



DISCERNING  
GOD'S WILL



God has Missions as  
part of His plan

# LESSON OBJECTIVES

- God desires us to follow His will
- Able to discern God's will
- Willing to surrender my own will for His will

## INTRODUCE YOURSELF

Share in one minute your challenge when it comes to discerning God's will.



# 1. GOD'S WILL FOR OUR LIVES

Calling and Will is the same

Why? God called us to do something to fulfil His Will!

## WHY DOES GOD'S WILL MATTER?

*"Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
<sup>10</sup> your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.*

*Matthew 6:9-10 (NIV)*

## GENERAL CALLING

*For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus **to do good works**, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

Ephesians 2:10 (NIV)

- Warning – we are saved through faith to do good works NOT do good works therefore we are saved.
  - How do you value yourself? Do you tell yourself I am a bad Christian bc I am not serving? Is your work determine your self-worth? Do you think this is how God sees you?
    - If we are His children, then He is our Father
      - As a father, I don't love my children based on how 'productive' they are. I love them regardless.
        - Though I do have more joy if they are obedient to me = obedience = productivity

## SPECIFIC CALLING

*10 In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, "Ananias!"*

*"Yes, Lord," he answered.*

*11 The Lord told him, "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. 12 In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight."*

– Acts 9:10-12 (NIV)

Faith is referring to faith in Jesus

Paul was talking about how some Galatians follow the OT law. But Paul said if you have faith in Jesus, you don't need the law to justify yourself.



## SPECIFIC CALLING - PAUL

*But when God, who set me apart from my mother's womb and called me by his grace, was pleased <sup>16</sup> to reveal his Son in me so that **I** might preach him among the Gentiles...*

- Galatians 1:15-16

Paul knew his calling from God  
He knew it very well.  
He dedicated his whole life to it  
He hit the mark in the end  
He finished the race and he kept his faith (2 Tim 4:7)



- Caveat – My wife and I call is more or less long term missions
  - We have a tendency to place our own calling to others
    - Aka my calling is the only true one, everyone else should conform to us
  - Your calling will be diff.
    - Maybe short-term, long-term, mid-term, here, anything in between
    - BUT the key is not for you or me to decide our own. Rather it is for God to lead us
      - John 21:18-19
- Cannot compare w others



## 2.HINDERANCE TO DOING HIS WILL *(AKA IDOLS)*

Calling and Will is the same

Why? God called us to do something to fulfil His Will!

DON'T ASSUME YOUR  
WILL = HIS WILL

YOUR WILL AND HIS  
WILL MAY NOT ALIGN  
(EVEN IF YOU ARE A  
CHRISTIAN)





## UNHEALTHY EMOTIONS

- Family or friend issues
- Dislike church
- A bad breakup
- Show others or proof to myself I am a good Christian
- Attention (Look at how special I am)



# RICH YOUNG RULER SYNDROME

Rich Young Ruler syndrome  
- Busy doing "God's work" but really disobedient

# FORMULA-BASED CHRISTIANITY



- No relationship, just formula
  - Follow what everyone is doing
    - Missions is only two weeks a year bc that's the holidays people have
      - Therefore I will do the same (and I've done my part for missions)
    - Check listed - Go to church, tithe, join cell group, volunteer at ministry, then justify, I am a good Christian bc I do all these things
  - Not allow the HS to work, not even seeking the HS



Image source: <https://oldmanmackie.files.wordpress.com/2014/10/common-sense.png>

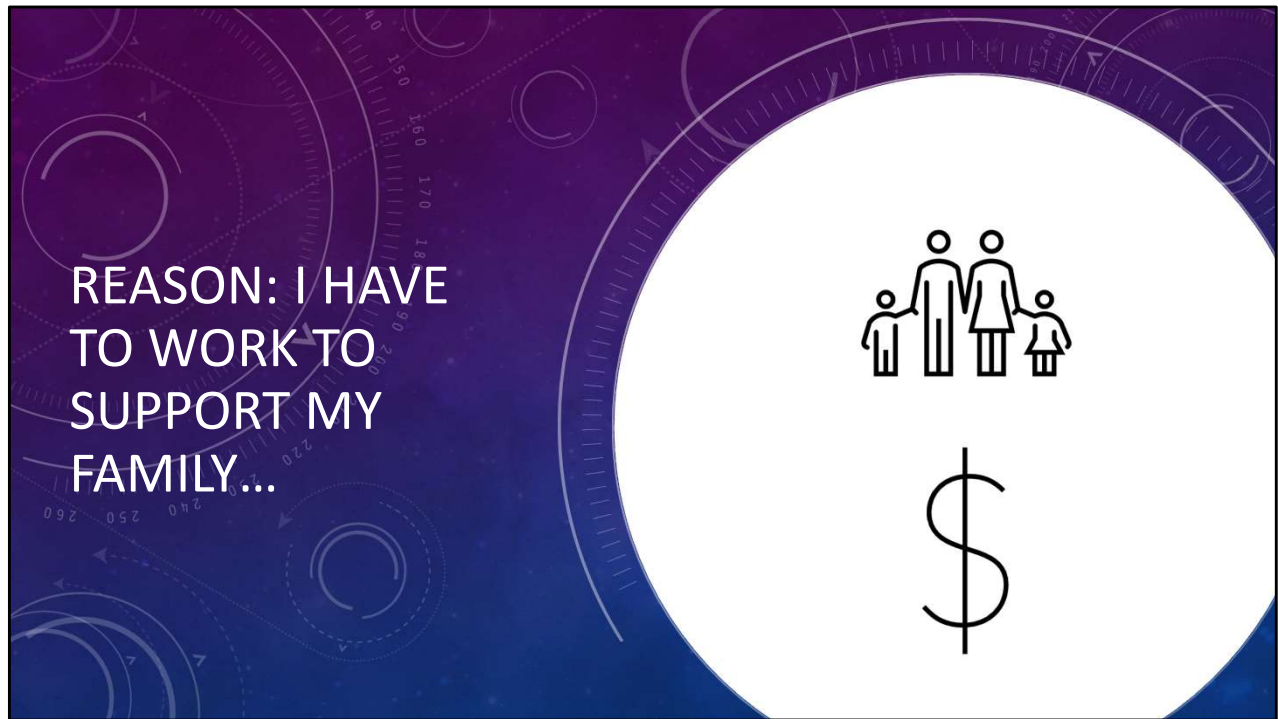
- good, commonsense, logic - i should stay here bc I am a Singaporean
- i am more effective here bc I speak singlish
- i have many family and friends who do not know Christ



## HINDERANCE TO FOLLOWING GOD'S WILL ARE OFTEN GOOD THINGS

- Take care of my family
- Still single
- I am not good enough, I need more training!!!
- There is so much need here
- What about my career? Future?

- God, I cannot obey bc I need to:
  - Take care of my family
  - Still single
  - I am not good enough
  - I love my comfort too much
  - There is so much need here
  - What about my career? Future?

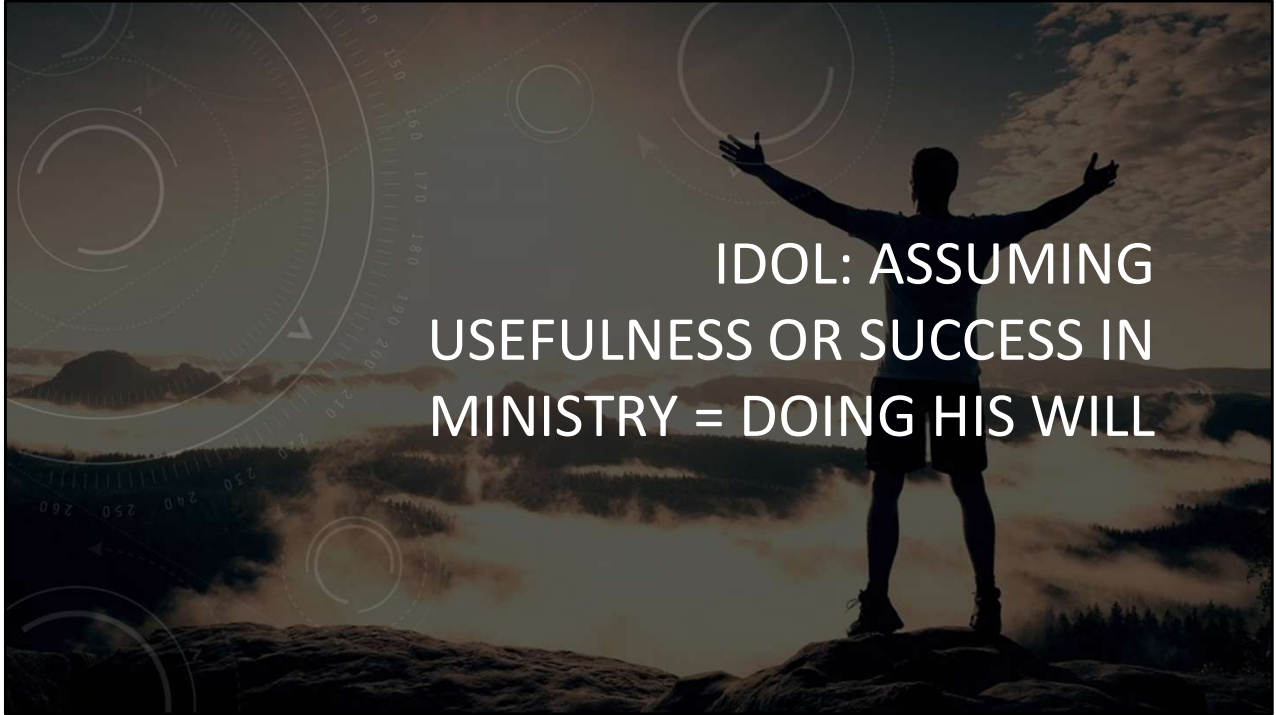


- Is true but also false
  - Who provides money for you? God or yourself?
    - It is God who provides us to make money. He can also provide in other means
    - This is why He says, do not worry about what the Gentiles go after (money, clothes). God knows you need them and will provide for you.
    - But first,
      - SEEK HIM AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS
    - Aka this doesn't neglect my duty to provide for my family. But it means that you can't excuse for not following God's calling and say you have to stay at your job to make money

## WHAT DO JESUS SAYS?

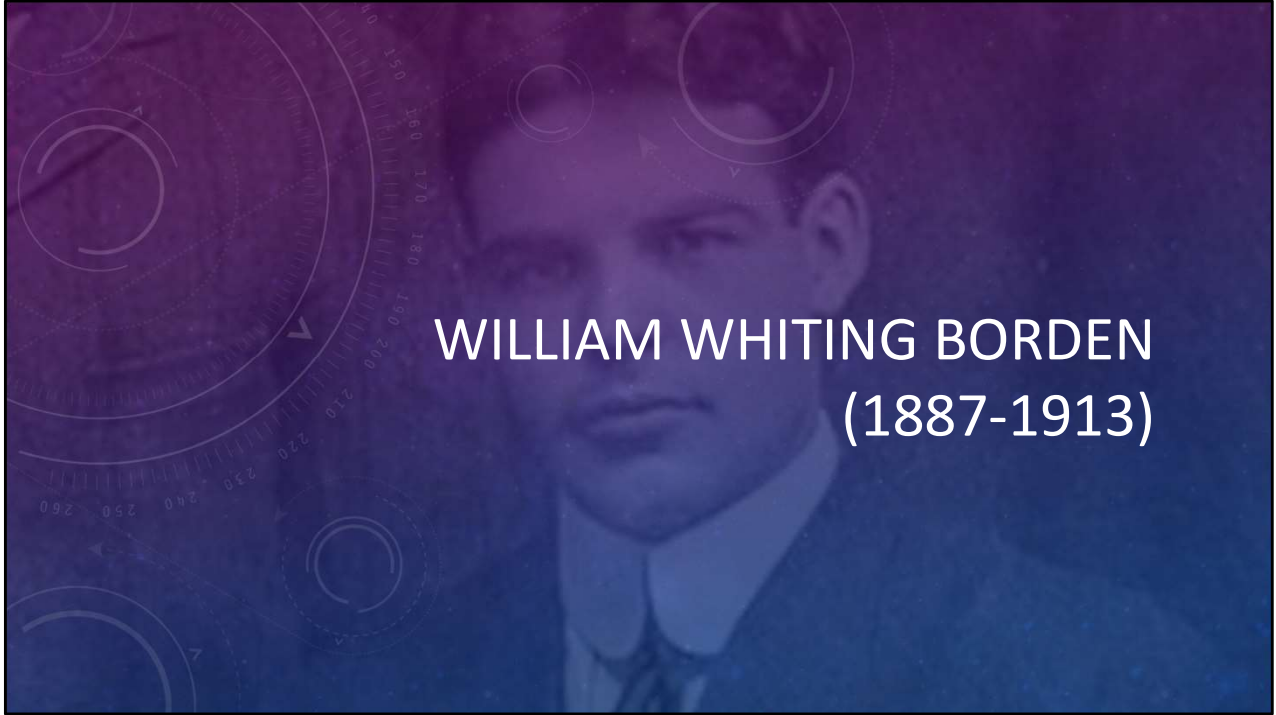
*31 So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. 33 **But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.** — Matthew 6:31-33 (NIV)*

Aka this doesn't neglect my duty to provide for my family. But it means that you can't excuse for not following God's calling and say you have to stay at your job to make money



**IDOL: ASSUMING  
USEFULNESS OR SUCCESS IN  
MINISTRY = DOING HIS WILL**

Image source: <https://www.theladders.com/career-advice/what-is-the-definition-of-success>



WILLIAM WHITING BORDEN  
(1887-1913)

- Millionaire American died in Egypt before going to be a missionary in China to reach out to Chinese Muslim
- Went to Egypt to learn Arabic before going to China
- Caught Cerebral Meningitis and died

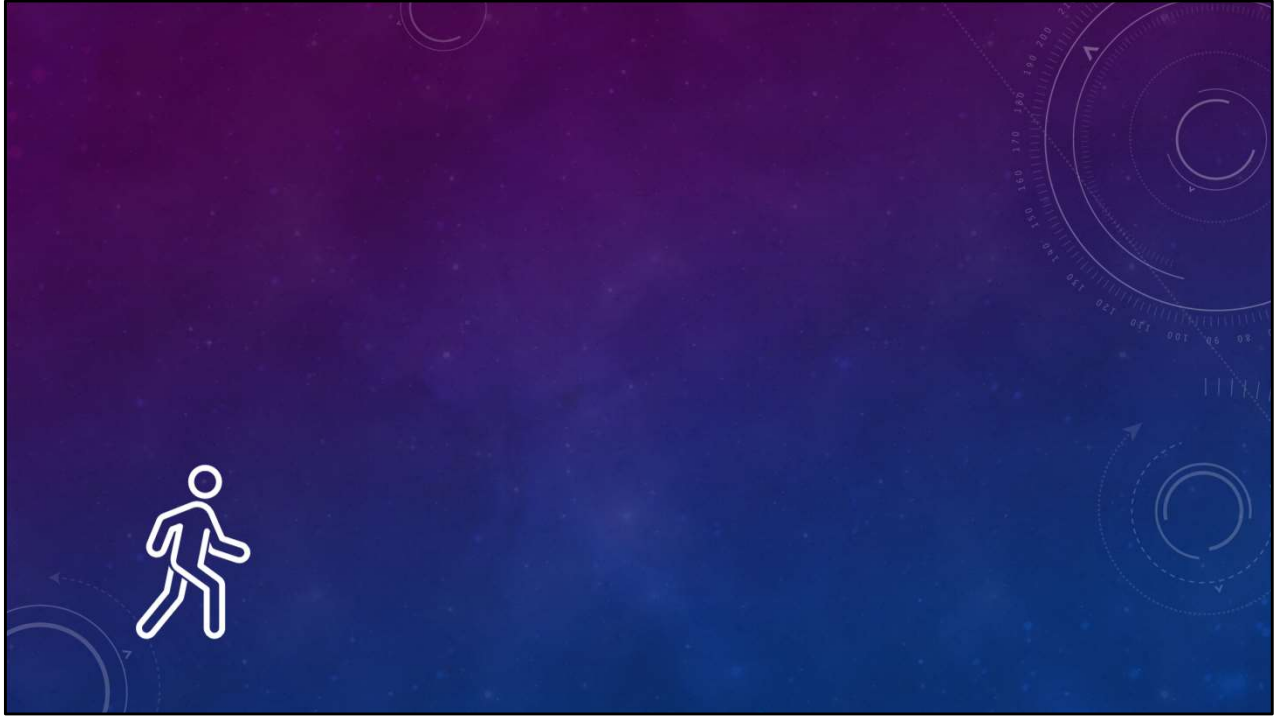


Mother found the words, “No Reserve”, dated after he gave up his fortune for missions

Later written “No Retreat” when his father told him he can never be part of the family business

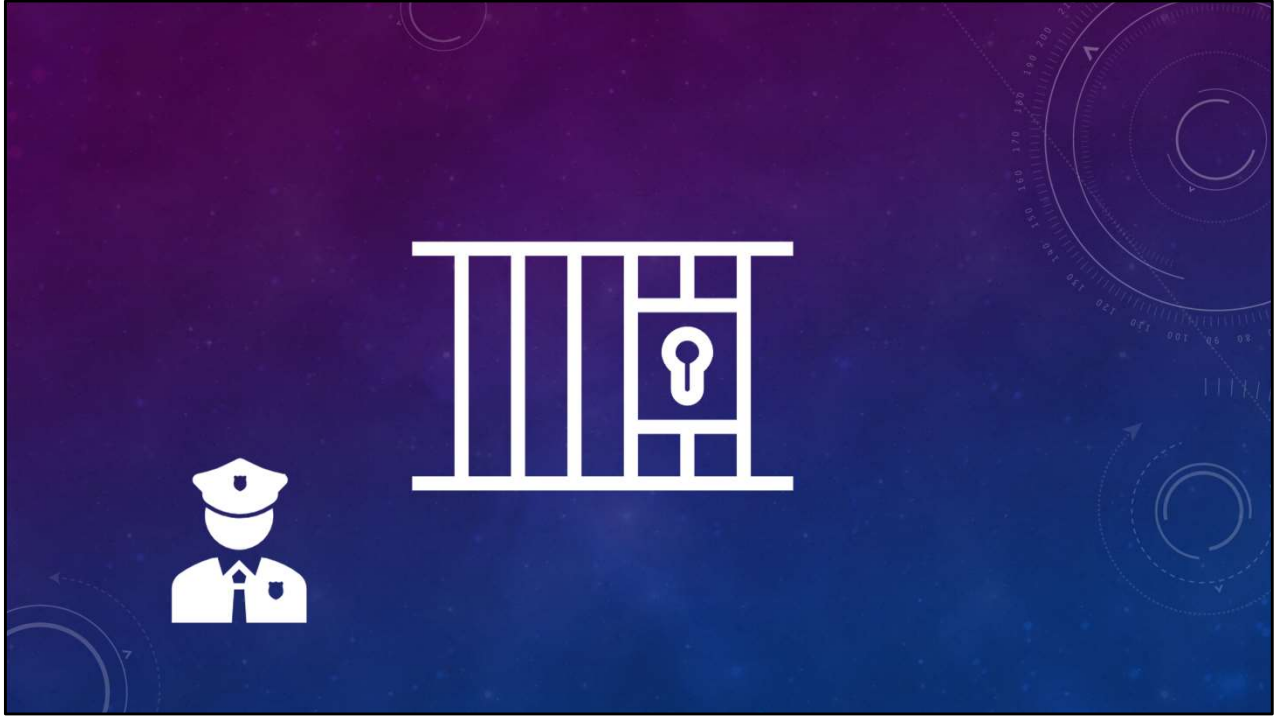
“No Regrets” when he was in Egypt

Was he successful?



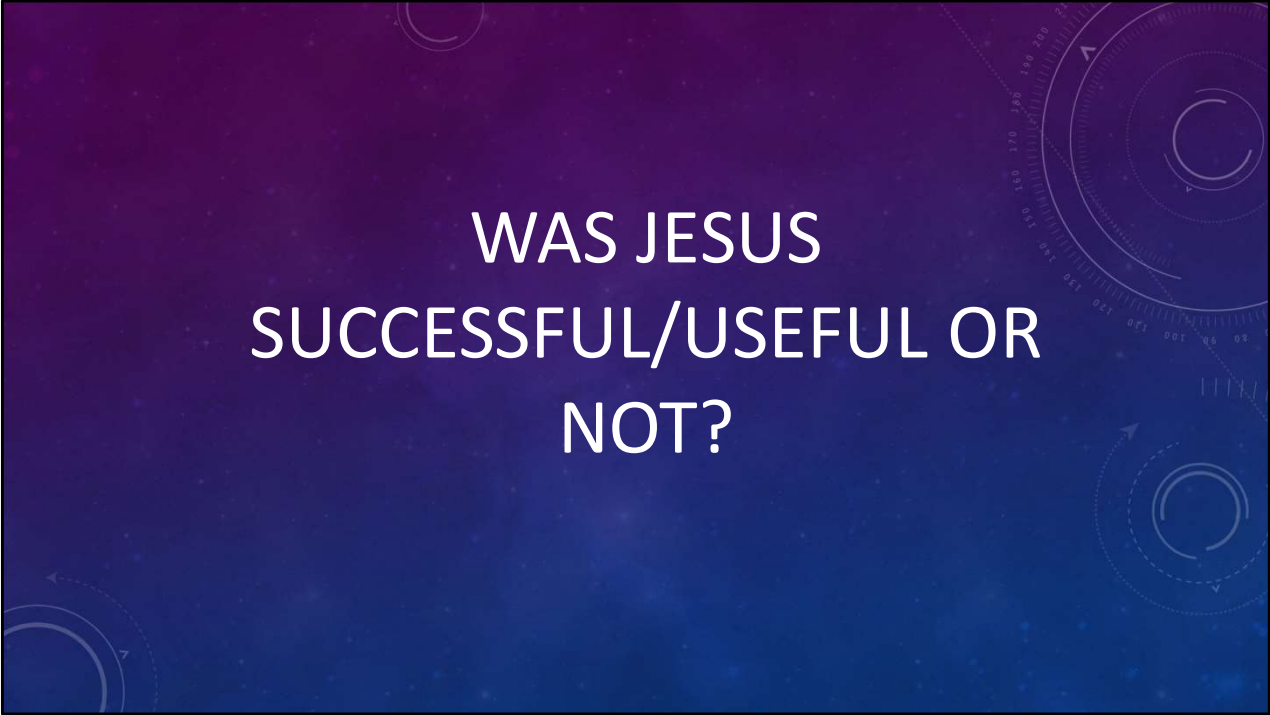








Success or not?




# WAS JESUS SUCCESSFUL/USEFUL OR NOT?

Ultimately, it is what God thinks that's important



Who are we serving?  
Who are we showing off to?



3. HOW CAN I  
OVERCOME THE ABOVE  
HINDERANCES TO  
FOLLOW GOD'S WILL

*or*

HOW CAN I OBEY GOD'S  
CALLING AND FULFIL HIS  
WILL



We conform to Him, not simply tell Him what we want  
and asks Him to bless it  
Listening to the quiet voice  
Common-sense may not always be right



Image source: <https://iclif.org/articles/leaders-surrender-values/>

#### Level of surrendering

- I surrender my Sunday to go to church
- I surrender 10% of my income
- I surrender my days off to volunteer
- I surrender my career to do the will of the Lord
- I surrender my life to lay it before the Lord and let Him will as He pleases
  - This may mean
    - Go overseas
    - Stay here
    - Live a 'normal' life while seeing your friends climb the corporate ladder and live a higher lifestyle
    - Stay single



- Deconstructing our priorities
  - Family and friends
  - Comfort
  - Career
  - Life
- Yield (surrender) our lives to Him
  - We don't plan and then ask God for peace
    - Rather we surrender our plans to Him and through the surrender, we yield to the Holy Spirit and we receive peace of God bc we walk according to Him, not us
      - Seek Him and His righteousness first (Matt 6:33)
- Like Jesus at Gethsemane Garden (ref)
  - Not my will be done but yours
- We lay out our plans and desire before the Lord
  - This include mission desires

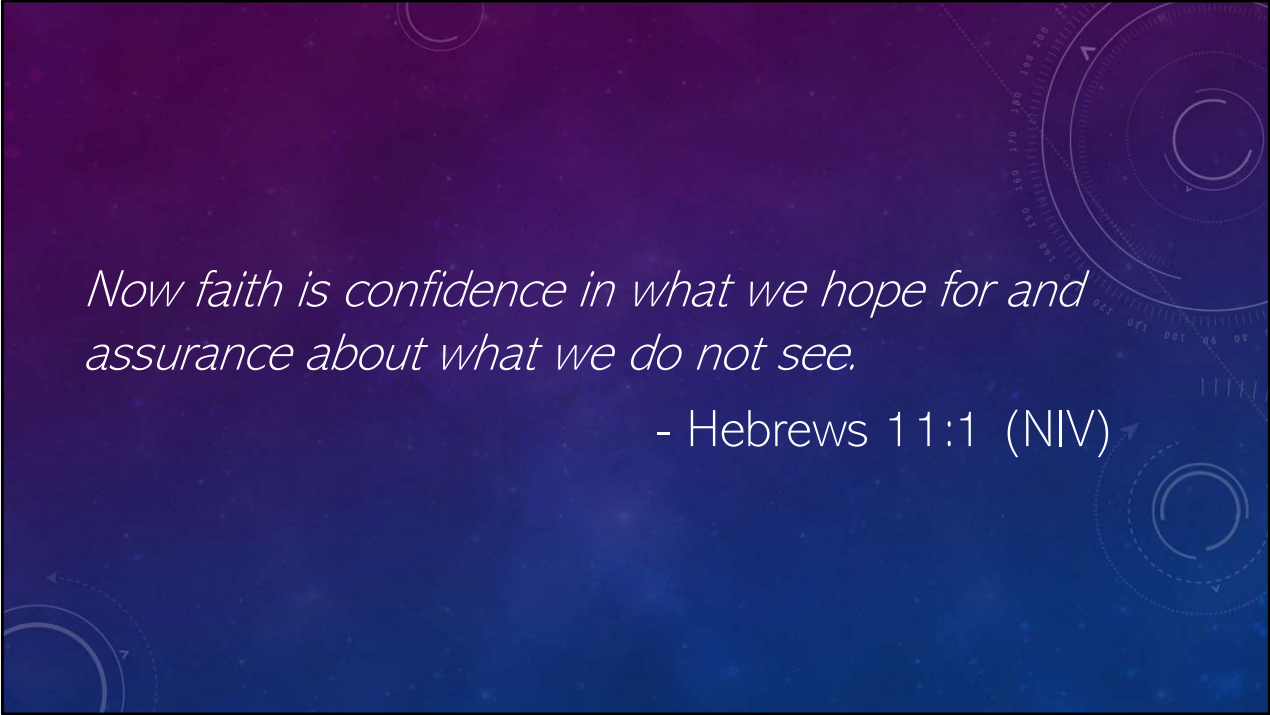




WITHOUT **RISK**, THERE IS  
NO NEED FOR **FAITH**

Hudson Taylor

Image source: <https://www.abwe.org/blog/all-things-all-people-hudson-taylor-s-life-and-legacy-contextualization>



*Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.*

- Hebrews 11:1 (NIV)

- If we plan it all ourselves without relying on God, then I question if we are not doing His will
  - def: Hebrews 11:1
  - If God doesn't move, it will not happen
- God's Will, can only rely on the Holy Spirit
- if it is not God, there is NO way
  -
- Why? Bc God desires all Glory to Him



Image source: <http://www.timstreetphoto.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/fog.jpg>

There are decisions you make in your life that will have profound impact for the rest of your life.

If you follow God and obey His will, those decisions will come.

They are life changing decisions.

They requires faith bc they are risky

You almost tell yourself, Jesus' better be real because without Him there is no way it can happen.

Two paths: Faith and risky or stay where you are, content with comfort and stability

- I encourage you to take that faith path. Because you do not know what will happen if you don't.

WJ and I have these death talks. What if I died on the field, or she dies, or we both go see Jesus?

What about our children? Who will take care of them?

I believe these talks will come more often when you are seeking His will bc there are risks, which requires faith.

Our faith doesn't grow bc we study more or go to more courses. Our faith bc the decisions we take requires faith, which has risk, which only God is glorified.

No one can say bc Cliff is so special or some talent he gets to do this or that.



## 4. HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOU ARE FOLLOWING GOD'S WILL?

- Divine coincidences
- You will live a life very differently than your peers and friends
  - o When people think about HDB, you think about where to serve
  - o When people think about retirement, you think how to keep going to serve
- Mission will become a huge part on how you make decisions
  - o Last week, we talked about missions is in God's heart
    - You care what He cares



# DIVINE OCCURRENCES

Why is it risk? Or why it requires faith?

God wants all the glory for Himself.

Just like in the Bible, if God doesn't show up, nothing will happen.





## Uganda

- Transplant
- Yellow Fever vaccination
- Prof Annelies



## NEXT WEEK: HELPING THE POOR

- Need to do some reading before hand
- Write to [cliff.tam@gmail.com](mailto:cliff.tam@gmail.com) for any questions, suggestions, and thoughts!
- Feedback at [bit.ly/audienceofonefeedback](http://bit.ly/audienceofonefeedback)