

Discernment






¹⁰ your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.

Matthew 6:10

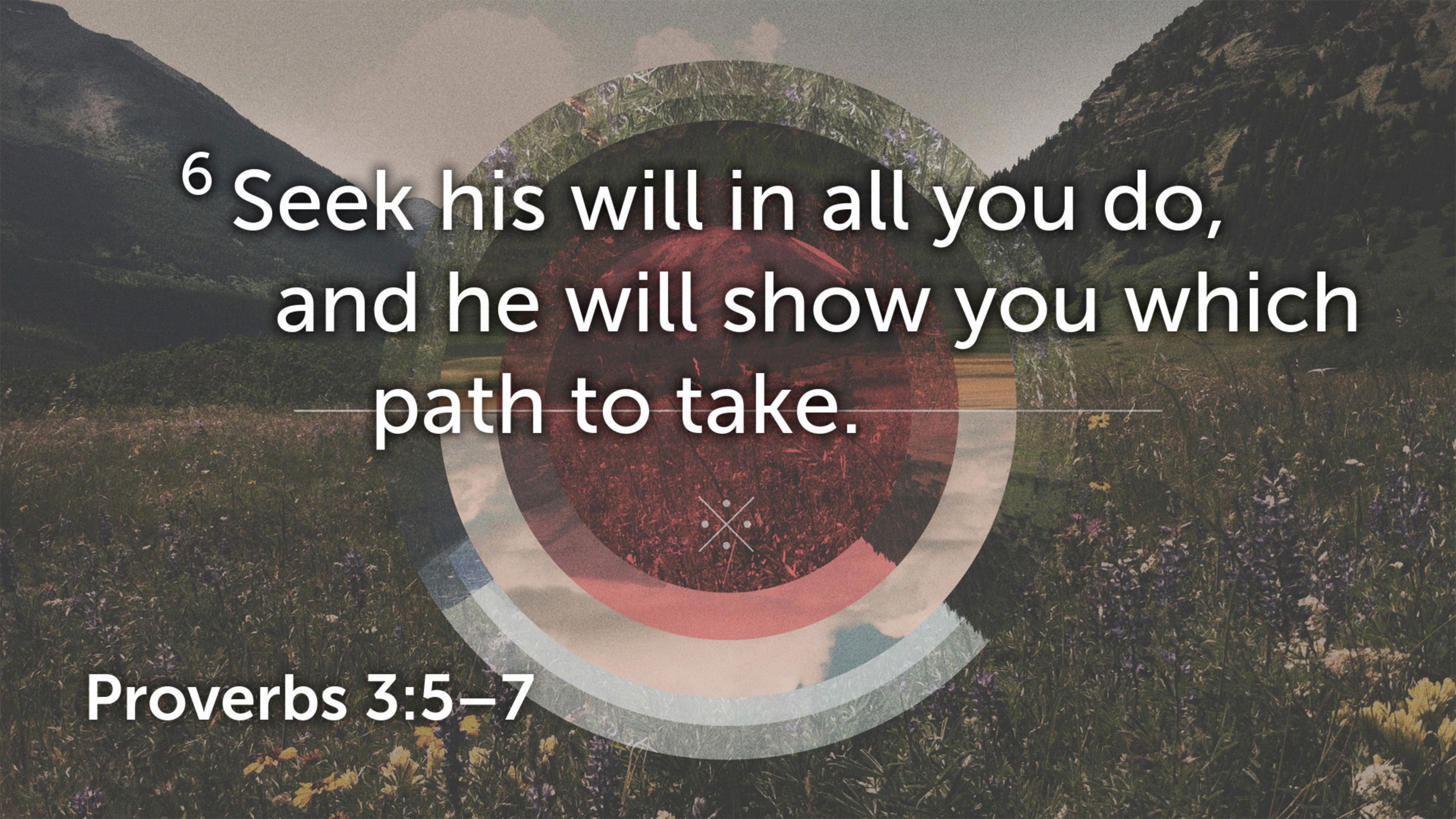
42 "Father, if you are willing,
please take this cup of suffering
away from me. Yet I want your
will to be done, not mine."

Luke 22:42

A scenic landscape featuring a river flowing through a valley between mountains. The foreground is a lush field of green grass and various wildflowers, including purple and yellow ones. A large, semi-transparent circular graphic is centered over the image, composed of several concentric rings in shades of red, orange, and light blue. The text is overlaid on this graphic.

**5 Trust in the LORD with all
your heart;
do not depend on your
own understanding.**

Proverbs 3:5–7



⁶ Seek his will in all you do,
and he will show you which
path to take.

Proverbs 3:5–7

A scenic mountain valley with a winding road and a large circular graphic overlay. The background shows a lush green valley with a dirt road curving through it, surrounded by steep, forested mountains under a clear sky. In the foreground, there are various wildflowers, including purple and yellow ones. A large, semi-transparent circular graphic is centered over the image, featuring a red and white bullseye pattern. The text is overlaid on this graphic.

⁷ Don't be impressed with
your own wisdom.
Instead, fear the LORD and
turn away from evil.

Proverbs 3:5–7

Discernment



Henri Nouwen on Discernment

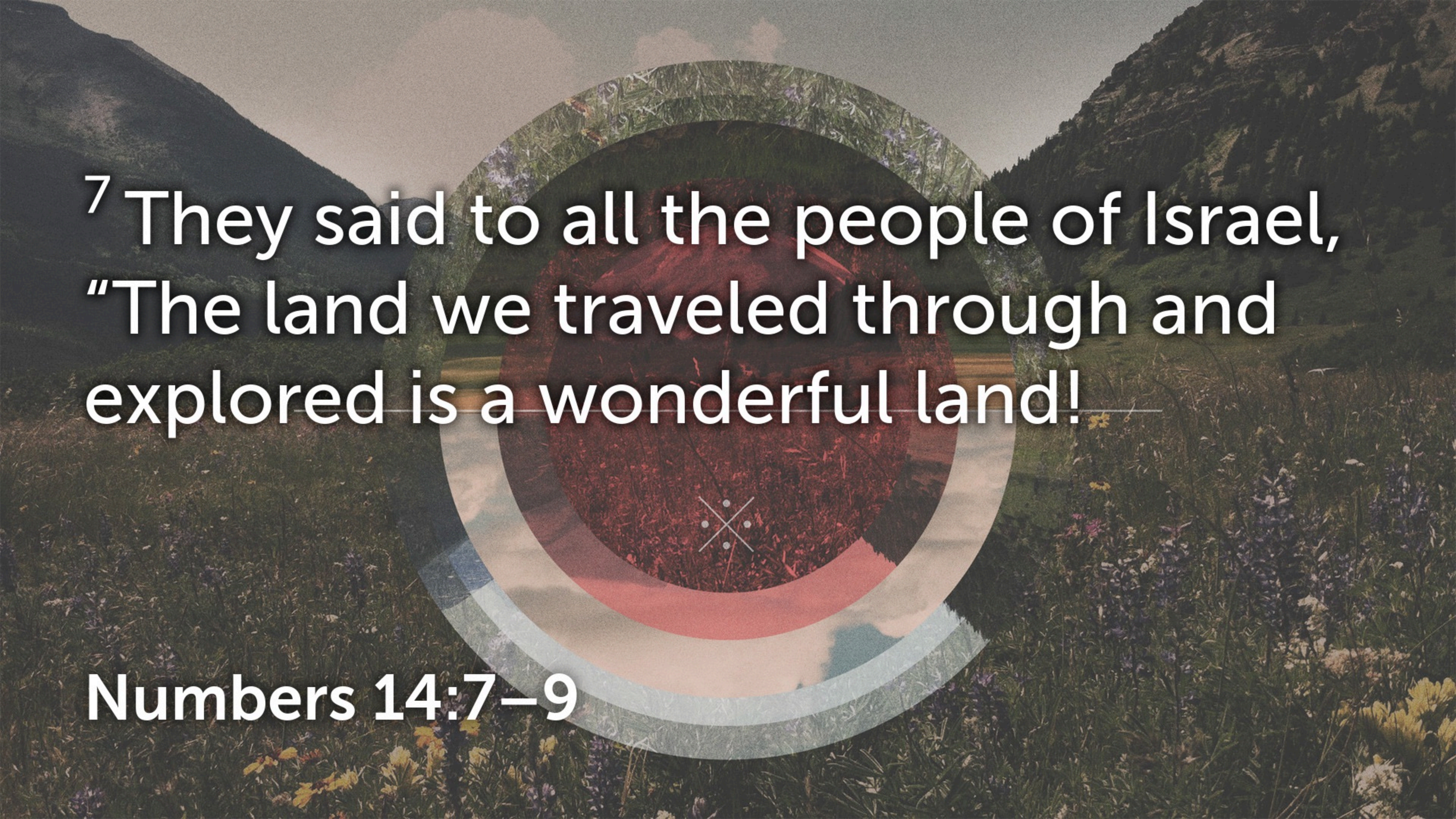
Christian discernment is not the same as decision making. Reaching a decision can be straightforward: we consider our goals and options... and then we choose the action that meets our goal most effectively. Discernment, on the other hand, is about listening and responding to that place within us where our deepest desires align with God's desire. As discerning people, we sift through our impulses, motives, and options to discover which ones lead us closer to the divine...and which ones lead us further away.

Henri Nouwen on Discernment

Discernment reveals new priorities, directions, and gifts from God. We come to realize that what previously seemed so important for our lives loses its power over us. Our desire to be successful, well liked and influential becomes increasingly less important as we move closer to God's heart. To our surprise, we even may experience a strange inner freedom to follow a new call or direction as previous concerns move into the background of our consciousness. Most rewarding of all is the discovery that as we pray more...God's will is gradually made known to us.

Discernment



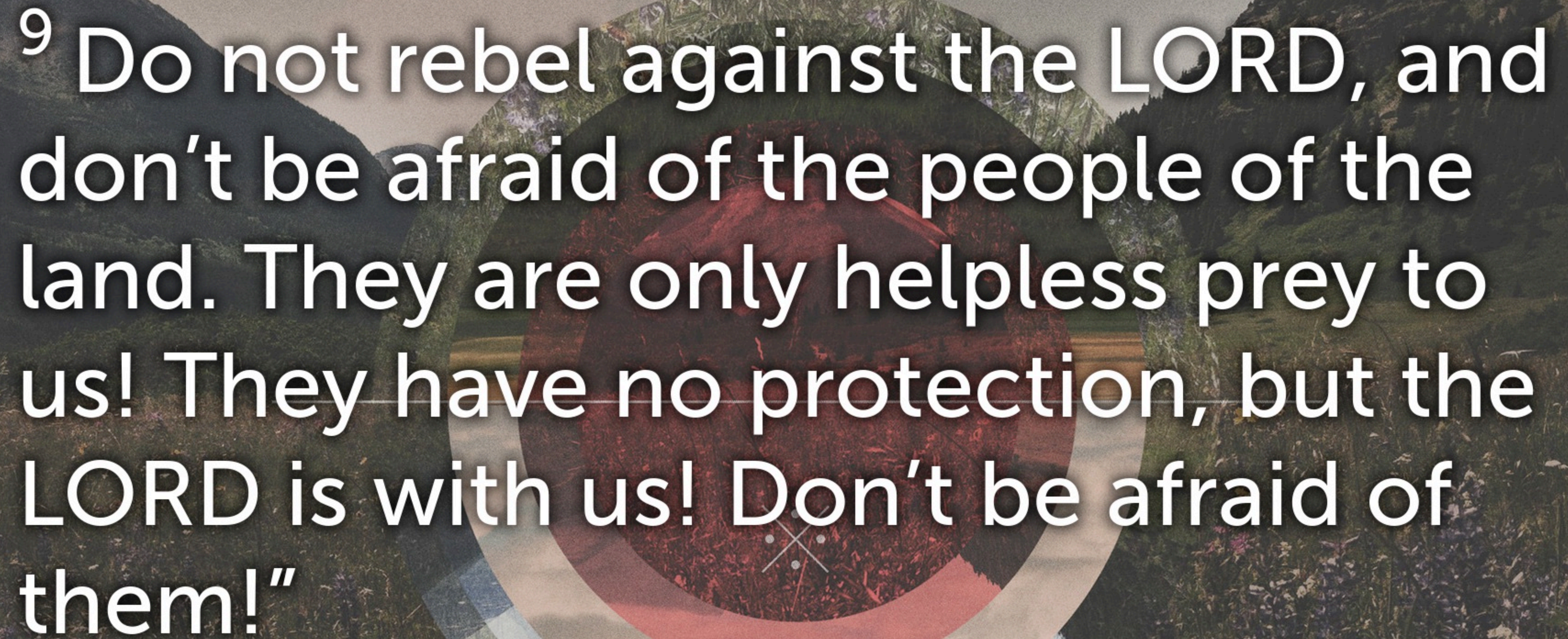


⁷ They said to all the people of Israel,
“The land we traveled through and
explored is a wonderful land!”

Numbers 14:7–9

⁸ And if the LORD is pleased with us, he will bring us safely into that land and give it to us. It is a rich land flowing with milk and honey.

Numbers 14:7–9



⁹ Do not rebel against the LORD, and don't be afraid of the people of the land. They are only helpless prey to us! They have no protection, but the LORD is with us! Don't be afraid of them!"

Numbers 14:7–9

Discernment



Seven Attitudes for Discernment by Ignatius

1. Openness:

Approach the decision in question with an open mind and an open heart. We cannot find God's will for us if we enter into the decision-making process with a pre-conceived outcome based on our self-will, biases, [or agendas].

Seven Attitudes for Discernment by Ignatius

2. Generosity:

To enter into a decision-making process with such openness requires a generous spirit with which we...put no conditions on what God might call us to. This is like writing God a signed "blank check."

Seven Attitudes for Discernment by Ignatius

3. *Courage*: Such openness and generosity require courage, for God might be asking something difficult, challenging, and risky of us. It takes courage to give up control and trustingly put the decision in God's hands while seeking God's will over our own, [because] there's no telling where God might be calling us...

Seven Attitudes for Discernment by Ignatius

4. Interior freedom

To make such a prayerful, generous, courageous decision requires interior freedom. The person's whole and deepest desire is to do whatever God's will is for them with no conditions attached.

Seven Attitudes for Discernment by Ignatius

5. *A habit of prayerful reflection on one's experience:*

How can we hear God's call if we're not listening? How can we listen, if we're not praying? To make a prayerful decision, we must first pray, putting aside a significant portion of time on a daily basis to quiet ourselves, put ourselves in God's presence, and listen to what God is saying to us.

Seven Attitudes for Discernment by Ignatius

6. Having one's priorities straight:

If serving God, our Creator and Lord, is the ultimate goal of our lives, then everything else in our lives must be kept in the subordinate position of a means to that end. This means that things such as opportunities, experiences, and relationships are to be valued and chosen only insofar as they contribute to our ultimate goal in life (which is to be Jesus) and rejected insofar as they deter us from that goal.

Seven Attitudes for Discernment by Ignatius

7. Not confusing ends with means:

"Many people, for example, choose marriage, which is a means... [or] choose to make a lot of money or to be successful, and only afterwards to be able to serve God by it...these people exhibit an attitude of putting God into second place, and they want God to come into their lives only after accommodating their own disordered and self-centered attachments...They mix up the order of an end and a means to that end. What they ought to seek first and above all else, they often put last."

Six Steps of Discernment by Ignatius

Step 1: Bring to mind the choice

“To place before my mind the object with regard to which I wish to make a choice.”

Six Steps of Discernment by Ignatius

Step 2: Pray for objectivity or indifference

"It is necessary to keep as my aim the end for which I am created, that is, the praise of God our Lord and the salvation of my soul...that I might be ready to follow whatever I perceive is more for the glory and praise of God."

Six Steps of Discernment by Ignatius

Step 3: Beg God to bring to mind what we should do

"I should beg God...to move my will, and to bring to my mind what I ought to do... that would be more for His praise and glory. Then I should use the understanding to weigh the matter with care..."

Six Steps of Discernment by Ignatius

**Step 4: List the advantages (pros)
and disadvantages (cons)**

Six Steps of Discernment by Ignatius

Step 4: List the advantages (pros) and disadvantages (cons)

Step 5: Come to a decision



Six Steps of Discernment by Ignatius

Step 6: Turn to God to confirm the decision (peace)

“After a choice or decision, one...must turn with great diligence to prayer in the presence of God...and offer Him the choice that [God may] accept and confirm it if it is for His greater service and praise.”

⁶ Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

Philippians 4:6–7

⁷ And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:6–7

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