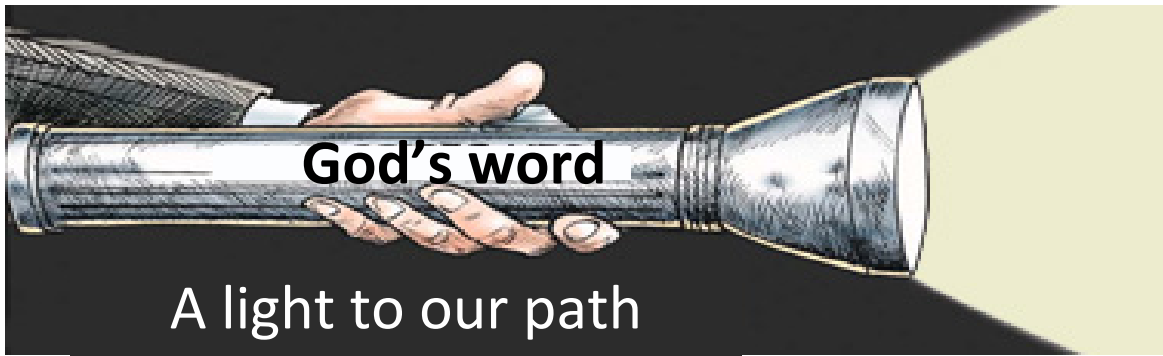
*“Be transformed by the
renewing of your minds”*
(Rom. 12:2)



Points for Home



“It has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us”
(Acts 15:28)



Points for Home



*“By testing you may discern
what is the will of God”*

(Rom. 12:2)