

Discipleship Lesson 8

God's Will

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.

Proverbs 3:5–6



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As you study this lesson you will understand why the following statements are **not true**.

1. You should always seek a sign to know God's will.
2. If you don't feel good about something, then it's not God's will.
3. The best way to know God's will is to follow your heart.

How Do I Know or Find God's Will for My Life?

A famous preacher once said that a successful man is a man who finds out what God wants him to accomplish with his life and then fulfills it. That is a very profound statement. The true measure of a man's success is not his social status, his bank account, his influence, or his fame. It is simply doing what God wants him to do.

Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to help believers understand two key truths about God's general will. First, we will discover what God's will is for everyone on earth. Second, we will discuss how you can discover God's specific plan for your life. Read Psalm 37:23–24.

I. Does God Really Have a Plan for My Life?

- A. God has meticulously worked out a plan for every life. If followed carefully, it will guarantee a life of the utmost satisfaction and fulfillment.

Finding our significance in Him and His purpose for our life is our **greatest achievement**. It starts with salvation, but then God wants you to follow the blueprint that He has for your life.

- B. It is important to know that it is **possible to miss God's perfect will** for your life. A Christian can miss God's will completely or in part. For example:

1. **Saul**, the first king of the Hebrews, is an outstanding and sorrowful example. Everything was in his favor. He was divinely called, anointed, and publicly crowned to fill the role of leader, captain, and king of Israel. The Spirit of God came upon him for his task. But through selfish pride and insane jealousy, Saul turned aside from the divine path of blessing (1 Samuel 13:9–14, 15:13–26, 35, 28:7–9, 31:3–5). His life ended in failure, disgrace, defeat, and finally, suicide (1 Chronicles 10:13–14).
2. **Solomon** is another sobering example of missing God's will. Though he served long as a wise ruler in Israel in the pure will of God, he allowed the love of women and the lust of the flesh to lead him astray. Because of his disobedience and failure, he was told that the kingdom would be divided and would disintegrate after his death (1 Kings 3:5–14, 11:1–13).
3. **King Uzziah** in 2 Chronicles 26 is another illustration. What did he do wrong?

The purpose of this lesson is to help you to discover and stay in the center of God's will, the place of blessing and of ultimate happiness for any Christian.

- C. It is exciting to know that the omnipotent God of the universe has a specific plan for your life. **God knows you best:** your strengths, your weaknesses, your gifts, your talents, your personality, and your background. He knows what plan would best maximize your greatest potential. God's will is not a deep mystery or something that God is trying to hide from you (Ephesians 5:17). God wants you to enjoy your Christian life and be greatly used to touch the lives of other people.

Notes and Questions:

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II. What Is God's Will for Everyone?

A. Look up the following verses and write down the key thought or principle about God's will.

1. 2 Peter 3:9; 1 Timothy 2:3–4
2. Ephesians 5:17–18
3. 1 Thessalonians 5:18
4. Romans 12:1–2
5. Ephesians 5:21
6. 1 Peter 3:17
7. Proverbs 3:9–10, 1 Corinthians 16:1–2
8. 1 Thessalonians 4:3
9. Ephesians 5:16
10. Ephesians 4:14–15

From this list, which two areas do you need to work on the most?

B. These areas of clear instruction from the Bible are often called God's *general will* because they are universally applicable to all people. These are not areas that we need to pray about or consider for our lives; rather, they are clear expectations of God's intent for all people. We should respond to these in complete obedience out of a heart of love for God. Read Isaiah 29:16.

III. What about God's Specific Plan for My Life?

- A. How can you know God's will or plan when it comes to areas that the Bible does not specifically mention? Sometimes people call these **gray areas**. Can you think of some gray areas that the Bible does not mention yet might be questionable or sinful behavior?
- B. A lot of Christians are confused about living under grace, believing that they are free in Christ and can exercise their liberty because they are not under the law any longer. Let's think about this.
1. Christ did not come to _____ the law (Matthew 5:17–19).
 2. Under grace, did God raise or lower the standard of righteousness? Read the following passages. Write down the Old Testament standard and then the New Testament standard.

Matthew 5:21–22

O.T. standard _____

N.T. standard _____

Matthew 5:27–28

O.T. standard _____

N.T. standard _____

Matthew 5:38–39

O.T. standard _____

N.T. standard _____

Matthew 5:43–44

O.T. standard _____

N.T. standard _____

Notes and Questions

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3. The liberty that you have in Jesus Christ gives you freedom to do what is right without the constraints of any laws, as opposed to giving you license to sin or to do whatever you want (Galatians 5:13).

Your liberty should not be used to feed your sinful flesh (Romans 6:12–18). Rather, your liberty should enable you to _____ God (1 Peter 2:16).

- C. How then can you know if certain questionable things are okay or not? A good way to judge these matters is to review the principles in Scripture that God gives us.

1. Am I being brought under the _____ of something that should not be controlling my life? See 1 Corinthians 6:12.

Give an example:

2. Am I building up myself or others in this activity? See 1 Corinthians 10:23.

Give examples of things not edifying:

3. If the Lord returned at this moment, would I be ashamed? See 2 Timothy 4:1–2; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Hebrews 4:13.

4. Would it cause a brother to stumble? See Romans 14:13–15, 15:1–2.

Give an example:

5. Would it be cause for an unsaved person to reject the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior? See 1 Corinthians 10:31–33.

Give an example:

Which one of these principles did you find to be most helpful and why?

IV. Four Principles to Remember in Discovering God's Will for Your Life

- A. **God's will never contradicts His Word.** So the first step is always to ask, "Does God's Word already speak about the decisions that I need to make?"

For example, it is never God's will for a Christian to marry a non-Christian. That is not something that a person has to pray about because 2 Corinthians 6:14 makes that clear.

Remember, special direction is never given when the guidance we ask is already written in Scripture.

- B. **Who should we ask before making important decisions?** See Proverbs 11:14, 15:22, 24:6.

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- C. **Sometimes God reveals His will through opportunities or circumstances.** Some people refer to this as God opening or closing doors of opportunity. Illustration: 1 Corinthians 16:9, Colossians 4:3, Revelation 3:8.

Nothing happens to the child of God by chance. God is always guiding and directing us toward fulfilling His will for our lives. How does Romans 8:28–29 support this truth?

- D. **Our inner convictions should agree with the leading of the Holy Spirit.**

God has given us His Holy Spirit to guide us and to bear witness with our spirit that a certain course of action is right or wrong (Romans 8:14–16; John 16:13).

Be cautious at this point to make sure that the voice you hear is not your own selfish desires. Some people say just follow what your heart tells you to do. But what does Jeremiah 17:9–10 say about that?

Remember the Holy Spirit in the child of God never contradicts Himself with the Word of God.

F. B. Meyer summed it up well: "When the Word of God, the impulse of the Holy Spirit in my heart, and the outward circumstances are in harmony, then I am convinced that I am acting in accordance to the will of God."

Notes and Questions



Notes and Questions:

V. Some Warnings to Heed

- A. Be very cautious about seeking signs and using the story of Gideon for support. Instead, use the ten-point checklist, "What Is God's Will for Everyone," in section II of this lesson.
- B. Be careful of using phrases like "I believe it is the Lord's will for me" or "the Lord led me to do this." This many times only support our own desires. You never read of the apostle Paul using this language.
- C. You don't have to worry that every decision falls within God's moral will. For example, God gives you complete freedom to choose what color shoes or dress you want to buy. Adam and Eve were free to eat of every tree in the garden at any time they wanted except what God specifically said not to eat; otherwise, God did not care.

VI. In Summary

- A. Here is a quick checklist of questions to ask yourself to assist in the decision-making process involving a specific area of your life.
 - 1. Am I following the clearly defined will of God?
 - 2. Have I searched the Word of God?
 - 3. Have I prayed about it?
 - 4. Have I sought godly counsel?
 - 5. Do the circumstances allow for me to do this?

If, in good conscience, you can answer yes to these questions, then pursue with peace and confidence what it is you want to do, believing it to be a God-given desire and therefore "His will."

VII. Practical Application

A. It is a mark of wisdom to seek godly counsel. When you need godly counsel, what two people would you ask help from?

1. _____

2. _____

B. As a result of this lesson, is there something that God wants you to start or stop?

C. If God would open any door of opportunity for you, what two things would you most like to do? (Dream big.)

1. _____

2. _____

D. Name two important truths or principles that stood out to you from this lesson.

1. _____

2. _____

Notes and Questions

