

How to Know God's Will — Choose Wisely!

Andy Deane · 2/25/2024 · Selected Scriptures

Today we'll figure out the age old question, How do we know what God wants us to do?

God's "general will" vs. God's "specific will" for our lives:

- God's "general will" is for all of us to be: Saved (1 Timothy 2:3-4); Spirit-filled (Ephesians 5:17-18); Sanctified (1 Thessalonians 4:3-7); Submissive (1 Peter 2:13-15); and even Suffering (2 Tim. 3:12).
- But what most people are curious about is God's "specific will" for their life.

Here are some of the least effect ways to determine God's specific will for your life.

- A gut feeling, praying away the desire, deciding based on peace, putting out a fleece, "Bible flopping".
- Feelings are important, but we ought not to label such experiences as the inerrant voice of the eternal god.

What does Bible say about knowing God's specific will for your life?

- Nothing. Nowhere is there a step-by-step process for it.
- Deut. 29:29, *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.*

Does the Bible give me any hints? A main principle is given to us by Jesus.

- Ma. 6:31-34, *31 So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. 33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.*
- Proverbs 3:5-6, *5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; 6 in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.*
- The principle is seek first God's kingdom & don't be anxious! He wants us to rest in fact that he knows the future.

How can we make wise decisions? Ask these 7 wise questions.

1. Is your decision within the boundaries of Scripture?
 - Checking to see if it's allowed, encouraged, cautioned, or denied, is a good start.
 - Psalms 119:105, *your word is a lamp to my feet...*
2. Have you prayed about the decision?
 - James 1:5-7, *if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask god...*
 - Prayer shows God we are humble and depend on Him to guide.
3. Will this decision bring God glory?
 - 1 Corinthians 10:31, *So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.*
 - Knowing your final destination (God's goal for your life) helps with step by step directions.
4. Does your decision show God's love to others?
 - When it comes to decisions not clearly dealt with in the bible (gray areas), we decide on the basis of love.
 - Philippians 2:3-4, *...let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.*
5. Are you overemphasizing a coincidence?
 - Circumstances may simply be factors that bring us to the point of a decision, but aren't always god guiding us.
 - John Boykins, "we've elevated coincidence to status of a miracle, & interpretation of coincidence to gospel."
 - Sometimes you can read providence backwards; but it is difficult & dangerous, to try to read in the present.
 - Why? Isaiah 55:8-9, *my thoughts are not your thoughts...*
 - Don't be mastered by circumstances, just evaluate them.
6. Have you sought counsel from others?
 - Proverbs 18:1, *a man who isolates himself seeks his own desire; he rages against all wise judgment.*
 - Proverbs 11:14, *Where there is no counsel, the people fall; But in the multitude of counselors there is safety.*
7. Do you want to do this thing?
 - If all those 5 things are true for your life, you can do whatever you want because God will place in your heart desires that are in alignment with His will: Psalms 37:4, *Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart.*

God's sovereignty removes all the fear and the pressure.

1. God's sovereignty means that you have responsibility, but not pressure!

- Just make a good decision and trust God's in control!
- Colossians 3:23, ... *whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the lord.*

2. God's sovereignty means that He'll gently overrule us if needed:

- Proverbs 16:9, *a man's heart plans his way, but the Lord directs...*
- Proverbs 11:3, *the integrity of the upright will guide them...*
- Example of God overruling: Genesis 20:3-6, *3 But God came to Abimelek in a dream one night and said to him, "You are as good as dead because of the woman you have taken; she is a married woman." 4 Now Abimelek had not gone near her, so he said, "Lord, will you destroy an innocent nation? 5 Did he not say to me, 'She is my sister,' and didn't she also say, 'He is my brother'? I have done this with a clear conscience and clean hands." 6 Then God said to him in the dream, "Yes, I know you did this with a clear conscience, and so I have kept you from sinning against me. That is why I did not let you touch her.*

3. God's sovereignty means other people can't ruin God's plan for you:

- When it comes to the decisions that are in bounds, we have a great deal of freedom. God doesn't have all of our life's decisions hidden in some kind of movie script we must read. He knows, but leaves choices to us.
- Example of other people trying to ruin: Genesis 50:20, *You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.*

"God is not a magic 8-ball we shake up and peer into whenever we have a decision to make. He is a good god who gives us brains, shows us the way of obedience, and invites us to take risks for him. We know god has a plan for our lives. That's wonderful. The problem is we think he's going to tell us the wonderful plan before it unfolds. We feel like we can know—and need to know—what god wants every step of the way. But such preoccupation with finding god's will, as well-intentioned as the desire may be, is more folly than freedom. The better way is the biblical way: seek first the kingdom of god, and then trust that he will take care of our needs, even before we know what they are and where we're going." — Kevin DeYoung, *Just Do Something*.