

Small Group Discussion + Leader Guide

Sunday, May 10, 2026

Preached By: Jake McMillan

Understanding the Will of God: *Living Confidently in God's Will*

Opening Prayer & Icebreaker

Icebreaker Question: Share about a time when you agonized over a decision, big or small. What made it so difficult?

Sermon Summary

This sermon addresses two common questions believers have about God's will: "What if I make a wrong decision?" and "How do I live confidently in God's will without missing it?" The pastor challenges us to redefine what constitutes a "wrong decision" — not by expected outcomes, but by whether we are living in obedience to God's Word. The will of God for believers is ultimately our sanctification (becoming more like Christ), not necessarily material success or comfortable circumstances.

Key Takeaways

1. Wrong decisions are defined by sin, not by outcomes - We cannot measure God's will by our assessment of "successful" results.
2. God's will for your life is your sanctification - God desires to make you holy and set you apart for His purposes (1 Thessalonians 4:3).
3. Being Spirit-led means living in obedience to God's Word - It's not about mystical signs, but about putting sin to death and walking in righteousness.

4. God sovereignly directs our steps - We can trust Him with the outcomes while we focus on faithfulness.
5. Suffering and trials serve sanctifying purposes - Difficult circumstances don't mean we've missed God's will.

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Problem

1. How have you typically thought about "God's will" for your life? Has it been more focused on outcomes or obedience?
2. The sermon contrasted the Rich Fool (Luke 12) with the Apostle Paul in prison. What strikes you most about this comparison? How does it challenge our cultural definitions of success?
3. Why do you think Christians are so prone to measuring God's blessing by external circumstances rather than internal transformation?

Diving Deeper into Scripture

4. Read Romans 8:28-30 together. How does understanding God's ultimate outcome (conformity to Christ's image) change the way you approach daily decisions?
5. Review Galatians 5:16-25. What does it practically look like to "walk by the Spirit" in your current season of life? Which "deeds of the flesh" do you most struggle with?
6. Read Proverbs 16:1-9. How do these verses balance human planning with divine sovereignty? What comfort or challenge do you find here?

Personal Application

7. Think about a decision you're currently facing. How would viewing it through the lens of "Will this lead me toward holiness or sin?" change your approach?
8. The sermon states that when we sin (make a wrong decision), we should "confess, repent, and believe the gospel." Why is it important to include all three of these steps? Which one do you tend to skip?
9. Where in your life are you most tempted to worry about outcomes rather than trust God's sovereign provision (Matthew 6:25-34)?

Going Deeper

10. How does understanding that God uses suffering for sanctification (1 Peter 1:3-9, James 1:2-4) change the way you view current or past difficulties?
11. The sermon emphasizes examining "the condition of our hearts" and our motives. How can we practically do this without becoming overly introspective or paralyzed by self-doubt?

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge

Choose one of the following to practice this week:

Option 1: Decision Inventory

- List current decisions you're facing (big or small)
- For each one, ask: "Is either option sinful according to Scripture?"
- If neither is sinful, make a wise choice and trust God with the outcome
- Journal about what it feels like to release control of results

Option 2: Motive Examination

- Each evening, review your day and ask: "What motivated my actions today—God's glory or my comfort/success?"
- Confess where you fell short
- Thank God for His grace and ask for His help tomorrow

Option 3: Trust Exercise

- Identify one area where you're anxious about outcomes
- Find 3-5 Scripture passages about God's sovereignty and provision
- Memorize one verse and pray it daily when anxiety arises

Accountability Questions

- What decision are you currently struggling with, and how can this group pray for you?
- Where do you need to confess sin and believe the gospel afresh?
- What is one practical way you will pursue holiness this week?

Memory Verse

Proverbs 16:9 - *"The heart of man plans his way, but Yahweh directs his steps."*

or

1 Thessalonians 4:3 - *"For this is the will of God, your sanctification."*

Closing Prayer Focus

- Thank God for His sovereign direction over our lives
- Confess areas where we've measured His will by outcomes rather than obedience
- Ask for wisdom to make decisions that honor Him
- Pray for trust in God's provision and purposes, even in difficult circumstances
- Request the Spirit's power to pursue holiness in specific areas

For Further Study

- Read the entire context of the passages mentioned: Luke 12:13-21, 2 Timothy 4, Romans 8:12-14, Galatians 5:16-25
- Study other biblical examples of people who honored God despite difficult outcomes (Job, Joseph, Daniel)
- Consider reading: Just Do Something by Kevin DeYoung or Decision Making and the Will of God by Garry Friesen