

UNDERSTANDING GOD'S WILL

Many people desire to know the answer to the question, "What is God's will for my life?" We often find ourselves praying, talking with spiritual mentors, or waiting for a sign trying to figure out what God wants us to do in certain situations. Anything from who we should date or marry, to what college we should attend, or career path to follow. These are all scenarios in which we desire to know God's will and direction. The Bible gives us some very clear expressions of God's will. We first want to be in line with those and then we can start to figure out how to live out His will in our lives.

Read Psalm 25:4, Psalm 86:11

Discuss: What are some scenarios that you have desired to know God's will?

God's expressed will

(adapted from John MacArthur lesson "How to Know the Will of God")

The first question we should not ask is "What is God's will for my life?" It is "What is God's will?"

God's will is for us to be saved

God desires for every person to be saved from judgment that is due to sinners. To be saved, you must recognize that you are a sinner and you must repent and believe in Jesus and His work on the cross. (2 Peter 3:9, 1 Tim 2:3-4)

If you aren't saved, then you cannot find God's will for your life.

God's will is for us to be Spirit filled

The moment a person believes in Jesus as Savior and Lord, they are filled and sealed with the Holy Spirit. (1 Cor. 12:13) Now we are called by God to allow that Spirit to control our lives or to "walk by the Spirit" instead of the flesh. (Ephesians 5:17-18, Galatians 5:16)

God's will is for us to be sanctified

Sanctification is a long process of becoming more and more like Jesus. Every single day, in the power of His grace, we are striving to grow to love Him and to obey His commands. In sanctification, we are in a process of loving God, loving people, and making disciples of all nations. (1 Thess. 4:3-5, 1 Tim. 6:11-12)

Discuss: How are you outside of God's will if you are not living a sanctified life?

God's will for us is to be submissive

One of the ways that we show the world a transformed life is by being able to live humbly underneath any authority God has placed over our lives. God's desire is that we would submit to authority as long as that authority is not asking us to do something that violates the commands of God. (1 Peter 2:13, Romans 13:1-2)

God's will for us is to suffer well for Jesus

Followers of Jesus Christ are in direct opposition to the world, the flesh, and the devil. Since our Lord suffered greatly on earth, He tells us as His followers that we should expect the same thing. God desires that we suffer for righteousness and not turn back from following Him. (1 Peter 4:19, Matt. 5:10-12)

Read John 15:18-20

Discuss: How does this give us perspective on suffering in this world?

God's will for your life

If you are in line with God's will as He has expressed clearly in scripture, then when it comes to making personal decisions, we have the freedom to do whatever our hearts desire.

Read Psalm 37:4

Discuss: If you are delighting yourself in God and His will, what will the desires of your heart become?

If I am in God's will, then I wouldn't want to make decisions and do things that God isn't leading me to do. It comes down to what my desires are.

A few keys to discern God's calling

Opportunity - Has He given me the opportunity? Has He opened a door? Is He working there?

Desire - Do I love it? Am I passionate about it? Am I burdened by it? Do I see a need?

Affirmation - Do other people say that I'm gifted to do it? Am I effective in it? Does God give me peace here?

Discuss: What kinds of things are you passionate about? How does this line up with God's will?

Personal Application

Are there any of the 5 expressions of God's will that you are currently outside of?

What changes would you need to make to align yourself with God's will?

How does God's will impact what you feel could be His will for your life?