

Wall Illustration: (Stained Textured Wall Behind Me)

Sheet of paper to each person ages 10 and up.

"How wide is the wall?"

Box 1 – Answer in feet and inches based on initial observation now.

Box 2 – Come up after worship and interact with the wall and write a number.

Box 3 – Come back tonight before with any measuring tape you want and document.

First, what are the chances all three numbers are the same? Not good, right?

So then I then say: "How wide is the wall?" Which box do you answer from?

Finally, I throw in this tidbit – everyone who shows me the right answer gets a free dinner on me at the Mexican place up by the highway.

So, theoretically, if there were 200 people with sheets in the AM, I should be taking 200 out to dinner, right? I mean, the process was simple and explained pretty well and the measurement device is undeniable. This is just a guess, but I feel like there would be about 20 right answers out of 200. What? How is that possible?!?! Here's why (and I base this on crowd mentality, not any particular characterization of the Lindale group).

Some would have immediately decided they didn't care and not participated at all.

Some would have done the initial box but left after church without coming up.

Some would have just not come back to church tonight (40 out right there).

A fairly small amount would have cared about it enough and remembered to bring the tape and got here early enough and measured it before worship. 20 maybe.

The rest are out there that night saying, "why didn't you tell us there'd be chips and salsa before we blew this thing off!" Well, the wall is a metaphor for God's Will for our Lives, and process of determining it's width is our measurement of that.

The Measurement of God's Will for our Lives - This is our actual study this morning. The wall represents God's expansive will for your life. The Word is the measure. It lays out across the situation and tells you exactly what God's will for your life is. But there are 4 kinds of people in the world:

- 1- I don't care what the will of God is for my life.
- 2- I care enough to think about it from a distance and I'll do what I believe is right.
- 3- I care enough to engage the issue and consider it, but not enough to dig too deeply.
- 4- I will lay God's will all across my life, in every issue, and fully determine what He wants.

So, back to our original categories. Would we have to do is get everyone to that 4th position in everything! How do we do that? Well, perhaps we could address the issues along the way:

1. I must first have a desire to know the Truth
 - a. **Matthew 28:18-20** – This has to matter. His glory has to mean something.
 - b. **Matthew 7:24-27** – I then must believe this. Two roads, two outcomes.
 - c. So I have to have burning in me an awe of Jesus and a reverence for His teachings.
2. I must press beyond initial ideas and feelings
 - a. My guess from the pew is rough and uneducated and not trustworthy.
 - b. **Acts 17:10-12** – They needed to dig in for themselves. They wanted contact.
 - c. **II Tim. 2:15-18** – Be diligent in study. I have to dig and look.
 - d. If I don't study, I'll miss the mark and maybe worst – lead myself and others astray.
3. I must press beyond casual interaction

- a. Many brethren do this – an issue arises – they pick a passage or so, and settle it.
 - b. **Acts 15:1-2, 6-7, 12-13, 16-9** – This took time and listening and caring.
 - c. They had to look at what God revealed, consider examples and implications.
4. I must base my belief entirely on the Word
- a. **Romans 1:1,5; 1:16-18** – The Word defines us, makes us who we are in God.
 - b. **Rom. 2:16** – It judges us. Not our feelings or ideas. The Word measures us.
 - c. **Rom. 10:17** – Faith cannot be found or proven any other way. Only one right answer.

The Parable of the Sower (Luke 8:5-8) --- *Demonstrates Levels of Integration with the Word of God.*

- 1 – (v11-12) – They just weren't interested in God's will for their lives.
 - 2 – (v12-13) – They had interest and looked to it, but really weren't willing to invest much.
 - 3 – (v14-14) – They did go to God, but the idea of extra effort and tough choices was too much.
 - 3 – (v15) – They accepted God's Word and integrated God's guide across their lives and produced.
- The Secret --- **(8:18)** – "Take care how you listen!" (**v8, 10, 13,14,15**) - Relationship with the Word!

Okay, I'm not likely to find any resistance in this crowd with these four points. So let's talk about application – if we can agree on these four conclusion – the applications affect every aspect of your life – they become the means by which we determine God's will in everything in your life.

DOCTRINE - "What must I do to be saved?" / "What are my Responsibilities to Brethren?"

- 1- Some don't want to know about salvation. But we must care about Jesus' will.
- 2- Some will think about it and decide what pleases God. We dig for more.
- 3- Some will find a verse or two, interact with the question a while and go with that.
- 4- But who, how many, will say, "WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?" and do exactly what Jesus told people to do to know Him and follow the pattern therein --- **Acts 2:36-42.**

PURITY - "Is social drinking acceptable?" / "Are R Rated Films Acceptable?"

- 1- Some enjoy wine and beer and don't want to talk about it.
- 2- Some will consider it a bit, decide Jesus drank wine and all is fine.
- 3- Some will find a verse or two, discuss it with a religious person to justify and move on.
- 4- But who, how many, will say, "WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?" and investigate Bible wine alcohol and read about God's call to example and sobriety and stand against compromise?

MORALITY - "Will Physical Immorality cost me heaven?" / "Will Lust in my heart cost me heaven?"

- 1- Some want to enjoy whom they want to enjoy.
- 2- Some will think about adultery, but decide that remarriage is about God wanting happiness.
- 3- Some will find a verse or two, maybe consider their own life a while, and form ideas.
- 4- But who, how many, will say, "WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?" and read everything the New Testament says about sexual sin and marriage and divorce and live by book chapter verse?

RELATIONSHIPS - "How do I approach an adulterous marriage?" / "... an unfaithful family member?"

- 1- Disfellowship is uncomfortable. Some just don't want to think about it.
- 2- Some will think about it from afar, but decide what's best for them and go on.
- 3- Some will interact with God and brethren cordially, but draw their own personal ideas.
- 4- But who, how many, will say, "WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?" and read the Word and respect it and quote it to wayward brethren even in their family and stand by God?

You see, in EVERY part of your life that concerns God's will, in every question of life, in every decision -- there are always 4 kinds of people... and always only 1 kind that God recognizes as His own.

Luke 8:4-8, 11-15 – So so few will be the good soil. So so few want to give the Word that kind of power, to dictate their purpose and define their future. But we aren't talking about a free dinner here for measure a wall. **Matthew 7:24-27** – we are talking about Christ' word defining your life and standing or falling in the final judgment. Are you living by the Book?