

Sunday 11 February 2024

Life Group Leaders' Notes

Series: God Of Abraham, Isaac And Jacob

Title: How To Find The Will Of God

Key Text: Genesis 24

Abraham was determined to follow God's plan and continue the line of blessing he had received into the next generation. We too can learn how to find the will of God for our lives: to find the right partner, pursue the right career and receive God's best in every area of life.

Abraham did all he could to pursue the blessing of God not just for his generation but for the generations to come. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were all determined to live differently to the culture around them. In particular we see this in how Abraham advanced and protected his family line in finding a wife for Isaac.

This is a very important decision, and we are defined by the choice we make in this area. Who you marry and choose to partner with in life will either help you and build you up in your life and spiritual walk with God, or they will ultimately pull you down and away from God's plans for you.

Whether you need to find God's will in this area of finding the right partner, choosing your future career, a decision in your family, a business decision, or in your ministry, we can understand very practically through Genesis chapter 24 how we can seek God's will.

1. You must want to find the will of God (Isaiah 55:9; Genesis 24:1-4)
2. Receive the best help you can (Genesis 24:2)
3. You must seek God's will through prayer (Genesis 24:12-14; Matthew 6:10)
4. You must be patient as you look for God's confirmation (Genesis 24:15-21)
5. You need to stay focused and avoid distraction (Genesis 24:54-56)
6. You must be prepared to act on God's direction (Genesis 24:58)
7. You will receive God's best for you (Genesis 24:66-67)

Apply

1. You must want to find the will of God. You must want to do things God's way and not your way. Many people believe that getting your own way is what will bring happiness and a life well lived. But we must be clear that God's ways are better than our ways (Isaiah 55:9). Jesus both knew and exemplified this, praying in the Garden of Gethsemane 'not my will but Yours be done'. We see how Abraham wanted God's best for his son Isaac. He wanted him to have a wife who shared a common faith in God and who was faithful to God (Genesis 24:1-4). Abraham didn't want Isaac's wife to come from the people living around them, those who were serving other gods and had completely different values. This was a decision that was going to impact generations to come. He was devoted to obeying God and he would not compromise on the direction and promise from God that he had received. Do we seriously want to find God's will, or do we just want him to support us in our own will? You need to make that choice and settle it in your heart, like Abraham and like Jesus did, that you want to seek the will of God for your life over your own will.

2. Receive the best help you can. Abraham chose a senior servant who he trusted with all he had (Genesis 24:2). He wasn't acting alone in trying to seek the will of God, he knew he needed the help of others, so he made a plan and sent his servant. Although Abraham couldn't physically go, he wanted someone who he knew was faithful to fulfil this mission. We too need help if we are to find God's will for our lives. People who naturally and spiritually have proved to be faithful, e.g. our leaders, our parents, not just because they have authority, but because they are people who have been faithful to you. Often asking for help like this takes a lot of humility. If we want to find the will of God – be it when finding a spouse, or maybe trying to decide what to study, or which career to accept or pursue – we need to be prepared to ask for help.

3. You must seek God's will through prayer (Genesis 24:12-14). Before the servant started searching for Isaac's wife, before he did anything, he was very specific in his prayers. Maybe

in the past you have been guilty of diving into things before first seeking God in prayer? Prayer is one of the greatest blessings we unlock when we become a Christian. But how can we pray effectively? How can we pray in a way that reveals the will of God to us? Jesus taught us to pray in teaching us the Lord's prayer (Matthew 6:10). To see the purposes of God fulfilled in our lives, to see Him answer our prayers, we have to be in a place of submission where God's will always wins over our own. Maybe today you need to start praying for God to direct you in a situation where you have been trying to figure it out on your own or making decisions based on your own ideas of what would be best. Today choose to pray and ask what God's will in your circumstance is.

4. You must be patient as you look for God's confirmation (Genesis 24:15-21). The servant didn't interfere or try to force anything to happen. We read how Rebekah approached the well and started to fulfil many of the signs that the servant had prayed for. It would have been easy for him to jump in and approach Rebekah as she'd ticked so many of the boxes already, she must be the one! But he ensured he followed God's lead and waited. It says he watched closely. We can't just look for signs that look to back up what we want. We need to be very prudent and open. When you are seeking the will of God, you have got to lay down your own desires and wait. Do not rush into anything: check, watch and wait for confirmation.

5. You need to stay focused and avoid distraction. Reading on, we see God confirm Rebekah was the one, before the servant revealed all this to her and her family. They agreed this plan was from the Lord and for her to marry Isaac (Genesis 24:54-56). Abraham's servant stayed faithful to his mission. He didn't just sit back after seeming to find success when the breakthrough from God to provide the perfect wife for Isaac had come. How easy it would have been for the servant to give himself a pat on the back for a job well done and stay feasting with the family for 10 days instead of a long, hot, camel ride home! But he stayed focused and alert. When we are pursuing God's will for our lives, temptations can come at any stage; temptation to take matters into your own hands, to do it your way and not God's way, or to give up altogether. When God has confirmed His will to you, you need to focus on its fulfilment. Put these dreams into your dream book, in your devotional journal. Keep praying, stay focused.

6. You must be prepared to act on God's direction (Genesis 24:58). Rebekah was faithful in answering the call of God. This whole experience would have been a whirlwind for her, but she was spiritually alert and could see this was the will of God. She did not hesitate or delay in answering the call to action and to leave for her new life. It's one thing to know something is the will of God, but it's another to do something about it. Faith without works is fruitless. Maybe God has confirmed His will for you in an area of your life already e.g. that you should share your faith with a friend or colleague, launch a life group, take a new job, start a family. You need to be quick to answer, go in faith with the knowledge that God is with you and will be for you!

7. You will receive God's best for you (Genesis 24:66-67). Through faithfully pursuing the will of God, God's best was released over this family: Rebekah very quickly had a husband who loved her deeply; Isaac was comforted and found peace; and Abraham ensured the blessing and promise he had received would pass to the next generation. God's best wasn't just individual - it wasn't just God's best for Isaac, for Rebekah, for Abraham - it was God's best for the future and how He would ultimately bless the whole world. So, we must pay attention and be sure that if we turn away from independence and start doing things God's way instead of our way, we too are going to be blessed and so will our decedents after us. When we walk in God's will for our lives, not just in His will for a partner, but also His will for a career, for our purpose, we too will receive His best. Today you can make that decision to say like Jesus, God 'not my will but Yours be done'.