

CHAPTER FOUR

KNOWING GOD'S WILL

Sometimes it may seem to you that God's will is hidden in a buried treasure chest and you have only small portions of the map to find it. But is this true? Is God keeping his plans from you as some hidden secret? Or will he allow you to follow him, and lead you step by step?

Proverbs 3:5-6 can clear up misconceptions about knowing God's will. Meditate on it carefully: "Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight."

THE REVEALED WILL OF GOD

1. What should be one of your desires as a follower of Christ?
Ephesians 5:17

2. What does God promise you concerning his will for your life?
Psalms 32:8

3. What does God reveal about his will for you in the following verses?
1 Thessalonians 4:3

- 1 Thessalonians 5:18* _____
- _____
- 1 Peter 2:15* _____
- _____

4. What was the psalmist's attitude toward God's will in Psalm 40:8?

What actions help produce this attitude? _____

5. Who is your source of strength to do God's will?
Philippians 2:13 _____
- John 15:5* _____

"The will of God is not like a magic package let down from heaven by a string. . . . The will of God is far more like a scroll that unrolls every day. . . . The will of God is something to be discerned and to be lived out every day of our lives. It is not something to be grasped as a package once for all. Our call, therefore, is basically not to follow a plan or a blueprint, or to go to a place or take up a work, but rather to follow the Lord Jesus Christ."

PAUL LITTLE⁴

We often face decisions on issues which Scriptures do not provide specific instructions for. In these cases, a Christian should apply the *principles* of decision-making which are contained in Scripture.

PRINCIPLES OF DECISION-MAKING

Objectives from Scripture

God has given particular commandments which can help you make decisions concerning your activities. If a particular course of action is inconsistent with the Bible, then you know it is not his will for you.

⁴ From *Affirming the Will of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1971), 8.

6. Using the following verses, state in your own words some of God's objectives for you. God wants you to . . .

Matthew 6:33 _____

Matthew 22:37-39 _____

Matthew 28:18-20 _____

1 Peter 1:15 _____

2 Peter 3:18 _____

Ask yourself some questions based on these and similar verses to determine your course of action:

- a. Am I putting God's desire ahead of my own?
- b. Will it help me to love God and others more?
- c. How does this action relate to my personal involvement in fulfilling Christ's Great Commission?
- d. Will this help me lead a more holy life?
- e. Will this course of action increase my personal knowledge of Christ?

Honestly answering these questions will help you make a decision in accordance with God's Word.

7. Using the following verses, develop questions that will help you discern God's will.

1 Corinthians 6:12 _____

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 _____

1 Corinthians 8:9 _____

1 Corinthians 10:31 _____

Obedience to God

If you refuse to obey God in what he has already shown you, why should God give you further direction? Obedience to the known will of God is important in receiving further guidance.

8. How do you gain an understanding of God's will?

Psalms 37:31 _____

Psalms 119:105,130 _____

9. What other action can you take to learn God's will?

Psalms 143:8 _____

James 1:5 _____

10. Psalm 25:4-5 is a prayer of David concerning God's direction for his life. Write this prayer in your own words, and use it now as a prayer of your own heart.

11. What conditions are given in Romans 12:1-2 for finding God's will?

12. Whose guidance have you been promised as you seek direction from God? *John 16:13*

13. Read Psalm 27:14 and Isaiah 30:18. How does "waiting on the Lord" relate to knowing God's will? How do you do it?

Satan rushes men—God guides them.

Openness to God's Leading

Many difficulties in determining the Lord's will are overcome when you are truly ready to do whatever his will may be.

14. You may not always know all of the possible alternatives in determining what to do. What is a means by which you can gather additional information? *Proverbs 15:22*

Counsel should be obtained from mature Christians who themselves are committed to the will of God and who know you well. It helps to talk with others who have previously made decisions in matters you are presently experiencing.

15. Explain the principle Jesus used in answering those who were questioning him. *John 7:17*

How does this apply to knowing God's will?

16. When you know what God wants you to do, how should you do it? *Ephesians 6:6*

17. What are other factors that can help you discern God's leading? Match the following verses with the appropriate phrase.

- ___ Careful and wise thinking a. *Colossians 3:15*
- ___ Inner spiritual peace b. *Romans 13:1*
- ___ Legal obligations c. *Ephesians 5:15-17*

**PRINCIPLES
IN PRACTICE**

18. Examine the following examples from the Bible and ask yourself these questions: What decision was made? What was the major issue in this decision?

PERSON _____ **DECISION** _____

Gideon *Judges 6:25-28* _____

Moses *Hebrews 11:25-26* _____

Demas *2 Timothy 4:10* _____

19. The following chart may be helpful in determining God's will for a particular decision you now face.

Decision I am facing: _____

SCRIPTURAL OBJECTIVES **YES** **NO** **NEUTRAL**

Am I putting God's desire ahead of my own? _____

Will it help me love God and others more? _____

Will it help me to fulfill the Great Commission? _____

Will it help me lead a more holy life? _____

Will it help me further my Christian training? _____

Other questions: _____

Obedience to God

Are there other areas in which I need to obey God before determining this decision?

What have I seen recently in the Scriptures that relates to this decision?

Have I prayed about this decision?

Openness to God's Leading

What are the various options I have in making this decision?

OPTIONS ADVANTAGES DISADVANTAGES

Am I truly willing to do whatever God wants me to? What counsel have I received from others?

With what decision do I feel inner spiritual peace?

What circumstances relate to this decision?
