



How to Know the Will of God

This "PASTOR'S GUIDE SHEET" was developed by Dr. Joe K. Taylor, Senior Pastor, South Reno Baptist Church, Reno, NV • jtaylor@southreno.com
Scriptures are printed verbatim with references noted but highlights and underlines are added. Quotes and all primary sources are footnoted.

For *I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity (but) to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.'*"

- Jeremiah 29:11-13

Introduction to "Knowing God's Will"

It is better to view God's Will more like headlights on a car rather than a road map. Know that you will never know "enough" of the Will of God:

- To make Heaven of Earth
- To make life fully predictable
- To make life fully understandable
- To remove all risk

Realize that "God's Will" is worked out in everyday life. It is a lifestyle; a moment by moment, day by day process of walking with Holy God. When the Bible talks about "the Will of God", it is pretty much talking about God's moral Will. There are two places in the Bible where the Bible says, "This is the Will of God". Let's take a look at them:

A. 1 Thessalonians 4:3, NASB95 - ³ "For this is the Will of God, your sanctification ..."

"Sanctification" is a word that means "making holy" or "consecrating" a place, thing, or person to God"¹
Since *holiness* is a primary attribute of God, we must understand that we cannot and will not know the Will of God for our life without personal holiness.

B. 1 Thessalonians 5:18, NASB95 - ¹⁸ "In everything give thanks; for this is God's Will for you in Christ Jesus."

It is God's Will that we find something to thank Him for in the midst of all circumstances. In order for this to happen, we need to see circumstances from God's point of view. Circumstances are the "schoolhouses" of our lives. There are lessons in every one of them—lessons about us and God.

Summary: ***Bring a life of holiness and an attitude of thanksgiving on your journey to know God's Will.***

¹Achtemeier, Paul J.; Harper & Row, Publishers; Society of Biblical Literature: *Harper's Bible Dictionary*. 1st ed. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985, S. 904

There are two aspects of God's Will:

1. His **General Will** for everyone (e.g. all should seek to be like Him, all should accept Him as Lord, all should seek to be holy, etc.)
2. His **Personal Will** for each individual (e.g. should you take a job, who should you marry, some activity, etc.)



How to Know God's Personal Will For Your Life

1. Decide to trust God and obey him no matter WHAT.

(Jesus Said) ". . . if any man **is willing to do My Will, he shall know** of that Will."
- John 7:17 (GN)

"Commit everything you do to the Lord. Trust him to help you . . . and He will."
- Psalm 37:5 (LB)

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and he will direct your paths."
- Proverbs 3:5-6

Someone said, "You will never know God's Will until you are willing to do it." The big question in seeking God's Will is, **"Will you do His Will when He reveals it to you—no matter what it is?"**

2. Check the Word of God (The Bible) and see what it says.

"For the Word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart."

- Hebrews 4:12 (NASB)

"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."

- 2 Timothy 3:16 (NASB)

VERY IMPORTANT: God will never "lead you to do something" that is not in keeping with His Holy Word!



What To Do?

See the **SCRIPTURE RESOURCE GUIDE** at the back of this **"PASTOR'S GUIDE SHEET"** for related topics and suggested Scriptures for your consideration.

3. Use your “head” and not your “heart”.

Head: i.e., counting the real cost, checking previous promises and contracts, looking at the facts, etc.

Heart: i.e., Emotions, feelings, "What might be easy though it is not God's Will," not realizing the facts, etc.

*"The naive believes everything, but **the prudent man considers his steps.**"*
- Proverbs 14:15 (NASB)

Evaluate your answers to the tough questions: *To the best of my knowledge . . .*

- Will this be beneficial for me, my health, and my family?
- Will this keep me free from any taint of compromise?
- Will this glorify God and bring honor to Him?
- Will this be a wise financial decision?
- Will this enhance my career and other stated goals?
- Will this help me be a good steward of what God has given me?
- Will this enhance my marriage (if married)?
- If made public, this would not lessen my Christian reputation?

If you can answer "yes" to all these questions, fine. If not, reconsider your intended course of action.

4. Value and get the wise counsel of others.

*"Without consultation, plans are frustrated, but **with many counselors they succeed.**"*
- Proverbs 15:22 (NASB)

You need to seek the godly counsel of people committed to following God's Will in their own lives. We all need—so *seek out*—the straightforward, prayerful counsel of friends who love us and are seeking first the kingdom of God in their own lives. Never trust your inward convictions, if godly people who know you well advise you to go a different direction. Solomon (a very wise man in the Bible) pressed this truth home when he wrote the scripture stated above in Proverbs 15:22—we need help from others.



What To Do?

Make a list of one, two, three individuals that you know “walk with God”. Contact them and ask for an hour of their time. *Seek out their counsel!*

5. Recognize that God chooses sometimes not to reveal His ways to us. When this happens, we must do only what we know God wants us to do.

*"The **secret things belong to the Lord** our God, but the **things revealed belong to us** . . . forever, that we may follow all the word of (His) law."*

- Deuteronomy 29:29 (NIV)

Someone has said, "God is in the business of sustaining, not explaining." If God has not revealed His Will, commit to do only the things that God would have you do. Ask Him to "sustain" you until His Will is revealed. For some situations, they may never make sense "this side of heaven".

6. Pray and make a decision.

Say, "***In the light that I have at this time, I believe God's Will for my life is** (whatever it is) .*"

Be willing to change as God gives you more *light*.

***"If you can't decide what is the right thing to do,
choose the thing that would give God the most glory!"***

7. NOTE: If God does not reveal His "Personal Will" for your life, as you are walking with the Lord, filled with His Holy Spirit, proceed with the "desires of your heart."

*"**Delight yourself in the Lord** and He will give you **the desires of your heart.**"*

- Psalm 37:4 (NIV)

The secret here is delighting yourself in the Lord. When we do that, He has no problem giving us the desires of our heart.

8. An important definition/quote for your prayerful consideration:

The Will of God is an inner conviction, given by the Spirit of God, confirmed in the Word of God, and by the People of God.

A Few "Final Matters" About God's Will

• Prompting

Do small things because of a lifestyle committed to God. (e.g. should I eat at McDonalds or at a "party bar"?) Do BIG things out of convictions you have arrived at because God has revealed His "Personal Will." (e.g. "Who should I marry?") **Remember, God deals with us to build trust in Him; WE CAN TRUST HIM!**

• When other people tell you they know "God's Will" for your life.

Examine their track record for knowing the Will of God in their own lives. What is their character? Pray and ask God to confirm the matter in your heart.

"If any man lacks wisdom, let him ask of God who gives freely to all men." - James 1:5

• If you just don't know what to do, resolve to do what will give God the most glory!

A Few Quotes Regarding God's Will

"Your great desire ought to be to *know* His Will. Your great delight will be to *do* His Will. Your great danger is to *refuse* His Will. Nothing is right for you if it is not God's Will."

- Dr. Adrain Rogers ²

"There are two worlds, set over against each other, dominated by two wills, the will of man and the Will of God, respectively. To do the Will of God is to do more than give unprotesting consent to it; it is rather to choose God's Will with positive determination."

- A. W. Tozer ³

"Moses did not draw up blueprints of the tabernacle for God to approve. God handed down His plans. Today, we draw up our program and seek Divine endorsement instead of seeking first the Divine program."

- Vance Havner ⁴

A Few Scriptures Regarding God's Will

Proverbs 3:6, HCSB - ⁶ ... *think about Him in all your ways, and He will guide you on the right paths.*

Ephesians 2:10, NIV - ¹⁰ *For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

Psalms 37:23, HCSB - ²³ *A man's steps are established by the Lord, and He takes pleasure in his way.*

Psalms 32:8, NIV - ⁸ *I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you.*

Isaiah 58:11, NIV - ¹¹ *The Lord will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail.*

² Adrian Rogers, *What Every Christian Ought to Know*, Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, © 2005, p. 131.

³ A. W. Tozer, *The Divine Conquest*, © 1950, p. 105.

⁴ Vance Havner, *Truth for Each Day*, Fleming H. Revell Company, © 1973, p. 133.

SCRIPTURE RESOURCE GUIDE

ABORTION: Eph. 1:7; Lk. 1:31; Ps. 139:13-16; Is. 1:18; Ps. 57:10; Ps. 103:8-11; Ps. 103:12; 1 Jn. 1:9; Lk. 1:41; Jer. 1:5. 1 Jn. 1:7-9; Deut. 33:27; Is. 40:31.

ADULTERY: Eph. 5:3; 1 Cor. 6:15-16; Jam. 1:14-15; Lev. 20:10; Prov. 6:32; Jer. 23:14; Prov. 28:13; Matt. 15:19-20; Matt. 5:27; Col. 3:1-2; 1 Jn. 1:9.

ADVERSITY: Hab. 3:17-18; Jam. 1:2-4; 1 Pet. 1:6-7; 2 Cor. 4:17; 2 Cor. 1:9; Ps. 33:16-18; Rom 8; Job 8:3; 2 Cor. 1:3-4; Matt. 11:28-29; Ps. 23, 27:1-2, 37, 40:1-8, 46:1, 56:3-4, 62:1-2, 69.

AFFAIR VICTIMS: 1 Pet. 4:8; 1 Cor. 13:5; Eph. 4:26-27; Heb. 12:15; Jam. 5:16; 2 Cor. 2:6-8; Prov. 17:22; Phil. 4:6, 8; 1 Pet. 5:7; Joel 2:25; 1 Jn. 1:8-9, 2:15-17; Jam. 4:4-5. NOTE: *Your responsibility to forgive your spouse always takes precedence over your right to divorce.*

ALCOHOLISM: 2 Pet. 2:19; Prov. 20:1; Prov. 23:29-33; 1 Cor. 15:33; Jam. 5:16a; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; Rom. 14:21; Jn. 8:36; Is. 26:3; Gal 5:22-23.

ANGER: Prov. 29:11; Rom. 12:19; Prov. 6:34, 14:17, 12:16, 14:29; Jam. 1:19-20; Prov. 17:14; Matt. 12:36; Col. 3:8; Prov. 10:20, 10:11, 12:18, 15:4, 16:21; Gal. 5:23; Lk. 6:29; Eph. 4:26.

BACKSLIDING: 1 Cor. 15:58; 1 Cor. 8:9; 13; Heb. 12:2; 10:24-25; Matt. 6:21; 1 Jn. 2:15; Jam. 4:4; 1 Cor. 10:13; Acts 24:16; Is. 66:2b; Jer. 29:13; Lk. 19:8b; 1 Jn. 3:10a; Jam. 5:19-20; Col 3:16-17; Prov. 28:13.

BITTERNESS: Eph. 4:32; Heb. 12:15; Matt. 5:23-24; Matt. 6:14-15; 1 Pet. 3:7; 1 Jn. 4:20; Rom 12:19; Jam. 5:16; Matt. 18:21-22; 1 Pet. 4:8.

DEPRESSION: Is. 43:2-3; Prov. 14:18; Job 7:3-5; Ps. 32:3-5; Eccl. 6:3; 1 Pet. 5:7; Ps. 55:4-8; Ps. 55:22; Ps. 137:1,4; Is. 61:3.

DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE: Mal. 2:15; Eph. 5:21ff; Matt. 19:8-9; 1 Cor. 7:10-11; Matt. 5:32, 19:9; 1 Cor. 7:15; 1 Cor. 7:12-13.

DOUBTING ONE'S SALVATION: 2 Sam. 22:31; Acts 16:31ff; Rom. 10:13; 1 Jn. 5:13; Ps. 32:3-4; Rom. 5:9-10, 8:38-39; 1 Pet. 1:18,23; Eph. 1:13-14; 2 Cor. 1:22, 5:5; Heb. 9:12; Heb. 7:25; Jn. 6:37-39; Is. 49:15-16; 1 Cor. 1:8-9; Phil. 1:6; 1 Thess. 5:23-24; Matt. 7:16-20; 1 Cor. 3:16.

ENVY: 1 Cor. 13:4; Prov. 14:30; Ps. 37:25; 1 Tim. 6:6-8; Lk. 12:15; Ps. 16:5-6.

FEAR: Ps. 27:1; 2 Tim. 1:7; Gen. 26:24; Is. 43:1-2; 1 Jn. 4:18; Ps. 91:5-6, 9-10; Matt. 10:28.

FINANCIAL BONDAGE: Prov. 22:17; Prov. 22:7; Ps. 24:1, 50:12; Deut. 8:18; 1 Cor. 4:2; Matt. 6:33; 1 Tim. 6:10; Lk. 6:38; Mal. 3:10; Prov. 6:1-3,5.

GAMBLING: Luke 12:15; Prov. 16:33; 1 Tim. 6:6-8, 9-10; Lk. 12:15; Prov. 11:28a, 23:4-5; 1 Tim. 6:17; Prov. 28:22; Matt. 6:33; Prov. 28:13; Rom. 7:14; Ps. 5:1-3; Jam. 5:16; Matt. 5:23-24.

GRIEF: Ps. 30:5; Job 14:5; Ps. 139:16-17; Eph. 4:26:27; Jam. 4:14b; 2 Cor. 1:3-4; 2 Cor. 1:8-9; Jn. 16:20-22; Phil. 4:8; Eccl. 3:4; Phil. 3:13; Rom. 38-39, Ps. 30:5.

HOMOSEXUALITY: Gen. 2:22; Lev. 20:13; Deut. 23:18; Lev. 18:22; Gen 19ff; Rom. 1:27; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; 1 Jn. 1:9.

HURT: 1 Pet. 5:7; Prov. 18:14; Eph. 4:23; Matt. 6:14-15; 1 Pet. 5:7; Gal. 6:2; 2 Cor. 1:9.

INFERIORITY: 1 Pet. 2:10; 1 Cor. 26-29; *Who are you in Christ? see...* 1 Jn. 3:1; Rom. 8:17; Rom. 8:37; 2 Cor. 5:21; 2 Cor. 5:17.

LUST: Rom. 6:12; Matt. 5:27; Job. 31:1; Mark 7:20-23; Prov. 28:13; 1 Jn. 2:15-16; 1 Thess. 4:3-8; 1 Cor. 6:14-18, 1 Cor. 7.

LYING: Eph. 4:25; Prov. 12:22, 17:7; 12:22, 19:9, 29:12, 26:28; 2 Cor. 7:10; Rev. 21:8; Matt. 5:37; Rom. 9:1; 1 Pet. 1:22.

MARITAL DIFFICULTIES: 1 Thess. 5:15; Gen. 2:24; Eph. 5:21ff; 1 Cor. 7:3-4, 5; Prov. 31:10-12, 15:1; ; Col. 4:6; 1 Pet. 3:7, Eph. 4:32, 26-27; Heb. 10:25; 1 Thess. 5:14; 1 Cor. 7:10-11.

OCCULT: 1 Jn. 3:8; 1 Chron. 10: 13-14; Deut. 17:10-12; Rev. 21:8; Is. 45:5; Lk. 13:3.

SALVATION: John 3:16, Rom. 3:23, 6:23; Ps. 51:5; Jn. 14:6; Rom. 10:9-10, 13; Acts. 3:19, 16:31.

SEEKING GOD'S WILL: Rom. 12:2; Jn 6:40; Eph. 6:5-6; 1 Pet. 2:13-15; Eph. 5:17-18; Ps 25:8; Jam. 1:5-6; Prov. 4:5-6; Deut. 29:29; Prov. 15:22, 11:14.

SUICIDE: Jam. 4:7; Ex. 20:13; 1 Cor. 6:19-20; Rom. 14:7; Ps. 30:5; Ex. 15:26; Job. 14:5. Ps. 139:14; Matt. 11:28-30.

TERMINAL ILLNESS: 2 Cor. 12:9; Heb. 9:27; Ps. 90:10; Eccl. 3:2; Jer. 29:11; 2 Tim. 2:12.

THE UNPARDONABLE SIN (ie. Never accepting Jesus as Lord of your life.): Mark 3:28-29; Matt. 12:31-32.

WORRY & ANXIETY: Phil. 4:6; Jn. 10:10; Matt. 6:25-27; Is. 46:11; Ps. 37:1,7; Matt. 6:31; Phil. 4:6-7; 1 Pet. 5:7; Ps. 55:22, 37:4, 27:1; 46:1; 23; Prov. 3:5-6; Jer. 29:11; Phil. 4:13, 19; Rom. 8:28ff.