

God's Will

A prophet sat before a large church and called out a name. A young man stood with his wife. After proving he had divine insight into their lives, the prophet said, "God wants you to move to Kansas, start a farm, any your agricultural innovations will attract international attention, giving third-world governments the means to feed their people."

Wouldn't you like to hear God's voice that clearly? Usually God isn't specific about the details of your life. In fact, it's a good idea to be a little skeptical of people who tell you what God wants you to do (1 Thessalonians 5:20-22). Still, we could use a simple guide to God's will.

KNOWING GOD'S WILL- IN GENERAL

God has taken a lot of the guess-work out of knowing His will. For instance, His commandments define right and wrong behaviors. All His rules can be reduced to two commands, "Love your God with all your heart," and "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Deuteronomy 6:5; Leviticus 19:18; Mark 12:20-31; Romans 13:8-10).

There are also specific Christian behaviors we know God wants us to adopt. The Bible says, "It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality" and we're told to "be joyful always, pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 4:3; 5:16-18).

Christians aren't to be "foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is" (Ephesians 5:17).

We can be certain of God's will in these matters because it is universal.

KNOWING GOD'S WILL-SPECIFICALLY

According to the Bible each person has a "calling" or destiny. God's calling gives every human life a purpose, but it also involves us in some kind of service to other people. Having a calling doesn't mean God tells us the exact career we're to choose, what company to work for, or how to spend our retirement years. The Bible stresses the importance of

using wisdom to make sound decisions. The responsibility of decision-making lies in our hands.

For most of us, God's will isn't something we know from birth, but unfolds as we go through life. Even if we have a good idea of what He's designed us to be, there are still many questions that are answered only as we obey Him.

MOVING FROM GENERAL TO SPECIFIC

The key to fulfilling God's call is to obey the part of His will we know for certain. By cooperating in what we do know, we develop a greater awareness of His complete design. Jesus said, "Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much" (Luke 16:10).

We can relieve ourselves from the stress of trying to figure out God's will if we realize it is already active in our lives, and as we do what we know is right, He will entrust us with more.

USING WISDOM TO MAKE DECISIONS

The best decisions are made when we have a good view of our whole life. The book of Proverbs frequently tells us to look at the consequences of issues and choose character and integrity over greed and laziness.

The following steps might help us get a whole-life perspective:

Prayer opens up God's will (Colossians 1:9).

Scripture gives us insight into God and His ways.

Wise counsel gives us an advantage over our own knowledge (Proverbs 11:14; 12:15).

Review your life; what you enjoy, what you do well, important turning points and where they may be leading you.

Non-conformity to the world and transformation in Christ opens our minds to the will of God (Romans 12:2).

Your best wisdom and common sense are necessary (Proverbs 4:7; 24:3).

Divine leading is also sometimes given to people through the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:2). On the other hand, don't try to read God's will from your circumstances (i.e., "What was God trying to tell me through that car wreck?").

Living in God's will is more important than knowing every detail of it (which we can't know anyway). As long as we submit our lives to His control and obey His commandments, we will successfully do His will (2 Peter 1:5-11). A simple, daily prayer might be, "God, I surrender to Your will. Guide my steps and direct my life."

If you would like further help understanding God's will, call us and we will provide our best counsel and insight.