

Seeking God's Will

Looking for direction in your life? We make many decisions every day that affect our lives, our family, our friends and our place of work. Most decisions are insignificant to us; but when we have a serious decision, we often seek advice. Sometimes we look to a trusted friend, a coworker, a neighbor next door, a family member, a member of the clergy or a counselor and some of us look to God. But often we live as Proverbs 21:2 states,

Every man's way is right in his own eyes, but the LORD weighs the hearts. (NASB) Proverbs 21:2

For example, we usually make plans without looking to God for direction. We make plans which seem best to us. And when we do James 4:13-17 becomes true of us. The passage implies that God greatly influences what happens in our life, and we sin when we do not submit our plans to God's will.

God actively cares for us by sending rain, changing our seasons and providing us food (Acts 14:17). He controls the events in our life by opening and shutting doors of opportunity down the long hall of life and creating situations which motivate us through open doors (Rom. 1:10; 15:30-32). For His disciples, His Spirit helps them according to His will (Rom. 8:27) and He provides opportunities for ministry (1 Cor. 1:1; 2 Cor. 1:1 and Eph 1:1). He does all of this according to His desire - according to His will.

Yet, He has a plan or a purpose for each one of us according to the next passage.

For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep,

was buried with his fathers, and saw corruption.) Acts 13:36 (NASB

God does not permit us to die until we have served His purpose. What is the purpose of your life? God wants you to be in His will. His will is no secret! He has revealed it to us in the Bible. He has told us we can know His will in the key decisions of our life. Are you interested? Then on to the five wills.

Two Commands. God has revealed His will to each and every one of us. And He has provided guidelines for knowing His will in specific situations. The starting point of our journey is with one of the first and most important

passages in Scripture. It is a command that reveals His will about what He desires to be the passion of your heart,

And He said to him, "YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL



Seeking God's Will In The Bible

YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.”

This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, “YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.” Matthew 22:37-39 (NASB)

Do you see His desire, His will? He completely wants your feelings, your attitude and your desires. He wants a relationship where your response to Him comes from a loving heart that longs to know Him, to desire Him and to please Him with everything you have. Is that true of you? God has already expressed His love for you in,

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. John 3:16 (NASB)

What He desires is two hearts (figuratively speaking for God) that love each other. Those of us who are not followers of Jesus must respond to another aspect of His will. It is also expressed as a command and is found in 1 John 3:23. His first and foremost will is that we love with our entire being. Please note that the word “begotten” in John 3:16 means “one and only.”

Fivefold Will of God. For a true disciple of Jesus, God is already working in us according to His will and His purpose which is to change us (1 Cor. 15:10; Phil 2:12-13; Heb. 13:21). While we know that God wants to make us like Jesus, have you ever wondered just what it is that He wants to change you into? What does He want you to be like? There are five “will” statements in the New Testament which answer these questions. They add to what we already know about the “will of God.” These passages are as follows:

1st Will - Abstain From Sexual Sin. Our first passage is 1 Thess 4:3. This passage merely says that it is God’s will for us to abstain from immorality. Now there are many concepts as to what immorality is. Some would say that sexual conduct with a person of the opposite sex is okay as long as you love them. Some would say that no sin takes place unless the other person objects. Many would say that it is wrong to have sex with your neighbor’s wife if you are already married - that would be adultery. Many would

agree that incest or sex with a sister, brother, son or daughter is immoral. But we would make a serious mistake if we limited God’s will about our sexual purity to just adultery and incest. To limit the English translation of the Greek word *porneia* to “immorality” misses the mark because it also includes incest, homosexuality, lesbianism, bestiality, and prostitution.

In Jesus’ day and during the life of the apostles, *porneia* was a problem just as it is today. History tells us that some of the Roman emperors were homosexuals and Corinth’s temple of Aphrodite had 1,000 priestesses who engaged in “sacred prostitution.” The temples, art and culture of the time were consumed with suggestions of *porneia* just like we experience today.

Except for not believing in Jesus Christ, sexual sin is the most destructive sin we can commit. The Holy Spirit tells us in 1 Cor. 6:18 that “every sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral (*porneia*) man sins against his own body (NASB).” And in Heb. 13:4, God says He will judge those who commit *porneia*. Wow, God means business. And what is God’s solution? Stop! Listen to the Holy Spirit,

Each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God. 1 Thessalonians 4:4-5 (NASB)

2nd Will - Be Filled With The Holy Spirit.

Now you may be asking, “But how do I get victory?” The next will of God answers the question. Self control over sexual sin is impossible without the Holy Spirit working in my life. Successful victory over *porneia* or any other sin comes by obedience to His will which includes,

Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit. Ephesians 5:17-18 (NJKV)

The Greek word for “filled” is *pleroo*. It has the idea of being

controlled. The word was sometimes used in Jesus' day to refer to someone who was controlled by wine. So God uses this word to say that we are not to be controlled by wine but by His Holy Spirit. The verb form of *pleroo* used in this verse implies ongoing submission to another. It is a repeated and constant event. The idea is someone who is willingly constantly submitting to the Holy Spirit.

So how is one constantly filled or controlled by the Holy Spirit? Very simply, ask that the Holy Spirit to constantly control you. Start by admitting your sins (1 John 1:9) so that you no longer grieve Him (Eph. 4:30) and quench Him (1 Thess 5:19) because of your sins. Then every time you sin after that, immediately admit to Him what you did and ask God to help you stop and have His Holy Spirit take control of you. Col 3:16 also tells us that we need to be saturated in the study and mediation of His Scripture. Col 3:16 calls it "richly dwelling" in His word. If you honestly desire to live a holy life by turning control of every aspect of your life over to Jesus - you will find victory.

3rd Will- You will Suffer. 1 Peter 4:19 reveals another will of God - namely that we will suffer. There are several reasons He desires us to suffer. The first reason is that He wants us to be a light in a world that is dark (Matt. 5:11-16, John 1:5). And if we really desire to be holy we will suffer. Listen to 2 Tim. 3:12, "all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution." If you really want to do God's will you are going to suffer - He wants you to be holy. Secondly, God uses trials and persecution to mold and shape us (James 1:2-5). Third, we sometimes suffer because we have sinned and are unwilling to change (Heb. 12:4-11). This is not God's permissive will - this is His will.

4th Will - Giving Thanks. The fourth will of God for you is that you,

Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. 1 Thessalonians 5:18 (NIV)

There is an old Chinese proverb that says, "When you drink from the stream remember the spring." From a spiritual perspective, the spring is God. It is God who supplies all of our present needs (Matt. 6:31-33; Acts 14:17; 1 Pet. 5:7) and

as well as our future needs (John 14:2); Do you thank Him for what He has done for you? Heb. 13:14-15 tells us that being thankful is a sacrifice of praise,

For here (on this earth) we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking the city which is to come. Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name. Hebrews 13:14-15 (NASB)

The amazing word in the verse is "sacrifice." Sometimes it is just very difficult to remember to stop and express my thanks - to acknowledge someone else has met my need. How often do we believe and even act like we accomplished great things for ourselves. Even when we are serving God, we look for praise from others. When we do that we are stealing praise that is due God. We forget that it is the Lord who controls the events in our lives. It is the Holy Spirit Who uses what we have done or said to minister to others. It is He Who deserves the thanks. He is not the stream of water. He is not the spring - He is the spring which feeds the stream.

5th Will- Submit to Government. In a democratic society we have an inherent mistrust of authority. We have a permissive philosophy that looks for "freedom" in society. In church many look for "freedom" in the pages of Scripture. We want freedom from authority and we thirst for control to prevent "unjust events" in our lives. The early Christians had an unjust government called the Roman Empire. Yet, God commanded the early Christians to be obedient - to submit. They were to pay their taxes (Matt. 22:17-22). Christians were persecuted and killed. Yet, in 1 Peter 2:13-15 the Holy Spirit tells us to submit to all forms of government - every form of human institution. This is the will of God for you - your submission. Why? Because He establishes governments (Rom 13:1).

What's Next. By now you may be asking, "But how do I know God's will about personal decisions in my life?" Well, that is the next section - the unknown.

His Will Is Mine. So far we have looked at two commands and five statements that tell us what the Lord's will is in our life. We looked at them first to prepare us for Psalm 37:4 and Romans 12:2. We started with what

Scripture reveals is clearly the will of God and now we want to know what to do in those situations where there is no chapter and verse to tell us what to do.

Psalm 37:4 tells us that what ever we want, the Lord will provide,

Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart. Psalm 37:4 (NIV)

Years, ago I knew a man who “became a Christian” so that he would be like his friend. His friend was very wealthy and he assumed that God would make him wealthy if he became a Christian. One day in his backyard we were talking and he complained to me that God did not do what he wanted.

He was angry with God. The problem with this young man was his heart.

Psalm 37:4 says that we must start by delighting ourselves in the Lord. The

Hebrew word for delight has the idea of “soft, delicate, to live with enjoyment and to have exquisite delight.” It has the idea of liking and loving God with your entire being. Your emotions are consumed with Him. Have you ever watched an older couple who are really in love with each other. They almost look alike. They almost have the same likes and dislikes. They have the same desires. That is the result of delighting in each other; that is God’s idea. You see, if you delight in Jesus - His desires will become your desires. The Holy Spirit will put His desires in your heart.

You may ask, “How does that happen?” It occurs as you delight in His will - the two commands and the five wills of God. We cannot expect the desires of our heart to reflect His desires if we are not pursuing the will of God that is already revealed. Romans 12:2 tells us there is also another aspect.

Romans 12:2 says,

Be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is - his good, pleasing and perfect will. Romans 12:2 (NIV)

This occurs as we spend time delighting ourselves in the Lord - as we discover more about Him in His Scriptures - as we drink at His fountain of life - as our mind is consumed with Him.

You Really Want To Know? We have been looking at God’s Word to see what His will is for our life. It is here that we discover how to please Him. It is here that He has

shown how to discern His will for our life. And it all starts by delighting ourselves in Him. He loves you!

We have found that when we are

Explicit Reference To Will of God	Passage
Be sexually pure	1 Thess. 4:3-8
Be filled with the Holy Spirit	Eph. 5:17-18
You will suffer	1 Pet. 4:19
Give thanks always	1 Thess. 5:18
Submit to your government	1 Pet. 2:13-15

consumed with Him, we will want to please Him by doing His known will. If you are delighting in Him and seeking to do His will, you will desire to flee sexual sin; you will be willing to suffer for righteousness; you will give thanks for all things; and you will be willing to submit to earthly authority. Then your desires will reflect His desires for your life. As we are filled or controlled by His Holy Spirit, God will put His desires in our heart and we will know His will for our lives.

But we need to ask ourselves, “Why do we want to know His will?” When I am seeking the will of God, I sometimes discover that I really want my will to be done.

Finding His Will - My Story. Some years ago, I had to make a serious decision about my future. I struggled and prayed every day asking God for His will. This went

on for months. Then one day as I was driving a freeway in California I realized I really wanted my will - I wanted His will to conform to my desires. So I prayed, admitted my sin to Him, and willingly yielded my future to Him. What a blessing - what a relief. And then God surprised me. He granted me the desire of my heart.

I had just learned an old lesson once again - He wants me to delight in Him first. To love Him with all my heart FIRST and then yield the outcome to Him. Knowing His will in your life starts by delighting in Him!

Do you delight in Him?