

A WORD WITH YOU - By Ron Hutchcraft

9360 – “Your Will of God Umpire”

Colossians 3:15-16

November 25, 2022

They take more abuse than anyone in professional baseball. More than the managers who make some dumb decisions. More than the players who mess up. No, it's those umpires that so many fans love to hate. Oh sure, they make some calls the fans don't like or agree with, but I'd hate to think of a ball game without some objective official deciding whether the pitch is a ball or a strike, or whether a hit is foul or fair. Let the players decide? I don't think so. It would be chaos without the umpire. Perhaps the place he's needed the most—and sometimes appreciated the least—is those close judgment calls when the runner and the ball arrive at the base at the same time. Everyone holds their breath as the umpire signals his verdict “Safe!” or “Out!”

I'm Ron Hutchcraft and I want to have **A WORD WITH YOU** today about **“Your Will of God Umpire.”**

The umpire decides what's safe or out in baseball—a decision which should not be left to the players themselves. Of course, baseball is just a game. It's in the decisions we make in our everyday lives that we could use a good umpire—one who could make a call as to whether what we're considering is safe for us or out. From God's perspective, that is, the only perspective that is never wrong—that's always best.

If you've been around Christian things very long, you know about the importance of trying to find out what the “will of God” is in the decisions that define our life. Well, that's easier said than done. Not because God is trying to hide His plan for us, but because we have a hard time discerning what's His will and what's my will. We know His plans are better than ours. But we're pretty caught up in our own plans, and it's often confusing to figure out, “What is God's will for us”

But God has provided an umpire that will help make the call for us. He writes to us about it in Colossians 3:15-16, our word for today from the Word of God. “Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts...and be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.” That word “rule” carries an interesting connotation in the original Greek language of the New Testament. It suggests someone officiating at an athletic contest. So it's kind of like, “Let the peace of Christ ‘be the umpire’ in your hearts.” Or, let Christ's peace decide whether something is “safe” for you or “out” for you.

When you're struggling with a decision, one helpful guideline in getting it right is this: trust what you have peace about in the times when you are talking about it in God's presence. In other words, believe what you feel most consistently when you're praying fervently about that decision. That peace tends to get compromised when we get off our knees and start listening to all those other voices and to our roller coaster feelings. But

the peace of Christ is clearest when we're closest to Him. It doesn't mean the absence of doubts or questions, but it's a sense of rightness about a certain course, especially when we're listening to Him alone.

That "peace of Christ" is, of course, tied directly to having the "word of Christ" permeating your life. The shaft of light shining on the right road comes as God illuminates a verse from His Word and makes it an arrow that points in His direction. Those who don't spend regular time in the Word of God, honestly are unlikely to recognize the will of God. As are those who come seeking God's direction, full of their own will. A lot of people have missed God's best because they tried to manipulate God or His Word so that their will would be God's will. It doesn't work that way. He's God; I'm not.

You'll never know what God wants if you come to Him with a contract containing what you want Him to sign for. No, You've got to come to God with a blank piece of paper, signed by you, accepting sight unseen what He writes there. The most powerful prayer in the Bible may be Jesus' eight words in the Garden of Gethsemane, "Yet not My will, but Yours be done" (Luke 22:42).

God promised that He would "...instruct you and teach you in the way you should go" (Psalm 32:8). And if you believe Him for the answers He promised, you'll experience the peace of Christ over that road He wants you to take—God's infallible umpire to let you know if it's "safe" or "out."

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