



Naturally Supernatural 25 JUNE 2023

Big Idea: To live naturally supernaturally, we discover what is good to the Holy Spirit and to us.

Key Scriptures: Acts 13:1-14; 15:28; 21:4-5, 10-14.

1. Having heard Pastor Craig's story of how he chose his seminary, have you ever made choices that were more 'naturally derived' than 'supernaturally determined?' Is it even fair to make that distinction?

2. Read Acts 13:1-14 again. Knowing what you now know, how does this passage illustrate the naturally supernatural? Remembering that Paul and Barnabas were sent on their way by the Holy Spirit, what lessons or insights can be derived from this passage about following the leading of the Holy Spirit?

3. Read Acts 13:9. This is the first time that Saul is referred to as Paul. Three options exist for when the name Paul was given.
 - a. It was given to him at birth by his father.
 - b. He received it after his conversion on the Damascus Road.
 - c. It was given to him by Paulus through a process called adrogation – a common Roman practice of welcoming someone into your family.

Which of these three have you heard? Is there any significance to Paul's Roman name being mentioned in this passage for the first time?

4. From Acts 15, we can say that there are five distinct practices to living naturally supernaturally in terms of discerning the next steps.

- a. Seeking guidance from the Lord.
- b. Following the path before us.
- c. Carefully examining Scripture.
- d. Seeking wise counsel. They talked together and discerned together.
- e. Striving for unity in the decision.

Which of these is the most natural for you? Which of these is the least used by you? Is it always necessary to practice all five? What other Scriptures about discernment are important to you?

5. Read Acts 24:4-5. How would you explain this passage? Did the believers of Tyre misunderstand? What significance do you think this passage has for how we stand alongside someone trying to discern God's will?

6. Read Acts 24:10-14. Pastor Craig made three observations from this verse:

- a. Unlike the disciples in Tyre, the prophet Agabus offered no interpretation, only sharing the revelation.
- b. Paul continued to Jerusalem because He was compelled by the Holy Spirit to head there (Acts 19:21; 20:16; 22-23).
- c. Revelation and interpretation are two separate aspects of the discernment process.

Which of these three is the biggest takeaway for you? How does the lesson you learn help you offer wise counsel to someone?

7. Ruth Haley Barton has four practices for pursuing God's will together that our church takes seriously.

- a. **Spirit of Revelation:** a deep understanding or insight into God's desires.
- b. **Spirit of Indifference:** cultivating a state of openness and detachment from personal desires, preferences, and attachments.
- c. **Spirit of Consolation:** paying close attention to moments of inner peace and joy.
- d. **Spirit of Desolation:** feelings of inner turmoil, confusion, and disconnection from God.

Which of these practices is the most natural for you? Which is the most difficult to grasp?

8. The key to discerning God's will is ensuring that we do not grieve the Holy Spirit or quench Him. We grieve the Holy Spirit when we ignore His desire to address issues in our lives. Such ignorance causes us to quench the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, as God, has the same attitude to sin as both the Father and the Son. For clarity, no one can deal with issues of which they are unaware. Unknown sin is not to be the focus here. Is there an issue that the Holy Spirit is revealing to you in this season? Are you ignoring that? Spend some time in prayer asking the Holy Spirit to reveal to you anything that is hindering His leading of you.

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