

HOW TO FIND THE WILL OF GOD

By Pastor David Harness

I. CAN I KNOW THE WILL OF GOD?

- A. Yes, you **can** know the will of God. *“For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the **knowledge of his will** in all wisdom and spiritual understanding”* (Colossians 1: 9).
 - 1. How to know the will of God is an often asked question with a seemingly elusive answer.
 - 2. God’s will is his *desire* or *wish* for us. It is to *please* Him (Colossians 1: 10).
 - 3. Ephesians 5:17, *“Wherefore be ye not unwise, but **understanding** what the will of the Lord is.”*
- B. God **wants** you to know his will.
 - 1. Colossians 4:12, *“...that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.”*
 - 2. Hebrews 10:36, *“For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.”*
 - 3. Ephesians 6:6, *“Not with eyeservice, as men pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.”*
 - 4. God said to Paul, *“The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will...”* (Acts 22:14).

II. MUCH OF GOD’S WILL IS ALREADY REVEALED IN HIS WORD.

- A. His Word reveals His **mind**. (I Corinthians 2: 16).
- B. His Word reveals His **judgments** (decisions about what is right and wrong; Exodus 21:1-24:3).
- C. His Word reveals His **desires** for us. God’s will never contradicts God’s Word.
 - 1. It is God’s will that we submit to every ordinance of man (I Peter 2:13-15).
 - 2. It is God’s will that we abstain from fornication, *“For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication* (I Thessalonians 4:3).
 - 3. It is God’s will that we always give thanks, *“In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you”* (I Thessalonians 5:18).
 - 4. It is God’s will that we be obedient to our masters (Ephesians 6:5-8).
 - 5. It is God’s will that all should be saved and that none should perish (I Timothy 2:4; Matthew 18:14; II Peter 3:9).
 - 6. It is God’s will that we present ourselves as a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1-2).
- D. If God has commanded us to do something, we do not have to pray whether it is God’s will; we just need to do it. Probably ninety percent of God’s will for us is already revealed in His Word.
- E. We need to find the will of God in are those areas that are **unclear in Scripture** (such as should we buy life insurance); choosing between **two apparent good things** (such as which job offer should you choose); or determining **what is God’s choice for your future** (for instance, who should I marry?).

III. STEPS IN FINDING THE WILL OF GOD.

- A. Diligently seek to find God’s will in the **Bible**.
 - 1. Psalms 119:105, *“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path”*.
 - 2. Psalms 119:133, *“Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me”*.
 - 3. Is there a command or principle that reveals God’s will?
- B. **Ask** God to reveal His will to you.
 - 1. Psalms 143:8, *“Cause me to hear thy lovingkindness in the morning; for in thee do I trust: cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto thee”*.
 - 2. Psalms 143:10, *“Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness”*.
 - 3. Psalms 32:8, *“I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye”*.
 - 4. Jeremiah 6:16, *“Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein.”*
 - 5. Sometimes Christians use “I’m praying about God’s will in this matter” as a cloak to cover their disobedience to what they already know the will of God to be.

- C. **Commit your will** to His will.
1. Psalms 37:5, “Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass”.
 2. Psalms 37:23, “The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way”.
 3. John 7:17, “If any man will do his will [God’s will], he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself”.
 4. Jesus always did the Father’s will and not his own will, “Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done” (Luke 22:42). “For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me” (John 6:38).
 5. We cannot do self-will and God’s will at the same time.
 6. George Muller, of Bristol, would pray until he had no will of his own in the matter and only wanted God’s will to be done.
- D. Look to God to direct you through **providential circumstances**.
1. God directed Paul to Macedonia by **closing the doors** of Asia and Bithynia (Acts 16:6-7).
 2. God directed Paul later to Ephesus by giving him an **open door**. “For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries” (I Corinthians 16:9).
- E. Seek out **good counsel**.
1. Use wise, **godly counselors**. “Every purpose is established by counsel: and with good advice make war” (Proverbs 20:18). A Biblical counselor will guide you to what the Scriptures teach and how to apply them to your situation.
 2. Use the **authority figures** God has placed over you: husband, parents, and pastor. “Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings; and the years of thy life shall be many. I have taught thee in the way of wisdom; I have led thee in right paths” (Proverbs 4:10-11).
- F. Expect that God will give you **peace and assurance** once you know his will. “And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, **assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them**” (Acts 16:10).

IV. FURTHER QUESTIONS

- A. Should we “**set out a fleece**”?
1. This refers to Gideon wanting to confirm that God would deliver Israel from the Midianites (Judges 6:36-40).
 2. Note that God had already told Gideon his will, as Gideon testified, “as thou hast said” (vs. 36, 37).
 3. We do not need to set out a fleece. God in his mercy answered Gideon in order to dispel his doubts.
- B. Is there a “**permissive will of God**”?
1. The Scripture referred to is concerning Balaam wanting to curse Israel (Numbers 22).
 2. God revealed his will to Balaam, “And God said unto Balaam, Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people: for they are blessed” (v.12).
 3. Balaam asks a second time if he can go, and God said, “Go” (v. 20). Note that as Balaam went, “the angel of the Lord stood in the way for **an adversary against him**” (v. 22), and that God said to Balaam, “thy way is **perverse before me**” (v. 32). Balaam was not in the permissive will of God—he was out of the will of God, and was just being used to fulfill God’s purpose for Israel.

V. CONCLUSION

- A. We do not have the ability to make proper decisions on our own. We need to know how to find the will of God and do it. “O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps” (Jeremiah 10:23).
- B. The emphasis in the Bible is on **doing** the will of God, rather than finding it. “And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that **doeth** the will of God abideth for ever” (I John 2:17). Review over the Scriptures referred to in this study and note how many mention doing the will of God.
1. Christ warned about knowing the will of God, but not doing it. “And that servant, which knew his lord’s will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes” (Luke 12:47).
 2. “The greatest thing you can do in life is to find the will of God and do it.”