

God's Will

Some decisions feel overwhelming — even paralyzing — for Christians, especially when they frantically weigh whether or not the decision is God's will or their own. A paradigm shift in the last two centuries trades on the notion that God has already made your decisions, and you must seek and interpret vague signs in order to make the proper choices. This teaching provides a biblically grounded view of God's will that will release Christians to make Godly decisions with confidence.

Plan

- I. GOD'S WILL - 2 BIBLICAL DISTINCTIONS
- II. 5 BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES OF GOD'S WILL FOR YOUR LIFE
- III. GET PRACTICAL AND ADDRESS OBJECTIONS

I. Two types of God's Will

SOVEREIGN WILL

- What God by his complete control either decrees to happen or allows to happen.
- Eph 1:11 "God works all things after the counsel of his will."

WILL OF DESIRE

- What God desires to occur.
- May also be referred to as personal will or moral will.
- Matt 7:21 Not everyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord," will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

II. Five Principles (will of desire)

SAVED

- 2 Peter 3:9 God is patient, not wishing/desiring/willing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.
- 1 Tim 2:4 God is one who desires/wants/wills that all people be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.

SANCTIFIED

- 1 Thes 4:30 ...for this is the will of God, your sanctification
- Sanctification - to be made holy, pure, more like Jesus
- The rest of the principles could be classified under this one
- **Important note: Suffering.** Many people think that if one suffers then they are outside of God's will. That is incorrect thinking.

- CS Lewis: “*God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains; it is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world*”

SPIRIT FILLED

- Eph 5:17-18 Do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. Do not be drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the spirit.
- Different than the indwelling of the Holy Spirit
 - All believers have the holy spirit
 - 1 Cor 6:19
 - Eph 1:13
- Two things about the Eph 5 Scripture
 - Notice the parallelism between drunk (filled) with wine vs being filled (drunk) with the spirit.
 - “Be filled” is a command for something continuous lit translated “be being kept filled.”
- Ephesians list of what flows from a spirit filled person is basically the same as the list in Col 3 that flows from a person filled with the word of Christ (*submission, speaking in psalms and spiritual songs, husbands loving wives, children obeying, etc.*)

There is a direct correlation here. **We become spirit-filled as we are completely saturated with Christ through HIS Word that was inspired by the Holy Spirit Himself!. To become drunk with it! Completely saturated by it!**

SUBMIT

- 1 Peter 2:13-15 Be subject for the Lord’s sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. For this is the Will Of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people.
- It’s God’s will that we submit and we are let in on why - because it silences the critics. Have you noticed that most critics of Christianity are actually critics of Christians?
- Is there ever an exception? Yes, when the earthy authorities contradict God’s authority.
 - The only time a believer should violate the law of the land is when the law either forbids him to do what he has been commanded to do by God or commands him to do what God forbids. - John MacArthur
- Example: Peter and John in Acts 4 after being arrested they were released and told to stop preaching the gospel.

(SUPER) THANKFUL

- 1 Thes 5:16-18 “Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”

IF YOU’VE GOT THESE 5 PRINCIPLES DOWN (not just mentally, but in life) the decisions become pretty straight forward. What do you do? (You may notice a problem - these principles do not describe you)

JUST DO WHAT YOU WANT TO DO. If these principles are truly who you are then who is it that is running your wants?

Remember Psalm 37:4 “*Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart.*” This is a chronological statement.

Notice that these principles are not so much about what you do. GOD’S WILL FOR YOUR LIFE IS PRIMARILY ABOUT WHO YOU ARE. What we do flows from who we are.

Ex: what job vs what kind of worker, where you live vs what kind of neighbor, where you go to school vs what kind of student, who you marry vs what kind of spouse you are.

III. Objections / Getting Practical

DOESN'T GOD HAVE A PLAN?

- Yes, In a sense. He knows everything that will happen. He is in complete control and everything that does happen he at least allowed to happen. But what makes us think that we get to be in on all the details that he will bring or allow to pass before they actually happen?
- Is it glorifying to God if we sit around and wait for supernatural directions, or should we get moving doing what scripture already tells us to do?

DOESN'T GOD DIRECT US PERSONALLY?

YES, absolutely. And how is anything we've said so far not personal?

- We should consult scripture to find God's will - inspired by a person, The Holy Spirit
- When we are saved we are indwelt by a person, The Holy Spirit.
- Sanctification occurs in cooperation with the person of The Holy Spirit.
- We get through suffering with the help and comfort of a person The Holy Spirit.
- Submitting happens with the help of the person of The Holy Spirit.
- We work to be Spirit filled - that's of a person.

This is an extremely personal interaction.

We must not allow a new spiritualist worldview to creep in to our Christianity. The Holy Spirit is not a force completely separated and distant that we may manipulate to get information from, rather, God has intertwined himself with the life of believers through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

FORMULA FOR DECISION MAKING

When faced with a decision ask the following about your options:

Is it Moral?

Is it Wise?

Do I want to?

Example: Did I need to try and divine some sign that Megan (my wife) was the woman God had picked out for me to marry? No. (Apply above questions to marriage)

Lurking underneath these questions should be the directing question: **How can I leverage all that I am to the glory of God and the expansion of his Kingdom?**

It's typical to look back on decisions and notice God's involvement along the way.

"God is not a magic 8-Ball we shake up and peer into whenever we have a decision to make. He is a good God who gives us brains, shows us the way of obedience, and invites us to take risks for him. We know God has a plan for our lives. That's wonderful. The problem is we think He's going to tell us the wonderful plan before it unfolds. We feel like we can know -- and need to know-- what God wants every step of the way. But such preoccupation with finding God's will, as well as the desire may be, is more folly than freedom.

The better way is the biblical way: seek first the kingdom of God, and then trust that He will take care of our needs, even before we know what they are and where we are going."

- Kevin DeYoung, Just Do Something

WHAT ABOUT MY PERSONAL EXPERIENCE?

I'm certainly not saying that he didn't. God can do what he wants.

We see **descriptions** of God supernaturally intervening in Scripture to give directives. Notice a few things about those encounters 1. They are supernatural 2. The directives are clear, not vague impressions. 3. They typically go against conventional wisdom.

Also, don't forget that likely the reason it appears in the Bible is because it was unusual and significant.

DESCRIPTION VS PRESCRIPTION

Personal stories of supernatural directives and Biblical examples are descriptions, but you will not find prescriptions for receiving them. This is because **God does not "try"** to give directives.

Example: Story of pastor/church planter Alex cleaning the men's bathroom and having a vision. This doesn't mean we should take turns cleaning that same bathroom to receive a revelation.

LANGUAGE SUGGESTION

I think that a lot of confusion would have been removed for me if people would have spoken about God's subjective interaction in a more biblical way.

Example: John 14-16 Holy Spirit subjectively acts in teaching, reminding, bearing witness, convicting, guiding to truth, glorifying Christ.

CONCLUSION

As we go about life being who we ought to be and following the principles laid out for us in scripture we will be doing what we ought... God will be running our lives.

And as God is running our lives we will stop focusing on ourselves!

We may start asking, "How can I leverage my life to be more about you?"

From: **God, What is your will for my life?**

To: **God, What is my life for you will?**

Reference Sources: *I was only able to touch the surface of this issue. Here are 4 sources that I recommend. Each take a very high view of scripture to explore this topic.*

1. *Just Do Something, A Liberating Approach to Finding God's Will*, by Kevin DeYoung
Alt title: How to Make a Decision Without Dreams, Visions, Fleeces, Impressions, Open Doors, Random Bible Verses, Casting Lots, Liver Shivers, Writing in the Sky, etc.
2. *Found: God's Will, Find the Direction and Purpose God Wants for Your Life*, by John MacArthur
3. "Decision Making and the Will of God" audio lecture series, by Greg Koukl www.str.org
4. *Decision Making and the Will of God*, by Garry Friesen