

Small Group Discussion + Leader Guide

Sunday, April 19, 2026

Preached By: Matt Alexander

Understanding the Will of God: *Hidden, Perfect, and Permissive*

Leader Teaching Overview:

Help your group understand that confusion about God's will often leads to fear, but biblical truth leads to freedom. Emphasize three key truths: (1) God's sovereignty means His hidden will cannot be disrupted, (2) God's revealed will in Scripture is clear and calls for obedience, and (3) God's permissive will reminds us that even in hardship, God is still working. Reinforce that the Christian life is not about finding a secret path, but walking faithfully in obedience and trust.

Memory Verse (ESV):

“The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.” — Deuteronomy 29:29 (ESV)

1. What does Deuteronomy 29:29 teach?

Answer: God has hidden things and revealed truth for us to obey.

Teaching Point: Clarify the difference between God's hidden will (His sovereign plan) and revealed will (Scripture). Remind the group that our responsibility is obedience, not figuring out God's secret plan. Application: Ask—Where are you tempted to demand answers from God instead of trusting Him?

2. Why do people fear missing God's will?

Answer: They think there is only one path and fear wrong choices.

Teaching Point: Address the common misconception that God's will is fragile. Emphasize God's sovereignty. Application: Encourage the group to replace fear with trust in God's control.

3. How do we discern God's will (Romans 12:2)?

Answer: Through transformed thinking and spiritual growth.

Teaching Point: Focus on the role of Scripture, prayer, and community in renewing the mind. Application: Ask each person to identify one habit that helps renew their mind.

4. What is God's will (1 Thess. 4:3)?

Answer: Sanctification—holy living.

Teaching Point: Stress that God's will is primarily about who we are becoming, not just what we are doing. Application: Discuss practical ways to pursue holiness this week.

5. What does Joseph's story teach?

Answer: God uses evil for good.

Teaching Point: Highlight God's sovereignty over suffering. God is working even when we cannot see it. Application: Invite testimonies or reflections on difficult seasons.

6. What is permissive will?

Answer: What God allows while remaining sovereign.

Teaching Point: Clarify that God is never out of control. Even what He allows serves His purposes. Application: Help the group process suffering through the lens of God's sovereignty.

7. How do we respond?

Answer: Trust, obey, persevere.

Teaching Point: Break down each response: Trust (Hidden Will), Obey (Perfect Will), Persevere (Permissive Will). Application: Have group repeat and personalize each response.

8. What is one step you can take this week?

Answer: Personal obedience step.

Teaching Point: Move from knowledge to action. Obedience is the goal. Application: Have each person share a specific next step.

Dig Deeper:

Romans 8:28 — *Discuss how God works all things for good. Micah 6:8 — What does walking humbly look like daily? Genesis 50:20 — Reflect on God's sovereignty in hardship. Leader Tip: Encourage journaling or prayerful reflection during the week.*

Closing Prayer:

Lord, You are sovereign over all things. Teach us to trust You when we don't understand, obey You in what You have revealed, and persevere in every season. Shape us into people who reflect Christ in our daily lives. Help us to walk in faith, not fear. In Jesus' name, Amen.