



KNOWING GOD'S WILL

Have you ever felt that you missed God's perfect will and are now stuck forever living in Plan B or even Plan Z? Perhaps you think you should have married someone else or chosen a different career path. Over the years, some of us may have made choices that directly contradict God's word. Other times we have tried hard to discern God's will, but at times still end up unsure, and questioning whether we made the right decision.



Knowing God's will can be much simpler than we often perceive it to be. Let me share with you three things that we can know about God's will:

1. **God tells us what to BE.** Although we might not know for sure what career path God wants for us, there are many passages in the Bible where God clearly tells us what He wants us to be. Throughout His Word, He tells us to *be* loving, forbearing, patient, kind, forgiving, generous, thankful, fruitful, humble, obedient, faithful, self-controlled, pure and a myriad of other descriptions of character traits that He'd like us to develop. God tells us directly and specifically what we are to be or become.
2. **God tells us what to DO.** The Bible already tells us a great deal about what we are to *do* as Christ-followers. He tells us that wherever we are, we are to pray without ceasing, to give thanks in all things, to love our enemies, to bless those who hurt us, to speak the truth in love, to spread the gospel, to help widows and orphans, to encourage one another, to submit to one another, to glorify God, to bear one another's burdens, to

KNOWING GOD'S WILL

overcome evil with good and more. These Christ-like character qualities are to become the attitudes and actions of the Christian who wants to be holy and thus be in God's will.

- 3. God permits personal choices within the wisdom of His word.** Making personal choices is often the one where we struggle the most. Do I become a doctor, lawyer or a missionary? Should I take this new job or not? These type of decisions are often made using a combination of God's word, wisdom, the counsel of others and personal preference. If hardship and suffering accompany our choice, we start to question whether we have made an awful mistake and missed God's will.

Sam was offered a wonderful job opportunity with a new company in California. He prayed about it, had the endorsement of his wife and kids and other good friends, and believed that God was giving him the green light to accept this new job. After only five short months, the company went out of business and Sam and his family were left with no income, no benefits and a lot of bills. "I really thought I heard the Lord tell me to move," Sam said as he scratched his head bewildered. "How do you ever know what God's will is or if you're making the right decision?"

Like Sam, most of us look at temporal things--like success, personal happiness and good results--in order to confirm that our decision was in line with God's will. Had Sam's company continued to prosper, Sam would have not have doubted his decision as God's will. No one who is happily married has second guessed whether she married the right person. We believe that if our choice is in God's will, then good results or blessings will follow. If bad things happen, we conclude it is because we must have stepped out of God's will. But is this thinking Biblical? The apostle Paul thought he was doing God's will but ended up being shipwrecked (Acts 27). Perhaps knowing God's will isn't discerned by looking at the temporal benefits of a decision, but in looking at the eternal results. Is it possible that Sam discerned God's will correctly after all? Sam *was* to move to California with this new job, but not for any temporal pleasures he might have attained with a great job and a secure income. It was God's will that Sam move to California because he knew that the hardship that would come would build the character qualities of Jesus into Sam and his family's life.

When we believe that God's preeminent will is to conform us to the image of Christ, then any decision that we make, God can and *does* use for that purpose. This does not mean we should throw caution to the wind and make reckless choices. However, we need never fear that if we have made a decision that results in difficulties or hardships (whether because of foolish decision making or because we stepped out in faith believing something was God's will but now everything has gone wrong), God's will has been thwarted.

KNOWING GOD'S WILL

God can and does bring us back to Plan A--his best plan for our lives--because He never deviates from that plan no matter what decisions we make. He tells us in Romans 8:28 and 29 that He will cause *all* things, the good decisions we make *and* the bad ones, to work together for our good for those of us who love God. That promise has no time limit. There are no Plan B's. He, who has begun a good work in us, will finish it (Philippians 1:6).

If you'd like more help in understanding this process, a portion of this teaching was taken from my book, [How to Live Right When Your Life Goes Wrong](#).