

Curious – How Can I Know God’s Will

5/9/21

Romans 12:1-2

Sunday AM

In preparing for today, I came across a humorous article from Mom’s about the things they’ve learned from their kids/grandkids.

If you hook a dog leash over a ceiling fan, the motor is not strong enough to rotate a 42-lb. boy wearing Batman underwear/superman cape. It is strong enough to spread paint on all four walls of a 20 x 20 room.

When you hear the toilet flush and the words "Uh-oh" – it's already too late.

A king-size waterbed holds enough water to fill a 2000 sq foot house 4 inches deep.

Legos will pass thru the digestive tract of a 4-yr old; while linking logs, duplos, and erector sets will not.

No matter how much Jell-O you put in a pool, you still can't walk on water. Pool filters do not like Jell-O.

You probably do not want to know what that odor is.

The Austin fire department has a 5-min response time.

The spin cycle on the washing machine doesn’t make earthworms dizzy. It will make a cat dizzy – and a cat can throw up twice their body weight when dizzy.

Happy Mother’s Day! I hope you all have a blessed and wonderful day – and that all who call you mom or see you as a mother figure will honor you today.

Today we’re finishing up a series answering questions from our church pertaining to faith, religion, and culture. So far, we’ve looked at questions about the existence of God’s, is Jesus the way to God, is doubt a sin, and what’s God plan for the end. Today, b/c I will not have the chance to speak to our soon-to-be grads in a few weeks, I want to answer a question pertinent to their lives – ***How can I know God’s will for my life?***

This is a topic near/dear to my heart – and one of the most vital questions in life. Several yrs ago, a ***USA Today*** survey asked, “If you could ask God one question what would you ask?” 80% of Americans replied – **What is God’s will/purpose for my life?**

As a pastor, this is the single most asked question I get. *How can I know God’s will for me?* As I’ve sought to answer this question for others, I’ve come to realize that God’s will is mysterious yet obvious – complex yet simple. I’ve also learned that God wants me to know and live in the center of His will for me.

It’s God’s will to reveal His will to anyone who is willing to do his will.

Yet confusion often arises here b/c too often, we don’t want God’s will – we want our will to be God’s will.

But God isn’t our co-pilot or genie in a bottle. So, while our human tendency might be to focus on our ambitions – on where we should go, how we should get there, and what we should do once we’ve arrived – this

doesn't appear to be God's concern. We might pursue life from point A to point B – but God is far more focused on the journey than the destination. He is much more engaged in WHO we are than in WHAT we do. Although what we do is important to His plan.

WTM – You can be certain God wants you to know and live in the center of His will. But to do this, we have to pursue God's will according to His plan.

I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. Romans 12:1-2

This text tells me that God's will isn't random. Yet neither is it according to our wishes/plans. His will is perfect/pleasing and according to His plans. We just have to live in such a way that test and approve it.

Today, I want to take a few min. to offer some clarity about God's will along w/ a plan for us to know how to discover His plan for our lives, b/c God wants you to know His will more than you want to know His will.

I The **EXPRESSION** of God's Will

God's will isn't hard to understand, although at times, it might seem challenging to see. To appreciate His will, we need to understand the (3) primary facets:

A **PROVIDENTIAL** Will of God

Also known as the *Decreed* or *Sovereign* will, the **Providential Will** of God includes anything He has pre-ordained and planned that no person has influence or say. This includes anything God has created in time/space and set into motion that's beyond man's scope, understanding, and influence. Things like the creation and the plan of salvation.

IOW – God didn't need to take request when He flung the stars in place; nor did He need our help when He determined how high to make the mountains or which animals to create? He neither needed nor sought our ideas. If He had, I would've advised Him to leave off mosquitoes, hornets, spiders and snakes to name a few.

He also didn't seek our advice on His ***plan of salvation*** – that is, how a person going to have their sins forgiven and enter a relationship w/ the Creator? Can you imagine what kind of mess we'd have if the plan of salvation was left up to us. We'd say things like all roads lead to God, co-exist, and just be a good person – oh wait... No, God decided the means of grace – and then provided the solution w/ Jesus dying on a cross.

B **PRESCRIPTIVE** Will of God

Also known as the *Depictive* or *Preceptive* Will, the **Prescriptive Will** of God is the general will of God as outlined in Scripture. It's where God reveals to us what is right/wrong, what's good/evil, what's of God/not of God. It's where God reveals His progressive plan so that we might know Him and His plan of redemption. It's also where He establishes guidelines/boundaries so that we have basic guidance/direction for living.

God Word is His general truth to provide us w/ everything we need for life and godliness.

His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life thru our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory/goodness. Thru these He has given us His great and precious promises, so that thru them you may participate in His divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. 2 Peter 1:3-4

Thus, God has given us the Scripture to reveal His general will for all of us – that is, the Bible is God’s basic will for everyone. So, when the Bible says, *Thou shall not kill, or steal or lie* – it applies to everyone in every culture in every age.

So, God’s prescriptive will is truth to lead us to Him. **It’s truth that applies to everyone equally** – guiding us to know Him and to discover and live out His will.

C **PERSONAL** Will of God

This is where we live. This is the burning question w/in the soul of everyone: What is God’s Will for me?

Also known as the *Directive or Preferential* Will, the **Personal Will** of God has to do w/ God’s plan/purpose for me. Who and what has He called me to be/do?

Should I marry this person or not? Should I take this job or not? How should I respond to my kids, spouse and boss? Should I make this move or not? Should I buy this house or not? And so on and so on...

W/in God’s Personal Will is His **Perfect/Permissive** Will. His Perfect Will is when your life aligns/tracks w/ His plan/purpose for your life. His Permissive Will is what He allows or gives permission even though it is not His perfect plan. That is, God allows you to make decisions of your own human will, whether good/sinful, and then affords you the opportunity to experience the results of these decisions.

EXAMPLE – Pic of straight-line w/ a squiggly line running over top w/ intersecting points. The straight-line represents God’s perfect will, while the squiggly line represents God’s permissive will. We cannot do anything outside God’s sovereignty, but w/in it, we can either align to His perfect will thru obedient followship of Scripture and the H.S. or we can make a way for ourselves only often intersecting w/ His Will.

In Romans 12, Paul tells us that to align/intersect w/ God’s Perfect Will requires that we offer our lives to Him in surrender and seek first His Kingdom/will.

I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – the is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. Romans 12:1-2

How does a person discover/experience God’s will? Let me offer you a (6) step plan:

II **EXPERIENCING** God’s Will

Scripture offers (6) steps to aligning w/ His will. These steps are like a recipe. The ingredients must be added in a particular order. You can’t start w/ #5 and skip the others, but you start w/ #1 and move to #6.

A **ACCEPT** God’s Plan for Surrender

offer your bodies to God...

offer – to lay down. It’s a volitional act requiring your formal surrender. We have to raise the white – and say, “I’m no longer going to do life my way on my terms, but God’s way – on His terms. I’m going to accept that His way is better than my way.

This is no easy task b/c it’s counter intuitive. **Why?** B/c we don’t naturally submit to anyone or anything – including God. At creation, man was dependent on God, but thru sin, we’ve sought to live independently of Him – we have sought to turn unto our own way.

Our surrender will never occur naturally, but only supernaturally thru accepting Christ as Savior and embracing His call for us to live under the influence of the H.S. in an abiding life.

But it doesn’t stop there. Not only are we required to surrender, we have to submit to His Word.

B **ALLOW** God’s Word to Guide

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

If we’re going to live in submitted to God – we must choose to not be **conformed** to the world b/c we want to be **transformed** by His Word.

conformed – don’t be stuffed in the mold of the world.

transformed – changed from the inside-out by God

Both words are passive verbs in the Greek meaning the action happens to the subject from an outside source instead of the subject doing the action. Meaning – its not what I can do, but what the H.S. does in/thru me. Instead of the world seeking to stuff us into its mold, God wants to shape us into His image.

This is the power of Scripture, and why it is so vital to hide it in our hearts, study it, and apply it. It’s b/c God speaks **rhema** (revelation) thru His truth.

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, b/c you know from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation thru faith in Christ. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:14-17

If you’re trying to find God’s will w/out consulting His Word – you are like a blind man trying to find a hidden door in a dark room.

C **ASCERTAIN** God’s Design for You

Psalms 139 says we’re all fearfully/wonderfully made, knit together in our mother’s womb. Meaning, we all have been uniquely designed/gifted by God for His purpose. Key to discovering God’s Personal Will is discerning who we are and how we’re wired by God.

We are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus to do good works. Ephesians 2:10

D **ASK** Godly People for Counsel

The way of a fool seems right to him, but a wise man listens to Godly advice. Proverbs 12:15

We seek advice from numerous sources – our parents, friends, kids, colleagues, pastors and others. God's encouragement is to seek the advice of Godly people. Seek the counsel of people who will tell you what you need to hear and not just what you want to hear.

1 Are they **GODLY**

Do you see tangible proof this person walks w/ God and lives under the influence of the H.S.?

2 Are they **TRUSTWORTHY**

Are you sure this person can keep a secret and not use your concern against you?

3 Are they **OBJECTIVE**

When you lay out the facts – can this person refrain from being subjective and give you what you need?

4 Are they **MISSIONAL**

Do they take into account how their counsel is going to impact God's Kingdom in/thru your life?

5 Are they **ENCOURAGING**

Will they do more than point you in the right direction, will they walk w/ you and offer accountability?

Never turn to someone who doesn't have the ability to help you, b/c they only have the ability to hurt you.

E **ANTICIPATE** God's Spirit to Prompt

In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps. Pr. 16:9

One of the jobs of the H.S. is to guide us to God's will. As we walk w/ God, the H.S. nudges/leads us to the heart/will of the Father. This is why it's important to trust in the Lord w/ all of our hearts and not in our own understanding. It's b/c when we acknowledge Him by putting Him first, we allow Him will direct our steps.

F **AWAIT** God's Peace to Affirm

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach/admonish one another w/ all wisdom thru psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing to God w/ gratitude in your hearts. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father thru him.

Colossians 3:15-17

This is a simple truth – God's peace will never lead you away from God's will. In those moments you don't have peace w/in – it should serve as a holy pause.

The will of God will never lead you where the peace of God will not keep you. Unknown

I can't begin to tell you how many times when faced w/ an important decision that I've exercised this plan to discover God's will for me in that moment. And God wants to do the same in your life. He wants you to know His will/plan for you. He wants to guide your steps. But it requires that we follow God's recipe – and this requires faith/obedience.

It is really simple – when it comes to life, you can choose to live by fate or you can trust God and live by faith.