

How To Know the Will of God

How can we find God's plan for our lives? How does God reveal His will to us? How does a sinful, finite human being come to know the will of a holy, infinite God? If there is a decision to make, are we to ask God to let the phone ring within the next two minutes to reveal a "yes" or "no?" If we are driving a car while trying to discern God's will, can we simply ask Him to let the stoplight turn green just as we get to it if He wants us to do so and so?

In this lesson we will consider some scriptures that will assure us God gives the guidance we need in every aspect of our lives, and we will look at six ways God reveals His divine will to us. Let's begin with the primary way ...

I. Through His Written Word

The Bible is indispensable in finding God's will for our lives. It is always the first place to go in our search. What do the following references tell us about the Bible and the will of God?

Psalm 119:105:

Psalm 119:130:

Before we go on, it must be pointed out that God has a *general will*, which is the same for all disciples of Jesus Christ, and a *specific will*, which, at least to some degree, is different for each believer. God's general will is revealed clearly and completely in the Bible, but His specific will is revealed only in principles from God's Word. Therefore, to discover God's specific will we must employ a combination of ways God uses.

According to the following references, what is God's general will for all believers?

1 Thessalonians 4:3 -

1 Thessalonians 5:16–18 -

Ephesians 5:18b -

2 Timothy 2:15a -

We need never worry about finding God's specific will for our lives until we have first been obedient in all areas of His general will. The revelation of God's specific will is always preceded by obedience to His general will.

God's general will is always revealed in the Bible as an imperative or a command, while His specific will is revealed in the Bible only through principles. These principles are basic guidelines that we must follow with common sense, discretion, and much prayer in order to find God's specific will. As we read and obey God's general will in the Bible, we become spiritually sensitive to the ways God may use to alert us to His specific will. God's specific will is seldom revealed through just one of the following, but usually through three or more. Also, we must keep in mind that God's specific will never contradict His written Word.

Let's now consider some of the other ways God reveals His will to us.

II. Through the Holy Spirit

Since the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit has indwelt every believer. The Holy Spirit has many ministries, but one of the most exciting is to lead and guide disciples. What do the following references tell us about the Holy Spirit's ministry in relation to God's specific will?

John 16:13a -

Romans 8:14 -

Galatians 5:16–18 -

If we walk in the Spirit, letting God control our lives daily, we can expect the Holy Spirit to reveal God's will to us. It is difficult to describe exactly how the Holy Spirit speaks to us and leads us, but nonetheless He does. It is impossible to prove our salvation experience to an unbeliever, and we cannot prove the leading of the Holy Spirit to one who refuses to believe.

In addition to using the Bible and the Holy Spirit, God reveals His will ...

III. Through an Inner Peace

There are two kinds of peace mentioned in the Bible—the peace with God (Rom. 5:1 & Col. 1:20) and the peace of God (Philip. 4:7).

According to Colossians 3:15, what is a disciple of Jesus Christ to let rule in his heart?

This peace is that inner peace a disciple of Jesus Christ loses when he or she has in some way strayed out of God's will.

The word translated rule is an athletic term. It literally means "to umpire." If we have a decision to make, we should let the peace of Christ be the umpire and call the decision to be made. Sometimes everything else seems right and in God's will, but there is a loss of inner peace—a feeling of uneasiness—as we contemplate a decision. This uneasy feeling is an absence of the peace of Christ, letting us know what we are about to do or have already done is wrong.

Still another way God reveals His will to us is ...

IV. Through the Counsel of Mature Disciples

A mature friend who knows the Bible and its spiritual principles can be a tremendous help in discovering the will of God for your life. This friend may suggest specific scriptures for you to read or may share some valuable insights from his or her own Christian life.

What do the following references tell us about seeking the counsel of others?

Proverbs 24:6 -

Proverbs 27:17 -

Often it may just be in a passing conversation something is said through which God reveals His will to us, using a mature friend without their even knowing it. Friends will help us make the right decision, not the easiest one.

Besides the Bible, the Holy Spirit, an inner peace, and the counsel of friends, God's will can also be discerned ...

V. Through Circumstances

We must always remember no circumstance in the life of a disciple of Jesus Christ develops by chance. In Lesson 2, we found God is omnipotent—all-powerful. He is in control of everything, including the circumstances surrounding each decision a believer must make. We read the Bible because God wrote it, and we should read circumstances because God controls them. Often the Bible refers to circumstances as "open" or "closed" doors. But remember that Satan can do likewise, so be careful. In what way does the following reference suggest that circumstances can reveal God's will?

1 Corinthians 16:6–9 -

As disciples of Jesus, we must be very careful in reading circumstances. Sometimes a door may look closed, but in reality God may only be using that circumstance to test our diligence and faith. Moreover, we should not impulsively walk through every open door, but we should take into consideration the other ways God reveals His will.

Finally, let's consider one more way God can reveal His will to us ...

VI. Through Personal Desires

One thing we must always remember in seeking God's will is God is not a "celestial killjoy." Finding God's will brings immense joy and satisfaction. When we discover God's will, we can expect our deepest desires to be fulfilled. Therefore, when God's will is made known in our lives, it may be something we have wanted to do for years.

As long as we live in this world, our personal desires will sometimes conflict with the will of God, so we must be very cautious (Jer. 17:9). However, as we grow in the knowledge of His Word and in His grace, what will be the result (Psalm 37:4 & Philippians 2:13)?

God seldom uses all six elements. Sometimes He uses two or three big green lights. At other times He gives us five or six small ones. However, if He gives us one red light, we should stop, evaluate further, and pray for clarification.

MEMORY VERSE: 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18