

The Will Of God

THOUGHTS ON THE WILL OF GOD: First a disclaimer: This post is only a “snippet” of the truths about the profound topic of GOD’S WILL but hopefully will give you some general guidance. First, we must distinguish between the **HIDDEN (SECRET) WILL** of God and the **REVEALED WILL** of God. The **HIDDEN WILL** of God can only be known in retrospect (if even then) because the “secret things belong to the Lord” (Dt 29:29a+). Recall that Joseph did not understand the “hidden” will of God in His life until later when he looked back over the events of his life and the Spirit revealed to him that he could confidently say to his brothers “you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.” (Ge 50:20+) In this life, we may never know God’s hidden or secret will for our life, but we can be assured that God’s ultimate purpose for us as believers is good for He promises to cause all things to work together for good, using them to conform us progressively into the image of His Son (Ro 8:28-29+).

John Piper adds that **HIDDEN WILL** is when

God sovereignly decrees (“Will of Decree”) and designs circumstances so that we end up where He wants us to be even if we don’t have any conscious part in getting there. For example, Paul and Silas found themselves in jail, and the result was the salvation of the jailer and his household (Acts 16:24-34+)!

ROLE OF GOD’S WORD: God’s REVEALED WILL is most clearly revealed in the HIS WORD, which provides clear guidelines regarding moral and spiritual matters (E.g., 1Th 4:3+ = a holy walk, 1Th 5:18+ = a continual attitude of gratitude, 1Pe 2:15+ = good behavior, etc). Swindoll writes that “The better you get to know the WORD OF GOD, the less confusing is the WILL OF GOD. Those who struggle the least with the will of God are those who know the Word of God best.” It follows that the best way to know GOD’S REVEALED WILL is by diligently studying HIS REVEALED WORD (cf 2Ti 2:15+, 2Ti 3:16-17+, Ps 119:105+, Pr 3:5-6+). But we need to beware of the delusion that just reading His Word is sufficient to discern His will (cf Jas 1:22+). When we obey what we read we will be blessed in what we do (Jas 1:25+). In John 7:17+ Jesus explains that whoever is willing to do (obey) God’s will, will know whether His teaching is of God or merely His own. The first prerequisite to ascertaining God’s leading in some matter is a willingness to follow God’s will, even if the answer goes against our preference. Someone has well said that most people don’t really want to know the will of God in order to do it. They want to know it in order to consider it. Spurgeon emphasizes that “Our responsibility is to seek out and walk in the good old paths (“Will of God” - Jer 6:16+), even if it goes against our own wills.” And Alan Redpath warns us “Don’t expect God to reveal His will for you next week until you practice it for today.” And so “To understand the will of God is my problem; to undertake the will of God is my privilege; to undercut the will of God is my peril.” (Rees) In short, the best way to know God’s WILL is to say “I WILL” to God!

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS ON GOD’S WORD and GOD’S WILL: John Piper asks

Do you see the implications of saying that we discover GOD’S WILL from HIS WORD? It means that if you are really serious about wanting to do God’s WILL, you will become a meditative student of his WORD. I say MEDITATIVE because it’s not just memorized facts that we need. It is a knowledge of “trajectories.” And we get that by asking (Ed: asking questions of the Scripture we read = “Inductive Bible Study”...questions like) WHAT’S the point of this? WHERE does that lead to? WHY did he say this? WHERE is he heading here? WHAT does this imply? To ask those questions prayerfully is to MEDITATE. If you are not spending much time in MEDITATIVE STUDY OF GOD’S WORD, then probably doing God’s will on earth is not the passion of your life. And if you ever ask the question, “What is God’s will?” you probably get very confused...? Do you think that in this atmosphere you can maintain a vigorous, powerful, free, renewed mind with a ten-minute glance at God’s book once a day? The reason there are church people who are basically secular like everyone else except with a religious veneer is that they devote 99% of their time absorbing the trajectories of the world and 1% of their time absorbing the trajectories of the Word. If you want to bring forth the will of God in your life like a mother brings forth a child, you must “marry” the Bible. For some of you the Bible is a stranger that you greet on the way to work but never have over for a relaxed evening of conversation and seldom invite along to spend significant time with you on vacation. Then do not be surprised if you are ill-equipped to read the “trajectories” of God’s will for your own life. Summer is a time for experiments. May I suggest one? If you are discouraged and perplexed about God’s will in some area of your life, plan in the next couple weeks to find a quiet place totally alone, and read the Bible meditatively for four hours interspersed only by prayer. Here’s what will happen. For some of you the clouds of confusion will lift, and the trajectory of God’s will shall be perfectly clear. For others the precise decision won’t come that quickly, but you will experience a wonderful purifying and stabilizing of your mind (Ro 12:2+).

ROLE OF A RENEWED MIND: What about those situations where there is no obvious Bible passage clearly revealing God’s will? Piper notes that in fact “Most of the decisions we make are not spelled out specifically in the Bible.” He advocates an approach

based on Ro 12:2+ which says “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove (Greek means to test and approve) what the WILL OF GOD is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.” And so we seek to spend time with God in His Word and in prayer, not so much to discern His will, but primarily to allow the Spirit to RENEW OUR MINDS with the truth (cp 2Cor 3:18+, Jn 17:17+, Ep 4:23+, Col 3:10+). As our mind is renewed, we are better able to see things the way God sees and understands them. Then when we are faced with a choice, there is something in our renewed mind (1Co 2:16b+) which is able to discern “where Christ would be magnified, where faith would be built, and where people would be loved....The Spirit shapes the mind and heart through the WORD and PRAYER so that we have inclinations toward what would be most glorifying to Him (1Cor 10:31+)” (Piper). Piper goes on to emphasize that the “the prerequisite of divine guidance is NOT the quest for messages, but the quest for holiness. Guidance is the product NOT of ecstatic heights but of spiritual depth.” In other words, we can best discern God’s will when we seek first His kingdom (and Jesus the King), for then all these things (including God’s good and acceptable and perfect will) will be given to us (Mt 6:33+). The relationship with God must come first!

ROLE OF PRAYER: Jesus taught us to pray “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” (Mt 6:10+) And on the night before He was crucified and experiencing intense agony (being in the center of God’s will does not mean we are immune to suffering!) and selflessly prayed “yet NOT MY WILL but THINE be done.” (Lk 22:42+, cp Jn 4:34+). Watson agrees that “If we would do GOD’S WILL aright, let us labor for self-denial. Unless we deny OUR OWN WILL, we shall never do God’s will. His will and ours are like the wind and tide when they are contrary.” Indeed, Jesus could affirm “I always do the things that are pleasing (His Father’s will) to Him.” (Jn 8:29+) And so if any of us lacks wisdom as to what to do in a difficult situation, James instructs us to ask God, believing that He will generously give us wisdom (Jas 1:2-7+). We should also ask God that we might be **FILLED WITH** (controlled by) the knowledge of GOD’S WILL in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that we might walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.” (Col 1:9-10+) We can also pray as David did for God to teach us to do His will and to let His good Spirit lead us (Ps 143:10+).

ROLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT: Paul writes that believers should “not be foolish but understand (put the pieces of the puzzle together so to speak) what the will of the Lord is (indicating that not to understand God’s will is foolish, and also that God’s will while mysterious can be discerned).” (Eph 5:17+). And then what does Paul say? “Be filled with the Spirit.” (Eph 5:18+) Clearly when we are filled with (controlled by) the Spirit, we are more likely to “understand what the will of the Lord is” in a given situation or circumstance. Watson adds “If the lodestone draw the iron, it is not hard for the iron to move: if God’s Spirit enables you, it will not be hard, but rather delightful to do God’s will (Ps 40:8+).” However you still might be wondering “What about those nudges I sometimes get to do this or that?” Scripture says that the Spirit indwells us to guide (lead) us (Jn 16:13+, Ro 8:14+, Gal 5:18+, 1Cor 2:12-13+) and He may give us inner impressions. While subjective impressions can sometimes give guidance, we need to be cautious and should “minor” on this approach, and instead “major” on understanding general biblical principles that the Spirit can use to give our renewed mind a sense of whether something is the will of God (Ro 12:2+). **John Piper** has some helpful guidance in this more subjective area asking

as I face all the decisions of today, how will I have a spiritual “taste bud” so that I can taste what is the WILL OF GOD, what is good, acceptable and perfect? And the answer that the Bible gives is, “Get a transformed mind.” So we labor in the WORD and in PRAYER not just to figure out lists of deeds that are more or less acceptable, BUT we labor to get a MIND that thinks and feels about things the way Christ does. So that when a phone call comes in, or an opportunity to go somewhere arises, or we have to choose this or that, there is something about our minds that discerns where Christ would be magnified, where faith would be built, and where people would be loved.

Martin Luther adds the caution that

Feelings come and feelings go,
And feelings are deceiving;
My warrant (authority) is the Word of God--
Naught else is worth believing.”

Henrietta Mears the famous Bible teacher once said

A bird is free in the air. Place a bird in the water and he has lost his liberty. A fish is free in the water, but leave him on the sand and he perishes....The Christian is free when he does the WILL OF GOD and is obedient to God’s command. This is as natural a realm for God’s child as the water is for the fish, or the air for the bird.”

**True freedom is not in having your own way,
but in yielding to God’s way.**

STEP BY STEP

Finally, remember that that God seldom gives us the whole picture of His will for our life, but leads us one step at a time - The steps of a man are established by the LORD (Ps 37:23⁺).

One other thought about the sweet will of God which is good and acceptable and perfect (Ro 12:2) - The will of God will never lead you where the grace and power of God is not able to keep you.

Rich Mullins has a great song about the stepwise revelation of the will of God, and in his song he also addresses those times when God's will is difficult or we fail to obey -- "I may falter in my steps but never beyond Your reach."

Sing this song ([Sometimes by Step](#)) as your prayer to God...

Oh God You are My God
And I will ever praise You
And I will seek you in the morning
And I will learn to walk in Your ways
And **step by step** You'll lead me
And I will follow You all of my days.

ADDENDUM NOTES ON THE WILL OF GOD

The best way to study a subject often begins with a definition of that subject. What do we mean by the **will of God**? It is that holy and stated purpose of the Father to make His dear children as much like Christ as possible. Without doubt the most important factor in finding God's will is the Bible itself. God speaks to us not in some loud voice, but through the Scriptures.

- 1) The Scriptures declare He does have a definite will for my life. "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord" (Ps 37:23⁺ [Spurgeon](#)). "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go" (Ps 32:8⁺ [Spurgeon](#)). See also Eph 2:10⁺; Heb 12:1⁺.
- 2) God desires us to know this will for our lives. "Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is" (Ep 5:17⁺).
- 3) This will is continuous. It does not begin when I am thirty years of age. God has a will for children, young people, adults, and senior citizens. See Isa 58:11.
- 4) God's will is specific. "Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, 'This is the way, walk in it'" (Isa 30:21). "But the way of the upright is a highway" (Pr 15:19).
- 5) God's will is profitable (Jos 1:8⁺; Ps 1:1, 2, 3⁺).

What is the will of God for us? As we have already noted, it differs from believer to believer. But here are four aspects in the will of God which apply to every Christian:

It is His will that we learn more about God Col 1:9⁺

It is His will that we grow in grace 1 Th 4:3⁺

It is His will that we study His Word 2 Ti 3:14, 15, 16, 17-⁺

It is His will that we share our faith Acts 1:8; 1 Ti 2:4 2 Peter 3:9⁺

The Will of God Acts 21:1-14

Jack Arnold has a very helpful summary of **the will of God** in the context of this passage regarding God's will for Paul regarding going to Jerusalem.

- [Acts 21:1-14 The Will of God](#)

The Will of God Acts 21:1-14

After a person becomes a Christian, the next most important step is to ascertain the will of God for his life. The most vital question for a Christian is, "What is the will of God for my life?" The Christian is not only asked to know the will of God, but he is commanded to know the will of God for his life. "So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is (Eph. 5:17).

According to the Bible, there are at least four different forms of the will of God. Bible scholars have tried to give more than four categories, but these four essentially express all we need to know as Christians about the will of God.

The Secret Will of God

The secret will of God flows out of God's sovereignty and includes what He planned in eternity past, and this will (plan) most certainly will come to pass. The secret will is known only to God and not to man.

"Remember the former things long past, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things which have not been done, saying 'My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all My good pleasure'" (Isa. 46:9, 10).

"The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law" (Deut. 29:29).

It is important to know that God has a secret will for it gives the Christian confidence that God has a plan for this work and for each Christian individually.

The Revealed Will of God

The revealed will of God refers to the commands of Scripture. It deals with what God desires for the Christian to do and with what the Christian ought to do according to God's revelation in the Bible (Deut. 29:29). The revealed will is never done perfectly by the Christian but it is his ethical standard of conduct. Christians, for instance, are commanded to be holy in conduct (I Pet. 1:15, 16), to have a prayer life (I Thes. 5:17), to grow in grace and knowledge (II Pet. 3:18), to love one another (Jn. 13:34, 35), to witness for Christ in this world (Matt. 28:19) and to keep hundreds of other commands written in Scripture. If a Christian fails to keep the revealed will of God, then he must pay the consequences for his disobedience.

The Permissive Will of God

The permissive will of God is a theological way of explaining how nothing can happen outside of God's secret will, and yet God is not responsible for sin. Human sin falls under the permissive will of God. It is related to those responsible actions of men which God passively allows, and yet He still has control over them. The permissive will of God deals with the negative aspects of God's secret will.

The Directive Will of God

The directive will of God deals with those things God is actively and deliberately directing in His secret will. It is related to the positive aspects of the secret will of God. God's directive will deals with the guidance of the Christian so that he knows in his experience, at least in part, the outworking of the secret will of God.

What Is Involved in the Directive Will?

The directive will is getting divine leading and guidance in the Christian's life so he knows in his experience that he is in the center of God's will and being directed by God. Most, if not all, problems in the directive will of God can be placed into three categories: 1) Vocation: what do you want me to do in life? 2) Location: where do you want me to live geographically? 3) Situation: seeking divine guidance and knowing God's will for every situation.

How Is the Directive Will of God Determined?

Primary Methods. There are four primary methods for determining the directive will of God.

1. Bible. The Bible is the first and primary source for determining God's directive will. One must know the commands and principles of Scripture and apply these to one's experience. It is never the will of God to do anything if it is contrary to any

biblical command or principle (Col. 1:9).

2. **Prayer.** One must pray honestly for God's will over any matter, making it known to God that He is willing and ready to do anything God reveals to him. If a person is not open and honest before God in prayer, then he will never know the directive will of God.
3. **Fellowship.** It is important that a Christian be in fellowship with Christ at all times. Where we are and what we are to do are not nearly so important as what we are to God. He wants us to be constantly in fellowship with Christ at all times no matter what the circumstances may be.
4. **Common Sense.** A Christian must use all of his God-given natural faculties in studying all factors in finding the will of God. However, all reasoning must be directed by biblical principles and bathed in prayers, for the mind is still tainted by sin and the heart is deceitful and desperately wicked.
5. **Conviction.** Quite often the Holy Spirit gives a strong conviction which cannot be shaken. It is the still small voice of God speaking to the conscience that we are to do something for Him. The inner witness of the Spirit is a reality for every Christian in fellowship with his Lord.

Secondary Methods

1. **Circumstances.** God may lead by opening and closing doors (Col. 4:3). The Christian should pray, "If this is not your will, Lord, then shut every door, no matter what it may cost me personally."
2. **Counsel.** It is always wise to seek out the counsel of another Christian or Christians to talk over the matter (Prov. 15:22). The counsel may be rejected, but it is good to get wisdom from older, more mature Christians. The facts, or the clarification of facts, may come through a counselor, but the leading must come from the Lord. To reject the advice of a counselor is not always wrong, especially if a person has a strong conviction from the Lord that he is to do something.
3. **Peace.** If God is in some move, He will give a peace which passes all human understanding (Col. 3:15). A person should pray until he has divine peace. He may be afraid emotionally of the situation but may have peace that he is doing the right thing.

Knowing the will of God is what Acts 21:1-26 is all about. The Apostle Paul had to know the will of God for his life in the same way we have to know the will of God for our lives, and he struggled with and faced the same kind of problems about the will of God as we do. ([Acts 21:1-14 The Will of God](#))

Robert Morgan in a sermon on Psalm 23 has the following thoughts on discerning the Will of God

- Read his full message Psalm 23: The Cure for "Nerves"
- [Also read his sermon Six Ways to Know God's Will](#) - this message has a number of illustrations

His Plan For Life's Pathways

He also provides guidance, and leads us in paths of righteousness.

He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.

I believe that I can say that all my life I have sensed the Lord's unseen hand leading me, even when I wasn't following Him as closely I should. The other day someone told my daughter, "If only your dad had done this or that he would be here or there...." Frankly I was offended. My answer is, "I don't want to be here or there, and I don't need people second guessing my decisions in life. I just want to do God's will."

We have three sheep who live in our back yard, and the other day I was studying Ethel's eyes. They was dull and cloudy. I can't image how she can even see through them. Sheep don't have very good eyesight, and they can't see very far down the path. They need a shepherd to guide them, and so do we. Jesus said in John 10 that His sheep follow Him because they know His voice.

One of my favorite hymns says,

All the way my Savior leads me
What have I to ask beside?
Can I doubt His tender mercy
Who through life has been my guide?
Heavenly peace, divinest comfort,
Here by faith in Him to dwell;
For I know what'ere befall me,

Jesus doeth all things well.

I'm of the opinion that the Lord wants to lead us even in the smaller decisions of life. The Bible says,

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths." (Proverbs 3:5-6)

THE SIX C's OF DIVINE GUIDANCE

How can you find God's will for your life? Let me give you the six C's of Divine Guidance.

1. Commit your decision to the Lord in prayer.
2. Open the covers of the Bible and seek Scriptural direction. Even on totally secular decisions, there's something about Bible study that tends to point the way for us.
3. Seek the counsel of those who know more about the matter than you do. The Bible says, "In a multitude of counselors there is safety."
4. Fourth, what are the circumstances indicating?
5. And then, very often, an inner conviction will begin to develop. The Holy Spirit helps us instinctively know what to do.
6. Finally, contemplate the issue. Think it through. God gave each of us a brain, and He expects us to use it to arrive at a wise and sanctified decision.

In the process, His divine guidance extends over our lives, and we can say,

"He leadeth me in paths of righteousness. He leads me in the right paths." (Psalm 23 - The Cure for "Nerves")

In another sermon on only a single verse '**Psalm 23:3**' Robert Morgans amplifies a bit more on the "Six C's" first introducing with these thoughts...

Great Guidance Verses and Hymns

Let me give you some of my favorite Bible verses that reassure us that God has an individual plan for each of His children, and He has promised to guide us accordingly:

- Proverbs 3:5-6: Trust in the Lord with all your heart; and lean not unto your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.
- Psalm 37:23: The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord.
- Psalm 139:16: All the days ordained for me were written in Your book before one of them came to be.
- Isaiah 48:17: I am the Lord your God, who teaches you what is best for you, who directs you in the way you should go.
- Psalm 32:8: I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye.
- Psalm 48:14: For this is our God forever and ever; He will be our guide even to the end.
- Isaiah 58:11: The Lord will guide you always; He will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail.
- Psalm 73:24: You will guide me with Your counsel and afterward receive me into glory.
- And our text today, Psalm 23:3: You lead me in paths of righteousness for Your name's sake.

These verses have also inspired some of our great hymns. There is a category of hymn that means a lot to me. I call these hymns of guidance.

Savior, like a Shepherd lead me,
Much I need Thy tender care.

If Thou but suffer God to guide thee,
And trust in Him through all thy days,
He's give the strength what e'er betide thee,
And bear thee through the evil days.

He leadeth me, He leadeth me,
By His own hand He leadeth me.
His faithful follower I would be
For by His hand He leadeth me.

Guide me, O Thou Great Jehovah,
Pilgrim through this barren land.

In shady green pastures, so rich and so sweet,
God leads His dear children along.

Precious Lord, take my hand,
Lead me on, let me stand,
I am tired, I am weak, I am worn.....

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Six C's of Guidance

Try using six C's of Divine Guidance.

1. Commit your decision to the Lord in prayer.

Ask the Lord to lead you. Ask Him to have His way in your decision and in the direction of your life. Let me give you a sample prayer. Let's say you're trying to decide where to go to college. Try finding a special place and time to consciously and definitely give it to the Lord in prayer. Find a hillside, (as I did on one occasion), or walk along the seashore (as I did on another occasion), or kneel down by your bedside or wherever you are; and take as long as you can to talk to the Lord about your decision. Say, "Dear God, I believe that you have a plan for my life. I want to remind you of some verses that You have put in your Bible. I want to remind You of Psalm 23:3, and I want to claim that verse in this decision. You have promised to lead me in paths of righteousness. I want to remind you of Proverbs 3:5 and 6, and of Jeremiah 29:11. I believe that I want to go on to college, but I'm not sure where to go. Should I go to this school or that one? Here are my five best options, Lord, and I want to lay them before You. I'm going to lay these academic catalogues here on the bed or here on the ground. I'm going to spread them out before You. You know how much each school costs. You know every professor under whom I will sit. You know every friend whom I would make at each school. You know every influence that I would face. Lord, will You lead me and guide me? Will You show me what to do and grant me the decision to make the choice that most pleases You and that represents Your perfect will for my life? I am willing to go where You send and do what You say."

You may spend five minutes in this prayer or you may spend an hour or you may spend all night, as some people have done. Jesus spent all night in prayer before choosing and calling His disciples. But I recommend having a definite time of prayer, committing your big decisions to the Lord (and the little ones, too!). And then, periodically, pray for this decision on an on-going way. Pray as the Lord or as circumstances bring it mind. Jot the item down on your prayer list and pray over it daily.

2. Second, open the Covers of the Bible and seek Scriptural direction.

This doesn't mean we'll always have a specific verse telling us what to do; but in the process of fellowshiping in God's Word, He'll use Bible texts to give wisdom, and certain Scriptures will become helpful in the decision-making process. It's a little hard to explain, but it's wonderful to experience. As we meet with the Lord each day for regular Bible reading or as we spend special times in prayer and Bible study, very often there's some verse or Scripture that God gives us. It helps us know what to do. It reassures us of the way we should go.

I'll give you an example. One of my favorite writers is Dr. J. Oswald Sanders. As far as I'm concerned, you can read every book he ever wrote and find profit in every page. He was a lawyer in New Zealand who ended up becoming a great missionary statesman and a powerful worldwide Bible teacher. Several years ago, when he was a very old man, he wrote an article for Discipleship Journal about lessons he had learned along the way, and he spoke of the time when he was invited to become leader of a great missionary organization. At the time, he had spent twenty years at a Bible college in Auckland and he enjoyed his work very much. He had a number of other ministries for which he was responsible and all of it was fulfilling to him. And then came an invitation to become the general director for China Inland Mission.

It was the last thing in the world he wanted to do, for it was a time of crisis. Hundreds of missionaries had been withdrawn from China, and he knew that the work would be tremendously stressful. A mighty stream of workers was coming out of China and had to be relocated all over Free Asia, and he did not want the job. The board asked him unanimously to become the director, but he didn't want to do it.

Dr. Sanders talked to a friend of his, a confidant, a medical doctor. The man said, "I've got a passage of Scripture for you that I believe is from the Lord." The passage was 1 Peter 5:1-7. Dr. Sanders went to his room and picked up the Bible. That's when the Phillips translation had just come out, so he thought to himself, "I'll read it in Phillips." He turned to 1 Peter 5 and began reading in verse 1. It dealt with Christian leadership and verse 2 contained these words: "Accept the responsibility of looking after (the flock) willingly, and not because you feel you can't get out of it..." What could he say to that? He knew instantly that this was God's word to Him, that he was to accept this responsibility and care for the families of this missionary flock, and to do so willingly.[ii]

So very often as we prayerfully think through a decision, we'll find verses of Scripture that seem to speak to us. They aren't magical, and we can't distort or wrest them out of context. I don't know how to explain it except that God speaks to us in His Word; and very often in His Word we hear a word behind us saying, "This is the way; go ye in it."

3. Third, Seek the Counsel of those who know more about the matter than you do, for "in a multitude of counselors there is safety."

Ask people whom you respect and trust for their advice.

4. Fourth, see how the Circumstances are leading.

God often guides us through His providential leading. He opens and closes doors. He brings the right opportunities at the right times. He brings the right people into our lives or across our paths.

5. Fifth, very often, an inner Conviction will begin to develop.

The Holy Spirit helps us instinctively know what to do.

6. And finally, Contemplate the issue

Think it through. God gave each of us a brain, and He expects us to use it to arrive at a wise and sanctified decision. John Wesley once said, "God generally guides me by present reasons to my mind for acting in a certain way." In other words, our guidance often comes in an objective rather than a subjective way. We make a list of pros and cons, we think through the issue, and we prayerfully reach a logical decision inside these marvelous brains that God has given to us.

(Read the entire message which is about guidance - Psalm 23:3)

Father, I wait thy daily will;
Thou shalt divide my portion still;
Grant me on earth what seems thee best,
Till death and heaven reveal the rest.
Isaac Watts

Shall I, I pray Thee, change thy will my Father
Until it be according unto mine?
But no Lord, no, that never shall be, rather
I pray thee blend my human will with thine.
Amy Carmichael

May the mind of Christ my Saviour
Live in me from day to day,
By his love and power controlling
All I do and say.
Katie Barclay Wilkinson

Let God have your life; he can do more with it than you can. D. L. Moody

There are no disappointments to those whose wills are buried in the will of God. Frederick W. Faber

Make this simple rule the guide of your life: to have no will but God's. François Fenelon

If you don't surrender to Christ you surrender to chaos. E. Stanley Jones

It has always been my ambition to have no plans as regards myself. Robert Murray M'Cheyne

To bring our minds under Christ's yoke is not to deny our rationality but to submit to his revelation. John R. W. Stott

When all that you are is available to all that God is, then all that God is is available to all that you are. Ian Thomas

The awesome purchase price of the very life of the Son of God should be more than ample motivation to make every child of God eagerly want to yield back to the Lord the very freedom which his death bought. Charles Caldwell Ryrie

My times are in thy hand;
My God, I wish them there;
My life, my friends, my soul I leave
Entirely to thy care.
William Freeman Lloyd

Adrian Rogers on The Will of God - "For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is My brother, and My sister, and mother." - Mark 3:35 - [Major Ian Thomas](#), English author and founder of a worldwide missionary fellowship, once wrote, "Which of these things in the life of Jesus is more spiritual? When Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount? When He raised Lazarus from the dead? When He washed His disciples' feet? Or when He spat on the ground and made clay to anoint the blind man's eyes? None was more spiritual than the other. Jesus did not divide His life up into little segments of spirituality. He was simply available to do whatever His Father willed."

**The will of God is not a road map.
It is a relationship!**

You just simply set yourself apart to do the will of God. Are you segregating your life into activities that are more spiritual than others? Surrender **all** you are to Him and make yourself available for **whatever** He calls you to do today.

Rob Morgan on the Word of God and the Will of God - Recently while preaching on the subject of guidance, I said that the Lord guides us as we spend time between the covers of His book. That doesn't mean we always find a specific verse telling us specifically what to do. It means that as we fellowship with Him in the Scripture, very often certain verses will impart the necessary wisdom we need. Last night in my bedtime reading I came across an excellent explanation of this. Dr. V. Raymond Edman, in his little book, [He Leadeth Me](#), pointed out that we can never find a specific verse to guide us in a specific way when we're looking for it.

The Bible is not a kind of fetish or oracle into which we can glance for a word on guidance. The Lord may lead us by the first verse we read upon opening the Book, but not necessarily so at all. In fact, it is the common experience of devout and deeply-taught Christians that to seek a verse on guidance is never to find it. Rather, it is as we read and meditate upon the Word, perhaps in some relatively obscure portion thereof, that we are taught by the Holy Spirit and are led aright in the light thereof. [1. V. Raymond Edman, [He Leadeth Me](#) (Wheaton, IL: Scripture Press, 1959), 20]

Alan Redpath once quipped on Mt 6:10 "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done" - "Before we can pray, 'Thy kingdom come', we must be willing to pray, 'My kingdom go'."

Rob Morgan on the Word of God and the Will of God - Recently while preaching on the subject of guidance, I said that the Lord guides us as we spend time between the covers of His book. That doesn't mean we always find a specific verse telling us specifically what to do. It means that as we fellowship with Him in the Scripture, very often certain verses will impart the necessary wisdom we need. Last night in my bedtime reading I came across an excellent explanation of this. Dr. V. Raymond Edman, in his little book, [He Leadeth Me](#), pointed out that we can never find a specific verse to guide us in a specific way when we're looking for it.

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The Will of God - There is no doubt that God has often brought a certain verse to the attention of one of His children in an unusual and almost miraculous manner, for a special need, but the Word was never intended to be consulted in a superstitious manner. - [S.](#)

Robert Law on Mt 6:10 - Prayer is a mighty instrument, not for getting man's will done in heaven, but for getting God's will done on earth.

Andrew Murray - A readiness to believe every promise implicitly, to obey every command unhesitatingly, to stand perfect and complete in all the will of God, is the only true spirit of Bible study.

1 Peter 4:19 - Choose God's Will - To choose to suffer means that there is something wrong; to choose God's will even if it means suffering is a very different thing. No healthy saint ever chooses suffering; he chooses God's will, as Jesus did, whether it means suffering or not. Be merciful to God's reputation. It is easy to blacken God's character because God never answers back, He never vindicates Himself. Beware of the thought that Jesus needed sympathy in His earthly life; He refused sympathy from others because He knew far too wisely that no one on earth understood what He was going through. Notice God's 'waste' of saints, according to the judgment of the world. God plants His saints in some of the most useless places. We say, 'God intends me to be here because I am so useful.' Jesus never estimated His life along the line of the greatest use. God puts His saints where they will glorify Him most, and we are no judges at all of where that is. ([Bible.org](#))

AN ANCIENT CONFESSION: The Belgic Confession of Faith (1561):

Article 7: We believe that [the] Holy Scriptures fully contain the **will of God**, and that whatsoever man ought to believe unto salvation is sufficiently taught therein ... Neither do we consider of equal value any writings of men, however holy these men may have been, with those divine Scriptures nor ought we to consider custom or the great multitude, or antiquity, or succession of times and persons, or councils, decrees or statutes, as of equal value with the truth of God ... Therefore, we reject with all our hearts whatsoever doth not agree with this infallible rule which the apostles have taught us, saying, Try the spirits whether they are of God. Likewise, if there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house. ([Click](#) full confession)

Epaphras Passionate Prayer - Epaphras, who is one of your number, a bonds slave of Jesus Christ, sends you his greetings, always laboring earnestly for you in his prayers, that you may stand perfect and **fully assured in all the will of God**. (Col 4:12+) -

But what does this mean practically to be fully assured in all the will of God? Why was this one of Epaphras' goals in prayer for the Colossian saints?

Warren Wiersbe gives an excellent answer

"Full assurance in the will of God" is a tremendous blessing! It is not necessary for the believer to drift in life. He can know God's will and enjoy it. As he learns God's will and lives it, he matures in the faith and experiences God's fullness." (See [The Wiersbe Bible Commentary](#))

If Satan can make you ignorant of God's will, he will rob you of all the glorious blessings God has planned for your life. You will make bad decisions, get involved in sinful activities, and build the wrong kind of life. And, sad to say, you will influence others to go wrong! In my ministry of the Word in many places, I have seen the tragic consequences of lives out of the will of God. (See quote found in first 22 pages of Wiersbe's book [The Strategy of Satan: How to Detect and Defeat Him](#))

The great Puritan writer [Thomas Watson](#) listed the following principles to invoke in order to rightly discern God's will asking "How shall we do God's will aright?"

(1) Get sound knowledge. We must know his will before we can do it; knowledge is the eye to direct the foot of obedience. The Papists make ignorance the mother of devotion; but Christ makes ignorance the mother of error. 'Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures.' Mt. 22:29. We must know God's will before we can do it aright. Affection without knowledge, is like a horse full of mettle, but his eyes are out.

(2) If we would do God's will aright, let us labor for self denial. Unless we deny our own will, we shall never do God's will. His will and ours are like the wind and tide when they are contrary. He wills one thing, we will another; he calls us to be crucified to the world, by nature we love the world; he calls us to forgive our enemies, by nature we bear malice in our hearts. His will and ours are contrary, and till we can cross our own

will, we shall never fulfil his.

(3) Let us get humble hearts. Pride is the spring of disobedience. 'Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice?' Ex 5:2. A proud man thinks it below him to stoop to God's will. Be humble. The humble son says, Lord what will you have me to do?' He puts, as it were, a blank paper into God hand; and bids him write what he will, and he will subscribe to it.

(4) Beg grace and strength of God to do his will. 'Teach me to do thy will:' as if David had said, Lord, I need not be taught to do my own will, I can do it fast enough, but teach me to do thy will. Psalm 143:10 ([Spurgeon](#)). And that which may add wings to prayer, is God's gracious promise, 'I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes.' Ezekiel 36:27. If the lodestone draw the iron, it is not hard for the iron to move: if God's Spirit enable, it will not be hard, but rather delightful to do God's will.

John Piper writes that "**Thy will be done**" in Mt 6:10 - On the personal level that must mean, "Father, please cause me to obey your will the way the angels obey it in heaven. ([Psalm 103:21](#), "Bless the Lord, all his hosts, his ministers that do his will!") Help me to do your will flawlessly and to do it with the same fervency and undivided devotion that they have. Make my obedience a heavenly obedience." But on the worldwide level the meaning is far greater. In heaven there is nothing but obedience to the will of God. So when we pray, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," we are praying that the earth would be filled only with people who do the will of God the way the angels do it in heaven. In other words we are praying for the kingdom to come. We are praying that the earth be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea ([Hab. 2:14](#)). We are praying that the cause of world missions would so prosper in our day that all the ransomed from every tribe and tongue and people and nation would be reached and gathered in, and the King would come. For whom are we praying when we pray, "Hallowed by thy name"? For the unreached peoples of the earth and for ourselves that God would use us to reach them. ([Matthew 6:5-15: Hallowed Be Thy Name](#))

Romans 12:1-5 Knowing God's Will - Here is an excerpt from Brian Bill's message...

An older lady came out on her porch every morning, and would raise her arms to the sky and shout, "Praise the Lord." One day an atheist moved next door and over time he became very irritated with this worshipping woman. So every morning after he heard her exclamation of praise, he would shout out, "There is no Lord!" This went on for several months, then one morning in the middle of winter the lady stepped onto her front porch and shouted, "Praise the Lord! Lord, please reveal your will to me because I have no food and I'm starving. Please provide for me, O Lord!" The next morning, when she came out on her porch there were two huge bags of groceries sitting there. "Praise the Lord!" she cried out. "He has provided groceries for me!" Just then the atheist jumped out of the bushes and shouted, "There is no Lord. I bought those groceries!" Without skipping a beat, the lady threw her arms in the air and shouted, "Praise the Lord! He has provided me with groceries and He made the devil pay for them!"

We've all asked questions like these at one time or another: How can I know God's will? Is He really interested in me as an individual? Is there a master plan for my life? We're beginning a six-part series that we're calling "Living Life on Purpose" and our topic today is "Knowing God's Will" from Romans 12. One of my classmates from my Bible College days posted something on Facebook this week that caught my attention: "If I could give a Christian only one chapter to live by it would be Romans 12."

Please turn in your Bibles to the twelfth chapter of Romans where I want us to notice the very first word in verse 1: "**Therefore....**" Whenever you see the word "therefore" in the Bible you should always ask what it's there for. When we come to this chapter, Paul is making a shift from doctrine to duty, from creed to conduct, from principles to practice, and from beliefs to behavior. We must not only know, we must grow and instead of just filling our heads, God's Word must also affect our attitudes and actions. It's as if he's saying, "Based on everything that I've just said, this is what you now need to put into practice."

I love what Martin Luther said about this book that literally changed his life and became the rallying cry for the Reformation:

Romans is the chief part of the New Testament, and the very purest gospel, which, indeed, deserves that a Christian not only know it word for word by heart but deal with it daily as with daily bread of the soul. For it can never be read or considered too much or too well, and the more it is handled, the more delightful it becomes, and the better it tastes." (Click for Pastor Bill's full sermon on Knowing God's Will)

The Will of God
by Robert Neighbour
(from "Sermons and Bible Studies")

[Epaphras](#) was a man who prayed. He did not pray as men usually pray, loungingly and lazily and leisurely. The Bible says he

labored fervently in prayer (Col 4:12+). It is said that [David Brainerd](#), who wrought so faithfully among the Indians of this country, years ago, was accustomed to pray out in the snow, in such an agony of petition, that great drops of sweat stood upon his brow. We need to pray as Epaphras prayed, and as Brainerd prayed. It is to be noted also, that Epaphras prayed always, continuously. Prayer, to this man of God, was not a mountain peak here and another mountain peak far away, with a valley of prayerlessness lying between. He prayed without ceasing (cp 1 Thess 5:17+). Again, we notice that Epaphras was definite in his prayers: He prayed, laboring fervently; He prayed that the saints at Colosse might stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. (Col 4:12+) The theme of the prayer of Epaphras is the theme of our study. We trust that a great blessing will be received as we study together the supreme passion of the heart of the man whose chief asset was his prayer life.

The Will of God Our Chief Aim

"And Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (1Sa 15:22).

**There is nothing more important for a Christian,
than to find out the will of God in his life.
To seek the will of God is certainly a holy ambition.**

Jesus Christ said, "Lo, I come: in the volume of the Book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will". (Hebrews 10:7) We, too, should delight in His will. Christ said, "Mine ears hast Thou opened", or "bored". (Ps 40:6KJV) The words suggest that Jesus Christ was the yielded bond slave of the Father. We too should be His [bond slaves](#).

Does it seem too much to us, that God has a plan for every life? A definite purpose? A revealed will?

Does not the architect present to the builders a plan? Must not the building be erected according to specifications?

God has a distinct purpose for every life: because He says: "To every man his work". (Mark 13:34KJV) The believer should constantly seek to know that purpose, and to fulfill it. To miss God's plan will be fatal to ourselves, and it will be fatal to all with whom we have to do.

Illustration: Recently, in crossing Lake Michigan, at night, we stood at the prow of the ship, looking over the dark waters; we knew not the direction in which we were going. There was no star visible, to give us aid. The night was cold, and dark; yet, we had no fear, for just above us, and behind, was one who held his hand upon the wheel. We knew he would bring us safe to port.

And God knows; He leads the way; He holds our hand; He has everything afore prepared. The steps of a good man are ordered of the Lord. He will guide us with his eye.

Illustration: It is said that when the Brooklyn bridge was building, the architect received an injury which laid him up for many months.

From his bed he gave instructions to the builders. Finally, when the work was completed, he was carried out on a cot, to view the bridge. After he had examined it in every detail, his eye lighted up with gladness, and, clapping his hands, he cried, "It is just according to the plan."

We too, should be able, when our life's task is completed, to say, "**We have finished the work which He gave us to do; it is just according to His plan.**"

"Thy will, O Lord, not mine, teach me to say;
Not my will, Lord, but Thine, I would obey;
Then shall I know the joy,
And Thy Name glorify,
When I, on earth, shall try to follow Thee.

"My weakness, Lord, I own, from day to day;
I listen for Thy voice to lead the way;
Oh, wilt Thou send the light
To make my pathway bright,
And show me what is right, the only way.

"I cannot see just where the Spirit leads,
But know that Christ is there, who intercedes;
Oh, help me now to rest
On Jesus' loving breast,

Till He shall manifest His love in me!"

Standing in the Will of God

"Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all Truth" (John 16:13).

In order to stand in the will of God, we must first lay down all plans of our own.

Illustration: It is said that once the Emperor William of Germany, rushed upon the captain aboard his own imperial ship and commanded full speed ahead. The captain was going at half speed because of dangerous shoals. Full speed would endanger the safety of all aboard. The captain therefore refused his Emperor's demands. The Emperor, in irritation, rang the bell, giving orders to the engineer below for full speed. Immediately, the captain reversed the Emperor's orders and demanded that he be left alone in the running of the boat. The captain in reality was only refusing to run the risk of the life of his Emperor. He fully expected to be dismissed when shore was reached. Instead, he was commended and promoted.

Whether this is true, I do not know, but one thing I know,—**we must keep our hands off the wheel.** It is not ours to choose the path which we must follow. We must walk in the way of His choosing.

It is not in a man to direct his steps (Jer 10:23). We do not know what the future holds, nor do we know the enemies which may lurk in ambush,—but God knows it all. He knows and He cares, and we should stand in the will of God.

"One step I see before me,
'Tis all I need to know;
For o'er each step of my onward way,
He makes new light to glow."

Standing Perfect in the Will of God

"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Rom. 12:2+).

There are two ways in which we might speak of this word 'perfect.'

1. We want to stand in His perfect will. The Bible speaks of "the good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Ro 12:2+). What we want is God's very best—His perfect will.

Jesus prayed "nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt". (Mt 26:39) Are we willing to go anywhere, to be anything, to pay any price, to get God's best in our life? So many are satisfied with His second choice. They want to be blessed, but they do not want the full blessing.

2. We want to stand perfectly and not half-heartedly in His will. We do not want to stand complainingly in His will. We want to say "Amen," that is, "the will of God be done." We also want to say, "Hallelujah," that is, "I am glad that the will of God is done."

In walking through life, when we put down one foot, let us always say "**Amen**," and when we put down the other foot, let us say "**Hallelujah**," and thus it will be "**Amen, Hallelujah**," all the time.

"O Blessed life! the heart at rest,
When all without tumultuous seems
That trusts a higher will, and deems
That higher will, not mine, the best.

"O blessed life! heart, mind, and soul,
From self-born aims and wishes free;
In all, at one with Deity,
And loyal to the Lord's control.

"O life! how blessed, how Divine!
High life, the earnest of a higher!
Saviour, fulfil my deep desire,
And let this blessed life be mine."

Standing Complete in the Will of God

"He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me" (John 14:21).

We should hold nothing back from God. We should have no reserve, no dread, no fear in following our Lord fully.

No matter where God leads, we must be willing to go.

If He tears up our nest, we will trust and not be afraid.

If He leads us into the place of quietude, where our life is not as loud as we might have planned; if He leads us into the place of suffering, where our life might not be as long as we had planned; if He leads us into the place of smaller things, where our life might not be as large as we had planned; still, let us rejoice and stand complete in His will.

It is only the life that does the will of God that abides forever.

It is only the life that works in Him down here that will receive His "well done" up there.

Who will go all the way with God?

"Jesus, I my cross have taken,
All to leave and follow Thee;
Naken, poor, despised, forsaken,
Thou, from hence, my all shalt be.

"Perish every fond ambition,
All I've sought, or hoped, or known,
Yet how rich is my condition!
God and Heaven are still my own."

Standing in All the Will of God

"I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do" (John 17:4).

Certainly our Lord is the only one who has ever stood perfect and complete in all the will of God. Christ never once deviated from the Father's perfect plan. Therefore as He stood that day in the upper room with the Cross just ahead, and His earth life about completed, He could say, "I have finished the work". There was no task left uncompleted.

May our great aim be all of God's will. To miss the mark in one small item may bring disaster and dismay.

Let us go all the way with God. No tryst left unkept; no duty left undone.

There are three stages of experience with some—

1. There was the time when, in our sin, we had no room or place for God at all—It is thus expressed by the song:

"Oh the bitter pain and sorrow,
That the time could ever be,
When I proudly said to Jesus,
'All of self and none of Thee.'"

2. There came a time of conviction. We saw ourselves as lost, and we saw Christ as a Saviour, and yet we would not give up all and follow fully, and then we said:

"Yet He found me; I beheld Him
Bleeding on the accursed tree:
Heard Him pray: 'Forgive them, Father!'
And my wistful heart said faintly,
'Some of self, and some of Thee!'"

3. There came a time, soon after, when we opened our hearts and received Christ, and then we sang:

"Higher than the highest Heaven,
Deeper than the deepest sea,
Lord, Thy love at last hath conquered;
Grant me now my supplication—
'None of self, and ALL of Thee!'"

Now since we are saved may it always be, "all of Thee." We must earnestly seek to stand "perfect and complete in all the Will of God."

Doing God's Will by Robert Neighbour - "Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in Heaven" (Matt. 7:21+).

1. It is the will of God to save us out of this present evil age (Gal. 1:4). God wants us to be a people separate unto Him.
2. It is the will of God that we should be sanctified, for "this is the will of God, even your sanctification" (1Thess. 4:3).

God wants His children to be clean and free from stain. God wants His children to be yielded, separated unto Him; dedicated unto His service.

3. It is the will of God that we should give thanks in everything (1Thess. 5:18-). God wants us to praise Him for our disappointments, and to spell disappointment with a capital "H" instead of a little "d."
 4. It is the will of God that we should be placed as sons (Eph. 1:5+). This is the will that looks on into the future. We are His sons by birth; we shall receive our blessing and our inheritance, by and by. This is the will of God.
 5. It is the will of God that we should be with Christ where He is (John 17:24).
- Certainly in all these things, every true believer desires to stand perfect and complete.

"Through me, Thou gentle Master,
Thy purposes fulfill
I yield myself for ever
To Thy most holy will.
What though I be but weakness,
My strength is not in me;
The poorest of Thy people
Has all things, having Thee."

How May We Ascertain God's Will?

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Rom. 12:1, 2).

1. We must know His Word. David said, "Thy Word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee". He also said, "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path". To stand perfect and complete in the will of God, we should never do anything contrary to His Word. We should seek to know what the Word says on every salient point.
2. We should not be conformed to this world. If we are to know the will of God, we must keep our ears closed to the calls of the world.
The words and thoughts of the world are as far from the words and thoughts of God, as the heavens are far above the earth, as the east is far from the west. If we would know His will, we must "be not conformed" to the world, but transformed by the renewing of our mind.
3. If we are to know the will of God, we must be taught by His Spirit. Jesus Christ was led of the Spirit, and we, too, may be led of the Spirit. We will know His leadings, by the still, small, inaudible voice within. We will also be assured that we have the leadings of the Spirit, when, in the performance of His will, we have rest of mind and are established in our hearts.
4. If we should know the will of God, we must pray as Epaphras prayed. Habakkuk 2:1 says: "I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what He will say unto me". We will never know the will of God in those things not specifically set forth in the Bible, unless we labor in prayer.
5. If we should know the will of God, we must weigh every "open door" in the light of what has just been said. It is true that many doors may open which are not of God. Jonah found a ship going to Tarshish, as he supposed, but in reality, it led him to a whale's belly. We must be careful to know that the open door is in the line of duty and not in the pattern of disobedience.
6. If we would know the will of God, we must be quick to obey when He speaks. Hosea 6:3: "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord". The man who hears God's commission, and delays obedience, will be in danger of getting into the midst of doubts. It is when we do His will, not when we discuss it; that we know of the doctrine (John 7:17).

When God spoke, Abraham obeyed.
When God spoke, Philip arose and went into the way to Gaza, which was desert.
When God spoke, Paul immediately obeyed. He was not disobedient to the Heavenly vision.
If we would know His will, we must pursue promptly each command He gives.

Wayne Barber - Generically, the **will of the Lord** is that we be strengthened in the inner man by the Spirit of God (Eph 3:16+), that we obey Him, that we depend completely on Him, that we be surrendered in our attitude towards Him. Specifically because of that fear of God (cp 2Cor 7:1⁺), God will give us wisdom in the specific areas of our life (Pr 1:7^{note from William Arnot}, Pr 9:10).

Charles Hodge - The **will of the Lord** is the will of Christ. That **Lord** here means Christ is plain not only from the general use of the New Testament, so often referred to, but also from the constant use of the word in this chapter as a designation of the Redeemer. Here again, therefore, the divinity of Christ is seen to be a practical doctrine, entering into the daily religious life of the believer. His will is the rule of truth and duty. ([Ephesians 5:17-18 Commentary](#))

Six Ways To Know God's Will
(Psalm 48:14; Psalm 73:24; Psalm 23:3)
by Rob Morgan, August 29, 1999

This is the last Sunday of August; we're almost in September and almost in the fall of the year. The children are back in school, the days are getting shorter, and the heat is beginning to subside a little. Soon we'll be able to look into the sky and see the ducks and the geese flying south. These larger birds migrate by day, but I recently read an article saying that many of the smaller songbirds, migrating to the south, travel mainly in at night. The article said that during the autumn months as we sleep peacefully in our beds, millions of songbirds quietly travel over our heads under cover of darkness, heading south for warmer climates.

Take Baltimore Orioles, for example (the birds, not the baseball players). Every fall, they pack their bags, close up their nests, leaving the key under the mat, and like head south like senior citizens. How do they know when to begin their trip? Apparently the weather patterns tell the birds when to move. One expert wrote: "As cold fronts pass over eastern North America, clear skies and north winds usually follow, sending waves of Orioles, warblers and other songbirds on their way to wintering grounds in Mexico and Latin America. These conditions are ideal for migration, allowing the birds to travel with little risk of storms, with the wind at their backs, and with a clear view of the stars to help them find their way."

These little birds fly over houses and highways, over shopping malls and parking lots, over city and country, passing state after state. If a particular Oriole opts for a direct flight home, it will fly over the Gulf of Mexico in a single night, crossing 600 miles of open water. The entire trip from Baltimore or Washington or New York to Mexico, Panama, or Costa Rica takes about two weeks. But the Oriole knows exactly where it is going. God planted within its little brain a perfect guidance system that tells it exactly where to go, and when, and how, and it returns to exactly the right spot. Not even our most advanced technologies, not even our military, has guidance systems so well developed as those in the tiny brains of the smallest migratory birds.

The Bible says that we are even more valuable to the Lord than the birds of the air. We are worth more than many sparrows. If the Lord is pleased to guide the birds in their migrations, it's a safe bet that He also wants to guide our lives.

One of the most comforting truths I've ever discovered is that...

He leadeth me, O blessed thought!
O words with heavenly comfort fraught!
Whate'er I do, where'er I be,
Still 'tis God's hand that leadeth me.

Refrain

He leadeth me, He leadeth me,
By His own hand He leadeth me;
His faithful follower I would be,
For by His hand He leadeth me.

Sometimes mid scenes of deepest gloom,
Sometimes where Eden's bowers bloom,
By waters still, over troubled sea,
Still 'tis His hand that leadeth me.

Refrain

Lord, I would place my hand in Thine,
Nor ever murmur nor repine;
Content, whatever lot I see,
Since 'tis my God that leadeth me.

Refrain

And when my task on earth is done,
When by Thy grace the vict'ry's won,
E'en death's cold wave I will not flee,
Since God through Jordan leadeth me.

Refrain

[\(Play and yield to the words of this hymn to Him\)](#)

(**Editorial Addition** - Here are the words of [Joseph Gilmore](#) that describe what led him to write this great hymn - "As a young man who recently had been graduated from Brown University and Newton Theological Institution, I was supplying for a couple of Sundays the pulpit of the First Baptist Church in Philadelphia [Pennsylvania]. At the mid-week service, on the 26th of March, 1862, I set out to give the people an exposition of the Twenty-third Psalm, which I had given before on three or four occasions, but this time I did not get further than the words "**He Leadeth Me.**" Those words took hold of me as they had never done before, and I saw them in a significance and wondrous beauty of which I had never dreamed. It was the darkest hour of the Civil War. I did not refer to that fact—that is, I don't think I did—but it may subconsciously have led me to realize that God's leadership is the one significant fact in human experience, that it makes no difference how we are led, or whither we are led, so long as we are sure God is leading us. At the close of the meeting a few of us in the parlor of my host, good Deacon Wattson, kept on talking about the thought which I had emphasized; and then and there, on a blank page of the brief from which I had intended to speak, I penciled the hymn, talking and writing at the same time, then handed it to my wife and thought no more about it. She sent it to The Watchman and Reflector, a paper published in Boston, where it was first printed. I did not know until 1865 that my hymn had been set to music by William B. Bradbury. I went to Rochester [New York] to preach as a candidate before the Second Baptist Church. Going into their chapel on arrival in the city, I picked up a hymnal to see what they were singing, and opened it at my own hymn, "He Leadeth Me.")

This morning I'd like to show you three of my favorite verses on the subject of divine guidance, all of them occurring in the Psalms, and then share with you six ways we can discover God's will for our lives. The verses are from Psalms 48, 73, and 23:

For this God is our God for ever and ever; He will be our Guide even to the end. - Psalm 48:14

You will guide me with Your counsel, and afterward You will take me into glory - Psalm 73:24

He leadeth me... - Psalm 23:3KJV

But how does He lead us? What are the means by which He guides us? Some of you may be trying to make a decision about whether to remain in Nashville or relocate. Some of you might be trying to decide whether to purchase a new car or not. Some of you might have decisions to make relating to work or school. How do we find God's will in these matters?

My favorite illustration about guidance comes from the writings of the Bible teacher [F. B. Meyer](#), a British preacher who was one of evangelist [D. L. Moody's](#) closest associates and who died in 1924. One night in his travels, Meyer was standing on the deck of a ship approaching land. He wondered how the crew knew when and how to safely steer to the dock, for it was a stormy night, and visibility was low. Meyer, standing on the bridge and peering through the window, asked "Captain, how do you know when to turn this ship into that narrow harbor?" "That's an art," replied the captain. "Do you see those three red lights on the shore? When they're all in a straight line I go right in!" Later Meyer said: When we want to know God's will, there are three things which always occur: the inward impulse, the Word of God, and the trend of circumstances.... Never act until these three things agree.

Well, I'd like to suggest that in determining God's will for your life, there are six lights that should align, they should all line up and fall into place, and those six lights give us powerful indications of God's will for our lives.

(1) Willingness

The first is willing in our hearts to do the will of God. I believe that God's will is something he reveals to his children, to those who come to him through Jesus Christ, and who are submissive. Psalm 25:9 says: The meek will he guide in judgment; and the meek he will teach his way. The word "meek" means humble, willing, submissive to God. We cannot come to God and say, "Lord, tell me what you want me to do with my life and if I like it I'll do it." We come instead saying, "Lord, I'm willing to follow your plans for my life, whatever they are. Please lead me into them."

Jeremiah 29:11 says, For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future.

[Arthur T. Pierson](#), Charles Spurgeon's successor in London, once said: To go as I am led, to go when I am led, to go where I am

led... it is that which has been for twenty years the one prayer of my life--A. T. Pierson

Proverbs 3:5-6 put it like this: Trust in the Lord with all you heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct your paths.

(2) Word of God & Prayer

Second, we come to know the will of God for our lives as we study the Word of God and pray. Now the word of God shows us the will of God for our lives in two ways. First, its very teachings constitute the will of God for our lives. We know God's will in moral and spiritual matters because his word reveals it to us clearly. Suppose a young man comes to me who is dating a non-Christian woman, and he is trying to decide whether or not it is God's will for him to propose. Well, the Bible says, "Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers." The Bible says, "Come out from among them and be ye separate, says the Lord." (2Cor 6:17, cp Isa 52:11) His Word reveals his will in that matter.

But there is a second way in which the Word of God aids us in discovering God's will. As we study it and as we memorize it, the Holy Spirit is able to bring specific verses to mind at just the time we need them.

Recently I came across two separate stories that can illustrate how this works. When [Charles Haddon Spurgeon](#), the Prince of Preachers who ministered in the south of London a hundred years ago, was a young man, eighteen years old, he was seeking God's will for his life. He felt that the need for theological training. He needed to be in Bible College, and his friends and his father told him that, by all means, he needed biblical training. So he so made application to Regent's Park College, and an interview was set between the head of the college and young Spurgeon. The meeting was to be in Cambridge at the home of Mr. Macmillan, the publisher. Spurgeon rose early that morning and had special prayer, seeking God's guidance in the matter. And at just the appointed time, he showed at Mr. Macmillan's house. He rang the bell, and a servant showed him into the parlor. There he sat for two hours until at last his patience could stand it no longer. He called for the servant and was horrified to discover that she had forgotten to announce his arrival, had not let anyone know he was there, had forgotten all about him.

Meanwhile the head of the college had sat waiting in an adjoining room until his patience, too, had been exhausted, and he had left Cambridge for London by train without the interview ever having taken place.

Spurgeon was deeply disappointed and disturbed, and his first impulse was to run after the man, to chase him to London, to explain what had happened. But he took a long walk out in the country to calm down, and as he walked along a verse of Scripture came to his mind so forcibly that he almost seemed to hear it audibly. He later said that it could not have been any clearer if Christ Himself had appeared to speak it aloud, so strong did this verse suddenly hit his mind. It was Jeremiah 45:5: "Seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not!"

The Lord seemed to be telling him not to worry about the misunderstanding and not to make extraordinary efforts to clear it up. As a result, Spurgeon never did make it to college, but it didn't matter. He became the most powerful and successful and fruitful minister in the history of Victorian England, and he later said that he "a thousand times thanked the Lord very heartily for the strange providence which forced his steps into another and far better path."

The other story involves one of my favorite authors, [J. Oswald Sanders](#), the missionary statesman who for many years was the director of [Overseas Missionary Fellowship](#). Sanders once wrote about a time when he wanted a particular position in the Christian world very much. Having friends in positions of influence, he was about to see if some strings could be pulled to turn the job in his direction. He was toying with the idea of doing a little lobbying. But while walking down the main street in Auckland, New Zealand one day, turning the matter over in his mind, as he walked past His Majesty's Theatre, a verse of Scripture came to his mind with tremendous authority and powerful conviction: "Seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not!" (Jeremiah 45:5). "The words came just as though it was God speaking. There were crowds all around me, and no one else heard the voice, but I heard it all right!" Sanders later said. "I believe that was a real turning point in my service to the Lord." As a result, he did not seek the position, but it later opened to him on its own in God's good timing.

Many times as we diligently study the Bible, the Lord uses specific verses to help us glimpse what his will is for us in specific matters. (**See Related Article - Illumination of the Bible**)

(3) Inward Impulse

The third means of guidance is what I'd like to call the inward impulse or inward impression or inward conviction that the Holy Spirit often gives us as we seek his will. I remember clearly how the Lord guided me to Columbia International University. I was a freshman at King College in Bristol, Tennessee, but really not very happy attending there. One night I was sitting up in bed reading the CIU academic catalogue that someone had given me. I suddenly had a very strong and unmistakable impression that I should

attend Columbia International University in Columbia, South Carolina. God has never spoken to me audibly, but he came close to it that night; and I have never doubted that decision.

A few years later I was pastoring a lovely little church in the rural area near Greeneville, Tennessee, but growing restless, for I was young and ambitious and I wanted to be where I could make a greater difference. A church in Chicago called, asking me to pastor. I was very excited, ready to go; but for some reason I stalled for time, asking for a week to think it over. We went to the beach, and I spent a great deal of time walking along the ocean, praying, and asking the Lord to show me what to do. Somehow I never had an inward peace about accepting that opportunity, so from vacation I called and turned down the offer. I couldn't explain why, because it seemed like the ideal spot for us. But I turned it down, and within forty-eight hours this church got in touch with me.

The Bible says, "Thine ear will hear a word behind thee saying, 'This is the way, walk ye in it,' when ye turn to the right hand or to the left." (Isaiah 30:21)(**Ed note:** Cp acknowledgement of this truth by Abraham's servant when sent to procure a wife [Rebekah] for Isaac - Ge 24:12, 27) And I think that when we seek to remain close to the Lord, His Holy Spirit often gives us a sense of peace about matters involving his will.

(4) Counsel of Others

The fourth means of guidance is seeking counsel from others. Go to Christian people, mature friends, family members, people you trust, and ask them their opinion about your decision. Proverbs 11:14, "With a multitude of counselors there is victory." ([Read Charles Bridges' note](#)) Proverbs 15:22 says: "Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed." ([Read Charles Bridges' note](#))

(5) Trend of Circumstances

Fifth, the trend of circumstances. God often reveals his will by providentially arranging the circumstances of life. When you study the book of Acts, we discover that God sometimes led Paul the apostle by means of open and closed doors. In Acts 16, for example, Paul wanted to go into Asia and evangelize the Orient, but the doors wouldn't open for him (**Ed:** by the "Spirit of Jesus!" - Acts 16:7). He couldn't get through the borders. But the doors into Europe opened virtually by themselves (**Ed:** Virtually and "visually" = Acts 16:9, 10), and Paul concluded that God wanted him to take the Gospel westward.

(6) Using Our Minds

Finally, I believe the Lord guides us by our own sanctified thought processes. We take all the factors mentioned above, and we mull them over, thinking things through.

The Bible says, "The mind of man plans his way, and the Lord directs his steps." (Proverbs 16:9[read William Arnot's writing on this verse](#))

[John Wesley](#) said, "God generally guides me by presenting reasons to my mind for acting in a certain way."

[J. Oswald Sanders](#) said, "God generally guides us by the exercise of our own sanctified judgment."

We consider all the factors mentioned above, then prayerfully make the best decision we can. And that decision almost always represents the will of God for our lives. And if somehow we do manage to make the wrong decision, if we are humble and prayerful and patient, the Lord has his own ways of getting us back on track.

In 18th century Wales, a young man named [William Williams](#) graduated from the university as a physician, but quickly changed professions to become a physician of the soul--a clergyman. Being warned against the "fanatical dissenters" such as Wesley and Whitefield, Williams decided to become one himself, becoming a Calvinistic [Methodist](#).

During his 43 years of itinerant ministry, Williams traveled over 95,000 miles, and his impassioned preaching drew crowds of 10,000 or more. Once he spoke to an estimated crowd of 80,000, noting in his journal, "God strengthened me to speak so loud that most could hear."

[William Williams](#) is best remembered, however, for his hymns, becoming in Wales what [Isaac Watts](#) was in England. In all, he composed over 800 hymns, his best known being an autobiographical prayer. Williams had lived as a pilgrim, pressing on through the snow of winter, the rains of springtime, and the heat of summer. He was beaten by mobs (once within an inch of his life) and cheered by crowds, but in all his travels he sought only to do the will of God, saying:

Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah
Pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak, but Thou art mighty;

Hold me with Thy powerful hand.

Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah
Pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak, but Thou art mighty;
Hold me with Thy powerful hand.

[\(Play and pray this great hymn to Him. Amen\)](#)

That's our prayer today. God doesn't leave his children to flounder along in this world, like travelers lost in the wilderness. We travel an appointed way. He knows the way we take. He will guide us by His counsel, and afterward receive us into glory (Ps 73:24). Amen

[George Mueller's Guide to Finding the Will of God](#) (see also [Mueller and Prayer](#))

1. Surrender your own will.

I seek at the beginning to get my heart into such a state that it has no will of its own in regard to a given matter. Nine-tenths of the trouble with people generally is just here. Nine-tenths of the difficulties are overcome when our hearts are ready to do the Lord's will, whatever it may be. When one is truly in this state it is usually but a little way to the knowledge of what His will is.

2. Do not depend on feelings.

Having done this, I do not leave the result to feeling or simple impression. If so, I make myself liable to great elusions.

3. Seek, the Spirit's will through God's Word.

I seek the will of the Spirit of God through, or in connection with, the Word of God. The Spirit and the Word must be combined. If I look to the Spirit alone without the Word, I lay myself open to great delusion also. If the Holy Ghost guides us at all, He will do it according to the Scriptures and never contrary to them.

4. Note providential circumstances.

Next I take into account providential circumstances. These often plainly indicate God's will in connection with His Word and Spirit.

5. Pray.

I ask God in prayer to reveal His will to me aright.

6. Wait.

William MacDonald emphasizes that **doing** (not just knowing) **God's will** is crucial "Because of the abounding evil and the shortness of the time (Eph 5:15-16), we might be tempted to spend our days in frantic and feverish activity of our own choosing. But this would amount to nothing but wasted energy (cp Jn 15:5 and would yield only "wood, hay and straw" at the Bema Seat 1Cor 3:12-15, 2Cor 5:10+). The important thing is to find out God's will for us each day and do it. This is the only way to be efficient and effective. It is all too possible to carry on Christian work according to our own ideas and in our own strength, and be completely out of the will of the Lord. **The path of wisdom is to discern God's will for our individual lives, then to obey it to the hilt** (cp walking in His will and works = Eph 2:10+). ([MacDonald, W & Farstad, A. Believer's Bible Commentary: Thomas Nelson](#))

Vital Relationship Between Knowing and Obeying - God's will is best discerned from God's Word as taught by God's Spirit. And so to know God's Will obey God's Word. John explains the basic principle that "obedience is the organ of spiritual knowledge" writing that ""If any man is willing to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from Myself. (John 7:17)

Martin Luther said "If it were in the will of God, I'd plant an oak tree today, even if Christ were coming tomorrow"

When **David Livingstone** was asked if he didn't fear that going into Africa was too difficult and too dangerous, he answered, "I am immortal until the will of God for me is accomplished."

ILLUSTRATION OF GUIDANCE (Humorous) - A flight attendant spent a week's vacation in the Rockies. She was captivated by the mountain peaks, the clear blue skies, and the sweet smelling pines. But she also was charmed by a very eligible bachelor who owned and operated a cattle ranch and lived in a log cabin. At the end of this week, Mr. Wonderful proposed. But it had all happened so quickly that the woman decided to return home and to her job, feeling that she would somehow be guided to make the right decision. The next day, in flight, she found herself wondering what to do. To perk up, she stopped in the rest room and splashed some cool water on her face. There was some turbulence and a sign in the rest room lit up: PLEASE RETURN TO THE CABIN. She did--to the cabin back in the mountains (Reader's Digest [1/81], p. 118)

John Stott -Nothing is more important in life than to **discover** and **do** the will of God. Moreover, in seeking to discover it, it is essential to distinguish between his '**general**' and his '**particular**' will. The former is so called because it relates to the generality of His people and is the same for all of us, e.g. to make us like Christ. His **particular** will, however, extending to the particularities of our life, is different for each of us, e.g. what career we shall follow, whether we should marry, and if so whom. Only after this distinction has been made can we consider how we may find out what the will of the Lord is. His 'general' will is found in Scripture; **the will of God for the people of God has been revealed in the Word of God** But we shall not find His 'particular' will in Scripture. To be sure, we shall find general principles in Scripture to guide us, but detailed decisions have to be made after careful thought and prayer and the seeking of advice from mature and experienced believers. (Stott, J. R. W. God's New Society: The Message of Ephesians. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press) (Bolding added)

Illustration of seeking the will of God - F. B. Meyer was sailing many years ago to England from northern Ireland. He told the story of how it was night and, as the ship entered the harbor, nothing was to be seen but a confusing array of lights. Dr. Meyer wondered how the captain could hope to navigate into the harbor safely at night in such a confusing jumble of lights, and so he asked him. The captain took him up to the bridge and said, "You see, sir, it's really very simple. I'll show you how. Do you see that big light over to the left? And do you see that other big light over there to the right of it? And now, do you see that outstanding light farther still this way? Well now, keep your eyes on those three lights and see what happens." As Dr. Meyer watched, the big outer light on the left gradually moved in until it coincided with the middle one. Then, as the ship turned, the light gradually merged into the third. "There now," said the captain, "all I have to do is to see that those three big lights become one; then I go straight forward." The point is that the believer also has three lights to guide him into the will of God. When Scripture and conscience are lined up with outward circumstances so that the three become one, we need have no fear. We may go straight ahead. God's will is clear.

Illustration of how not to discern the will of God. A middle-aged farmer who had been desiring for years to be an evangelist was out working in the field one day when he decided to rest under a tree. As he looked into the sky he saw that the clouds seemed to form into the letters P and C. Immediately he hopped up, sold his farm, and went out to P-reach C-hrist, which he felt was God's leading. Unfortunately, he was a horrible preacher. After one of his sermons a neighbor came forward and whispered in his ear, "Are you sure God wasn't just trying to tell you to P-lant C-orn."

1 Peter 4:13 - Partakers of His Suffering - November 5, 2016 - ...but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings... —1 Peter 4:13 (Oswald Chambers)

If you are going to be used by God, He will take you through a number of experiences that are not meant for you personally at all. They are designed to make you useful in His hands, and to enable you to understand what takes place in the lives of others. Because of this process, you will never be surprised by what comes your way. You say, "Oh, I can't deal with that person." Why can't you? God gave you sufficient opportunities to learn from Him about that problem; but you turned away, not heeding the lesson, because it seemed foolish to spend your time that way.

The sufferings of Christ were not those of ordinary people. He suffered "according to the will of God"(1 Peter 4:19), having a different point of view of suffering from ours. It is only through our relationship with Jesus Christ that we can understand what God is after in His dealings with us. When it comes to suffering, it is part of our Christian culture to want to know God's purpose beforehand. In the history of the Christian church, the tendency has been to avoid being identified with the sufferings of Jesus Christ. People have sought to carry out God's orders through a shortcut of their own. God's way is always the way of suffering—the way of the "long road home."

Are we partakers of Christ's sufferings? Are we prepared for God to stamp out our personal ambitions? Are we prepared for God to destroy our individual decisions by supernaturally transforming them? It will mean not knowing why God is taking us that way, because knowing would make us spiritually proud. We never realize at the time what God is putting us through—we go through it more or less without understanding. Then suddenly we come to a place of enlightenment, and realize—"God has strengthened me and I didn't even know it!"

When a man's heart is right with God the mysterious utterances of the Bible are spirit and life to him. Spiritual truth is discernible only to a pure heart, not to a keen intellect. It is not a question of profundity of intellect, but of purity of heart. *Bringing Sons Unto Glory*, 231 L ([Partakers of His Sufferings - Oswald Chambers. My utmost for his highest: November 5](#))

1 Peter 4:19 - Devotional - One of the toughest tests we face while serving God is betrayal. I saw it happen to a loving pastor. He encouraged a gifted teenager in his congregation to go to Bible school. He arranged for financial support. He continued to mentor the young man after graduation, letting him preach on occasion.

But then the graduate began to undermine the pastor with innuendo and criticism. Finally the heartbroken minister left. Then the young man announced himself as a candidate for pastor of the church.

Jesus knew about betrayal. he invested 3 years into the lives of His 12 disciples, one of them was Judas. Jesus had taught him, performed miracles before his eyes, and even washed his feet. Yet Judas sold his allegiance for 30 pieces of silver. When Jesus predicted His own betrayal in John 13:18, He quoted David, who also knew what it was like to have a friend turn on him (Ps. 41:9).

Knowing that He would be betrayed, Jesus continued to do what the Father wanted Him to do. He taught us by example to serve people because we love and obey God, not because we want to be appreciated.

Have you been betrayed? Find comfort in knowing that true fulfillment comes in doing the will of God. - D C Egnor ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

When people turn against you
In spite of all you do,
Remember Christ's rejection
And all He's done for you.
- Anon.

If you are betrayed, leave it with God.

Pastor Ron Teed on the "Will of God" - Excerpts from his 22 pages of sermons (2 parts) on the Will of God (See links under Resources Related to the Will of God) - Paul's ministry was centered in the will of God. Paul did nothing in ministry that was not within the will of God. I can't begin to tell you how significant that knowledge is in the ministry of a servant of Christ. If you can live with confidence that you are living within the will of God, you will be at peace. Paul was committed to this kind of life. That has to be the overriding attitude in all effective Christian service.....People who function within the will of God know:

(1) **Precision** - This word probably reminds you of a watch. It functions precisely, is on time, and without error. Anyone who functions in ministry within the will of God will know precision.....

(2) **Providence** - Paul's ministry was to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles. That was his calling. But look what he says in Romans 15:22: "In fact, my visit to you has been delayed so long because I have been preaching in these places." Paul says he's been so busy doing what God has called him to do and that is the reason he was delayed in coming to Rome. This is **providence**. By moving Paul here and moving him there, God had providentially controlled his life. God controls us and He controls human history in basically one of two ways: (a) Through miracles, which are a direct interruption of the natural laws of the universe, or (b) By controlling all things in the natural course of events. This of course is how God primarily works....

(3) **Planning** - While it's wonderful to trust God's providence, that is no excuse for poor planning. In fact you may find this difficult to accept initially, but you'll never really experience the providence of God unless you've got some plans for God to work on....Let me ask you something. Do you make any plans? Do you lean on the providence of God? Do you function in a ministry with precision? Those are characteristics of ministry within the will of God. We'll look at several more of these qualities next week....

(4) **Priority** The person who is functioning within the will of God has God's priorities.....

(5) **Prosperity** There is prosperity for one who functions within the will of God.....

(6) **Persecution** - It is true that one who is serving within the will of God is going to experience persecution.....

(7) **Purpose** One who serves within the will of God has a very clear purpose.....

(8) **Prayer** - The person who lives within the will of God is a person of prayer. A person cannot fully know what the will of God is

for him or her unless they are constantly in prayer and in the Word.

RELATED RESOURCES:

- Ephesians 5:17-18 Commentary
- Colossians 1:9-10 Commentary
- Matthew 6:9-10: Thy Will Be Done - Sermon on Mount
- [Romans 11:33-12:2: Discovering Will of God by Ray Stedman](#)
- [What Is the Will of God and How Do We Know It? by John Piper](#)
- [Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God](#)
- [How to Really Know The Will of God](#) - Well done book by Richard Strauss
- [How Can I Know What God Wants Me to Do?](#)- 33 page booklet
- [Will of God by Phillip Towner - Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology](#)
- [Romans 15:17-33 Living in the Will of God \(1\) - Ron Teed](#)
- [Romans 15:30-33 Living Within the Will of God \(2\) - Ron Teed](#)
- [How can I be sure I am praying according to the will of God? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [How can I know God's will for my life? What does the Bible say about knowing God's will? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [How can we recognize the voice of God? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Does God have a plan for me? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [How can I find my spiritual calling? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [How can I get to know God better? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What is the difference between God's sovereign will and God's perfect will? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Taking the Mystery Out of Knowing God's Will](#) - John MacArthur
- [Knowing God's Will](#) - John MacArthur
- [How to Know the Will of God](#) - John MacArthur
- [God's Will Is Not Secret](#) - John MacArthur
- [Being Filled with the Knowledge of God's Will](#) - John MacArthur
-