

What Is God's Will For My Life?¹

1. Introduction

Sincere Christian believers would like to know what God's will is for their life.

- Can a Christian know what God's will is for him or her?
- We think of God's will in terms of a career, a mate, a job, a school choice, etc.
- We think that God's will is revealed to us in an obtuse manner
- Here's some examples:
 - o We open the Bible and randomly point at a verse and try to determine how that might apply to our life
 - o We fall on a banana peel and land on a map of Africa – immediately we assume that God has called us to Africa
 - o We spin the globe in our classroom, wait for it to stop, and then blindly point to China – we think God might be calling us to China
 - o We feel we should “hear a voice out of heaven” telling us what we should do with our lives, who we should marry, etc.
- Perhaps we are afraid of what God has in mind for our life or who we should marry:
 - o Do you say “I don't want to know God's will” because he may ask me to do something that I'm not prepared or trained to do?
 - o Do you fear that God will ask you to marry someone who you are not compatible with?
 - o Do you fear that God will call you into His service, but that your heart is set on pursuing a lucrative career?
 - o Do you see God as a cosmic killjoy?
- If God has a will for our life, how can we know it?
 - o God can communicate that to you.
 - o How? Through the Bible, His revelation
 - o His will for our life is explicitly given in His Scripture
 - o Let's look at five (5) Biblical principles that we find there

2. Principle #1 – Salvation

- The Apostle Peter introduces to us the concept of the will of God.
- Peter warns us of an apostate, or false teacher:
 - o Denies the deity of Christ, denies “the Lord that bought them”, **2 Pet. 2:1**
 - o Denies the second coming of Christ, **2 Pet. 3:1-10**, saying “where is the promise of His coming?” All things continue as they were before. Nothing will ever change for it never has.
- Peter says you forgot about the flood, **2 Pet. 3:10**, God will intervene. God is not slack concerning his promise, **2 Pet. 3:9**.

¹ This message is from the book “Found: God's Will” by Dr. John MacArthur.

- God is longsuffering, “not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.” **2 Pet. 3:9**.
- God wants men to be saved, so much that He stays His judgment.
- **1 Tim. 2:3-4**, “For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.”
- It is God’s will that men be saved.
- If you have not come to the foot of the cross and met Jesus Christ, then you are not even in the beginning of God’s will.
- God has no reason to reveal to anything particular about your life because you have not met qualification #1 – **Salvation**.

God leads His own:

- “I would not be where I am today if it were not for God.”
- Paul told the pagan Athenians in **Acts 17:28** “in Him we live, and move, and have our being.” Christ is the sustainer of the whole universe.
- We don’t read about God personally leading those who have not received Jesus Christ as personal Saviour.
- **John 10:4**, “And when He puts forth His own sheep, He goes before them, and the sheep follow Him, for they know His voice.”
- **Mark 3:31-35**, “For whosoever shall do the will of God ... is My brother, and My sister, and mother.” In order to be related to Him, one has to do the will of God – to do the will of God one has to be related to Jesus.
- In **1 John 2:15-17**, the Apostle John says “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world ... the world passes away, and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God **abideth** forever.”
- If you have never committed your life to Jesus Christ, you cannot expect anything at all from God.
- The doctrine of salvation is unpopular because it includes the recognition of sin.
- If you are saved you need to reach others with the message of salvation.
- God’s will is that people be saved.
 - o God gave the One He loved the most, His Son.
 - o God sent Him to die on a cross.
 - o His love indicates how much He wills that men be saved.

3. Principle #2 – Spirit-Filled

- **Eph. 5:17**, “Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.”
- **Eph. 5:16**, “redeeming the time, because the days are evil.”
- **Eph. 5:18**, “Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit.”
- To know God’s will, 1) you must be saved and 2) you must be Spirit-filled.
- How can God show you something if you are not even fulfilling what God has already clearly stated as His will?
- What does it mean to be Spirit filled?

- When you were saved, the moment you received Christ, the Holy Spirit came to live within you.
- “If any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.” **Rom. 8:9.**
- **1 Cor. 6:19**, “Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit?”
- **1 Cor. 12:12-13**, “ ... For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body – whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free – and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.”
- Many Christians think they do not have the Holy Spirit.
- We already have the Holy Spirit.
 - We already have “more love” – **Rom. 5:5**, “ ... the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”
 - We already have “more grace” – **2 Cor. 12:9**, the grace He has already given you is sufficient.
 - We already have “more strength” – **Phil. 4:13**, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”
 - We already have “power” – **Acts 1:8**, you have had power since the Holy Spirit came upon you.

Complete In Him

- As Christians we have everything.
- **2 Pet. 1:3**, “According as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness”
- The Apostle Paul in **Col. 2:10**, “And you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.”
- Jesus said in **Acts 1:8**, “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”
- The Holy Spirit is in the Christian all the time as a compact, concentrated, powerful force of divine energy.
- A Christian not yielded to the Spirit of God does not manifest the Christ life.
- We cannot do anything apart from being filled with the Spirit.
- A glove can do nothing on its own – I need to put my hand in the glove to do something. The glove cannot do it without my hand in it.
- How can I know my spiritual gift?
 - Live a Spirit-filled life, and see what God does through you.
- Peter’s experience on the Sea of Galilee, **Matt. 14:22-33.**
 - Boat tossing in a storm.
 - Jesus walks on the water.
 - Peter comes to Jesus on the water.
 - Peter takes his focus off Christ and sinks.
 - Separated from Jesus, Peter was a failure.
 - On three occasions Peter denied Jesus.
- Peter filled with the Holy Spirit, **Acts 2:4.**

- **Acts 2:14**, “Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words.”
- Peter proclaims the gospel with boldness.
- **Acts 3:6**, “Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.” - a lame man healed.
- Jesus said he would send “another Comforter” when He went away. **John 14:16**.
- **Eph. 5:22-6:9** explains how Spirit-filled people are to live.
- **Col. 3** has the same list of how we are to live as Spirit-filled believers.
 - Filled with the Word
 - Submissive
 - Speaking in psalms and spiritual songs
 - Wives submitting, husbands loving, children obeying, parents not provoking
 - **Col. 3:16**, “Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom.”
 - How should I read the Bible?
 - The more you read the Bible the more it saturates your mind.
- To be Spirit-filled is to live a Christ-conscious life.
- This is God’s will that you not only be saved, but that you also be Spirit-filled.

4. Principle #3 – Sanctification (Practical Purity)

- God desires that every believer be sanctified (purified).
- **1 Th. 4:3-7**, “For this is the will of God, even your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord [is] the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified. For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness.”
- Paul gives four principles of practical purity.

#A – Abstain From Fornication

- Stay away from sexual sin.
- Don’t sit and watch others doing it.
- Have no part in these things.
- God “invented” sex, but designed it for the marriage relationship
- God cannot show His will to a person living in sexual sin
- In **1 Cor. 6:12-13**, the Apostle Paul says “All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. Foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods, but God will destroy both it and them. Now the body [is] not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.”

#B – Control Your Body

- Keep our body in subjection to insure that we are honoring God.

- **1 Th. 4:4**, “Every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor.”
- Control the way we dress and what we do with our body.
- Overdressing and gluttony are dishonoring to God.
- Dishonoring God can have no place in the will of God.

#C – Subdue Your Passions

- Do not be lustful, implying sexual desires.
- **1 Th. 4:5**, “Not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God.”
- Don’t act like the godless.
- Live a godly life.
- If you have fallen, ask God for forgiveness and be liberated.

#D – Treat Others Fairly

- Do not take advantage of others.
- **1 Th. 4:6**, “That no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter.”
- Some use others in a business way to advance and get what they want.
- Some use others in a sexual way to gratify their own desires.
- Don’t do it for the “Lord is the avenger of such.”
- **1 Th. 4:8**, “Therefore he who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit.”
- **1 Th. 4:7**, “For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness.”
- God’s will is that we be sanctified, holy, pure.
- A holy man is an awesome weapon in the hand of God.
- **2 Tim. 2:21**, “Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter [dishonor], he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.”
- God’s will is that we be saved, Spirit-filled and sanctified.

5. Principle #4 – Submission

- Being a missionary is considered to be the ultimate sacrifice to some.
- But one cannot be an effective missionary unless he is a “submissionary”, i.e. submissive.
- **1 Pet. 2:13-16**, “Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake; whether to the king as supreme, or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those that do good. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men – as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God.”
- This makes you the best possible citizen in the society that you live
- We are also called to be submissive to parents and to other believers
- God gives us the reason that we are to submit to those in authority
- **1 Pet. 2:15**, “For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.”
- Critics look for faults in Christians; we must strive to eliminate our faults

- We should make the best contribution to society that we can make, and do it within the law
- **1 Pet. 2:16** – don't use your freedom as a cover for being malicious and evil
- **1 Pet. 2:17**, "Honor all [people]. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king."
- **1 Pet. 2:18**, "Servants, be submissive to your masters, with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh."
 - Don't hide under a blanket of so-called Christian liberty
 - Even if your boss is perverse, submit, lovingly and willingly – as long as it does not cause you to go against God's will
- We should live an exemplary life in the society that God has placed us
- If we lived our lives like Peter described we would shake the world
- Even if we work for non-Christian employers we are to give them an honest days' work for a day's pay
- **Eph. 6:5-8**, "Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether [he is] a slave or free."
 - Obey the laws of your government so that people may know that your faith is real
 - Be mindful of your behavior in traffic
- When the church chooses an elder, pick one who is blameless
- **1 Tim. 3:10**, "But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being [found] blameless."
- Obey ALL laws of the land, even if you do not agree with them, unless they violate God's clear revelation and command
- When Peter and John were told not to preach anymore in the name of Jesus, they answered "You judge whether we ought to obey God or men." **Acts 4:18-20**. They went right out of that place and started preaching.
- We need to be the kind of citizens of the world who will draw the attention of the world. We need to be different and have the qualities of salt and light. **Matt. 5:13-16**.
- **Rom. 13:1-14**, "Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God."
- **Eph. 5:22 – 6:9**, wives, husbands, children, slaves, masters - all submit
- God's will is that we be saved, Spirit-filled, sanctified and submissive.

6. Principle #5 – Suffering

- Many would-be followers of Jesus come to Him with dreams of greatness.
- **Mark 9:33-35**, disciples arguing about which of them would be the greatest.

- Jesus told them that real greatness centers in being of service to others.
- But Jesus also promised them in **Matt. 19:28**, “You who have followed Me ... shall sit upon 12 thrones, judging the 12 tribes of Israel.”
- In the will of God, greatness follows along behind suffering, sometimes far behind.
- The will of God involves suffering.
- **Luke 9:57-58**, “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.”
- **1 Pet. 5:10**, “But the God of all grace, who has called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that you have suffered a while, make you perfect, established, strengthened and settled.”
- **1 Pet. 4:19**, “Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.”
- Suffering is par for the course for Christians.
- **1 Pet. 3:17**, “For it is better, if the will of God be so, that you suffer for well-doing, than for evil-doing.”
- It is better that we suffer for doing what is right.
- **1 Pet. 4:13**, “Rejoice, inasmuch as you are partakers of Christ’s sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.”
- **1 Pet. 4:16**, “Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.”
- If you are a Christian who is living a godly life in an ungodly world, you will suffer.
- See also **2 Tim. 3:12**, “Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.”

Out In The Bushes?

- **Phil. 1:29**, “For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake.”
- If you live a godly life, you will get flak.
- If you live “out in the bushes” where the world cannot see you, you will not get flak.
- **Acts 4** records the result of Peter’s and John’s bold preaching.
 - 5000 were converted.
- **Acts 4:3**, the Jews laid hands on Peter and John.
- **Acts 4:7**, “By what power, or by what name, have you done this?”
- Peter and John were put in jail. They preached Jesus to the Sanhedrin.
- They put Paul in the Philippian jail – the jailer and his whole family were saved.

Not Out Of Order

- Peter is preaching Jesus to the Sanhedrin because they had asked him by what name he healed the lame man by the Gate Beautiful. He is not out of order, but answering their questions.
- Peter and John did not pray for protection, but for boldness.
- **Acts 4:29**, “Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word,”

- Peter and John submitted themselves to suffering and had results.
- Today many preach an “emasculated” gospel to accommodate everybody’s prejudice.

Confronting The World

- If you confront the world with the Truth, you will get a reaction.
- Paul said that he gloried in infirmity, tribulation, necessity, even in persecution, because when he was persecuted, people got saved, and that is good.
- **Phil. 2:17**, “Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all.”
- **Col. 1:24**, “I rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh.”
- Paul is enduring the suffering that was meant for Jesus.
- **Gal. 6:17**, “I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.”
- Are you willing to suffer for Him who suffered for you?
- Are you willing to confront the world? That is the will of God.

7. The Final Principle

- God’s will is that you be saved, Spirit-filled, sanctified, submissive, and suffering.
- You haven’t told me what career I should choose, what school to go to, which job I should take, who to marry, etc.
- What is God’s will for my life?
- If you are practicing all five basic principles of God’s will, the next principle of God’s will is – DO WHATEVER YOU WANT!
- God is directing your wants.
- **Ps. 37:4**, “Delight yourself also in the Lord; and He shall give you the desires of your heart.”
 - If you are living a godly life, He will give you the right desires.
- Where should you serve? What is your burden? You may have the right idea, but God may have a different place in mind:
 - Burden for Muslims in Comoro Islands -> Portland
 - Burden for French in Paris -> Montreal
- **Acts 9:32-35**, “...There he found a certain man named Aeneas, who had been bedridden eight years and was paralyzed. And Peter said to him, ‘Aeneas, Jesus the Christ heals you. Arise and make your bed.’ Then he arose immediately.”
 - Peter was passing through the area and was sensitive to God’s calling
- **Acts 16:6-10**, “Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia. After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them. ”So passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, ‘Come over to Macedonia and help us.’ Now after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to

- Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them.”
- Paul was all set to go to Asia Minor, but there was a roadblock. God directed him to Macedonia. This opened up Europe to the Gospel.
 - **Rom. 12:1-2**, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”
 - Whatever happens in your life, give thanks for everything
 - **1 Th. 5:16-18**, “Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”
 - God is using it to shape you into His will.
 - **Rom. 8:28**, “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”
 - Be available to do God’s will.
 - Are you in God’s will now?
 - What do you need to do to be in God’s will?