

Small Group Discussion + Leader Guide

Sunday, May 3, 2026

Preached By: Matt Stewart

Understanding the Will of God: *Discerning God's Will*

Opening Prayer & Icebreaker

Icebreaker Question: Share about a time when you faced a difficult decision and didn't know which way to go. How did you ultimately make your choice?

Sermon Summary

This sermon explores how to discern God's will in our decision-making, particularly in areas where we have freedom to choose. Rather than expecting a "blueprint" from God, we're invited into a relationship where wisdom guides our choices. The key framework is discerning God's will through God's Way, God's Word, and God's People.

Key Takeaways

1. God has already made many things clear through Scripture regarding moral choices and who we should be as Christians.
2. We have freedom in non-moral decisions (career, location, purchases), and this freedom is an opportunity to walk with God, not a grey area to fear.
3. The Wisdom Model teaches us to make decisions by:
 - Living God's Way (not conforming to the world)
 - Knowing God's Word (transforming our minds)
 - Seeking God's People (wise counsel)

4. Maturity produces wisdom - as we grow spiritually, our "wanter" gets fixed and our desires align with God's.
5. We have guardrails - God's sovereignty on one side and His providence on the other protect us as we make choices.

Discussion Questions

Section 1: Understanding God's Will (15-20 minutes)

1. What misconceptions about "God's will" have you struggled with in the past? How does the idea of a "blueprint" versus a "relationship" change your perspective?
2. Read Romans 12:2. What does it mean practically to "not be conformed to this world"? What are some specific ways our culture's thinking differs from God's wisdom?
3. The sermon mentions that God's will includes our sanctification and maturity. How does viewing spiritual growth as God's will for you change how you approach daily life?

Section 2: The Wisdom Model (20-25 minutes)

4. God's Way: The sermon states that "a barrier to discerning God's will is when we try to stay as close to the world as we can." What areas of your life might be too influenced by worldly thinking? How can you create more separation?
5. God's Word: How does regular time in Scripture actually change the way you make decisions? Can someone share an example of when God's Word gave them clarity on a choice?
6. God's People: Proverbs 15:22 says "without counsel plans fail, but with many advisers they succeed." Who are the wise counselors in your life? Is there a decision you're facing now where you need to seek godly counsel?
7. The sermon uses the illustration of knowing someone so well you can make decisions for them. How does spending time with God

help us know His heart better? What spiritual disciplines help you "know" God more deeply?

Section 3: The Decision Matrix (15-20 minutes)

8. Review the decision-making filter from the sermon:
 - Does the Bible allow it?
 - Does my conscience allow it?
 - What's the effect on other Christians, non-Christians, and my spiritual life?
9. How might this framework help you with a current decision you're facing?
10. The sermon mentions that "the more you obey, the clearer some of these choices become." How have you experienced this in your own life?
11. What's the difference between freedom FROM Scripture and freedom IN Scripture? Why is this distinction important?

Section 4: Living in Freedom (10-15 minutes)

11. The sermon describes the "guardrails" of God's sovereignty and providence. How does knowing God is both in control AND actively involved give you confidence to make bold choices?
12. Looking at the 5% Life principles (personal time with God, worship, community, service), which area do you need to strengthen to grow in wisdom?

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge:

Choose ONE of the following to practice this week:

Option 1: Decision Audit

- Identify a decision you're currently facing (big or small)

- Walk through the decision matrix from the sermon
- Journal your thoughts and pray through each step

Option 2: Wisdom Seeking

- Identify someone in your church community who demonstrates godly wisdom
- Schedule time to meet with them and ask for counsel on a decision or area of growth
- Come prepared with specific questions

Option 3: Mind Renewal

- Choose one area where you've been "conformed to the world"
- Find 3-5 Scripture passages that speak to God's perspective on this area
- Memorize one verse and meditate on it daily

Option 4: Obedience Step

- Identify one thing God has already made clear in His Word that you've been avoiding
- Take one concrete step of obedience this week
- Share your experience with an accountability partner

Group Activity: Testing Decisions Together

Exercise:

Have group members share a current decision they're wrestling with (job change, relationship, financial choice, ministry opportunity, etc.). As a group, practice using the wisdom model:

1. Is this a moral issue addressed clearly in Scripture?
2. What biblical principles apply to this situation?
3. What would glorify God most?
4. What wise counsel can this group offer?
5. How might this decision affect spiritual growth?

Closing Reflection

Read together:

Proverbs 3:5-6 "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths."

Final Question:

What is one way you can "acknowledge Him" in a decision you're facing this week?

Prayer Requests & Closing Prayer

- Share decisions group members are facing
- Pray for wisdom, transformed minds, and freedom to walk boldly with God
- Thank God for His sovereignty, providence, and active involvement in our lives

Closing Prayer Focus:

- Wisdom for specific decisions shared
- Growth in spiritual maturity
- Freedom from fear of "missing" God's will
- Desire to glorify God in all things