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“Shattered Edge”

Following the Lord can leave us on the edge between trusting God in our circumstances and acting outside of His will.

John 18:2-10 (NIV) Now Judas, who betrayed him, knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples. 3 So Judas came to the garden, guiding a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and the Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns and weapons. 4 Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out and asked them, “Who is it you want?” 5 “Jesus of Nazareth,” they replied. “I am he,” Jesus said. (And Judas the traitor was standing there with them.) 6 When Jesus said, “I am he,” they drew back and fell to the ground. 7 Again he asked them, “Who is it you want?” “Jesus of Nazareth,” they said. 8 Jesus answered, “I told you that I am he. If you are looking for me, then let these men go.” 9 This happened so that the words he had spoken would be fulfilled: “I have not lost one of those you gave me.” 10 Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest’s servant, cutting off his right ear. (The servant’s name was Malchus.)

Acting outside the will of God

Out of loyalty, Peter’s heart was right to defend Jesus and yet he acted outside God’s will.

- Peter had good intentions yet he got it wrong.
- Zeal, foolishly acted upon, can get us outside the will of God.

Romans 10:1-3 (NIV) Brothers and sisters, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved. 2 For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. 3 Since they did not know the righteousness of God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God’s righteousness.

- Peter had made a vow to Jesus about never leaving Him. The Garden situation presented the opportunity for him to follow through on his words, “I will never”.

Matthew 26:33-35 (NIV) Peter replied, “Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will.” 34 “Truly I tell you,” Jesus answered, “this very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times.” 35 But Peter declared, “Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.” And all the other disciples said the same.

- Everyone of us has been in Peter’s situation making promises we can’t keep.

Ecclesiastes 5:2 (NIV) Do not be quick with your mouth, do not be hasty in your heart to utter anything before God. God is in heaven and you are on earth, so let your words be few.

- Jesus performs His last miracle covering for the over zealous action of Peter. By healing Malchus, Jesus saved Peter from certain arrest.

“The reason why many are still troubled, still seeking, still making little forward progress is because they haven't yet come to the end of themselves. We're still trying to give orders, and interfering with God's work within us.”

— A. W. Tozer

Acting within the will of God requires:

1. **Trusting God - Jesus trusted the Father all the way to the cross.**

John 10:15 (NIV) just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep.

- Trust is imperative for lasting obedience.

Proverbs 3:5 (NIV) Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.

- God is good, even when we don't understand Him.

Psalms 34:8 (NIV) Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.

Psalms 100:5 (NIV) For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.

- God is good in the widest sense imaginable.
- Trusting God's character enables me to obey Him.

2. Obeying God

John 14:21 (NIV) Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them."

- Jesus doesn't ask us to do something that He wasn't willing to do.

John 18:11 (NIV) Jesus commanded Peter, "Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?"

What was the Lord's cup of wrath?

- Jesus' entire ministry was submitting Himself to the Father's eternal plan.

Luke 22:42 (NIV) "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done."

- Do you stop and ask God what His will is?
- It is important to seek God's will over our own. His Word reveals so much of His will for how we live and the decisions we make.

Proverbs 16:9 (ESV) The heart of man plans his way, but the LORD establishes his steps.

In John 18, Peter acted out of self-will and Jesus followed God's will.

Galatians 5:16-17 (NIV) So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17 For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want.

We will not make good decisions when *fear* or *anger* drives our actions.

What can we learn from Peter in this story?

1. Remember God is good, even when He's not fully understood. There are mysteries God doesn't reveal.
2. Ask God what His will is before acting on impulse.
3. Will you trust and obey Him even when His ways are hard? Even when they are costly to you, your family? Luke 9:23
4. Encourage one another - *help people have courage* to trust and obey. (Hebrews 3:12)
5. Being honest about your mistakes. You are more like Peter than you realize. (Psalm 51:17)



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