

# Knowing God's Will—What the Bible Says About How to Discern and Follow it

**Guiding Scripture:** [God] "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee..." (Psalm 32:8)

Discerning the will of God is almost never simple, quick, or easy. What worked for Mr. Jones may not work for Mrs. Smith. What worked for you yesterday may not work well for you tomorrow. God moves in mysterious ways—and communicates in many different ways. This article presents helps and precepts to aid in the process of discerning God's leading for your life.

Knowing the will of God is key to finding peace and purpose in life. As western culture is very formula and marketing-driven, many expect that the process of discerning the will of God should be able to be expressed as a slogan, formula or recipe. That is not the case. Discerning God's will involves many variables and changing constants. This requires the seeker to remain open and dependent on God for prompting and guidance. One can never say, *"God can't be calling me to \_\_\_\_\_, for that has never been done that way before. Or, "God can't be asking me to do \_\_\_\_\_ because I had success in doing \_\_\_\_\_ another way in the past.* Discerning the will of God is not about having a certain feeling or following a particular formula—it is about being sensitive to the subtle promptings of the Spirit that incrementally guide the perceptive seeker in the direction they ought to go.

The foundational truth of this study (and Christendom) is that true [peace and happiness](#) are obtainable only by fulfilling God's will. To fulfill God's will, one must first know what God's will is. This article will note a few insights regarding how to know God's will, how to discern between God's leading and Satan's clever deceptions, and how to identify (and avoid) the common roadblocks to being able to perceive God's leading.

Discerning the will of God can be challenging. Our prayer is that the notes below will help individuals grow in their ability to both discern His leading and receive His blessing.

## **5 THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN CONSIDERING THE WILL OF GOD**

**Believers are to look to God to direct their steps via the opening *and* closing of doors. A few support verses are noted below.**

- *"To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: "This is the message from the One Who is holy and true. He has the key that belonged to David, and when **He opens a door**, no one can close it, and **when He closes it**, no one can open it" (Rev. 3:7).*
- *"...pray also for us, that God would **open unto us a door**...to speak the mystery of Christ..." (Colossians 4:3)*
- *"The [Apostles] traveled through the region of...Galatia because the Holy Spirit **did not let them** preach...in the province of Asia. When they reached the border of Mysia, they tried to go into the province of Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus **did not allow them**." (Acts 16:5-7).*

### **God has a plan, and desires to reveal His plan**

So then, one does not need to rely on their plan, or wonder *if* the Lord will reveal His leading, but *how* the Lord will reveal his leading. Consider the verses below.

- [God] "I know the plans I have for you..." (Jeremiah 29:11a)
- "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." (Proverbs 3:5-6)
- "No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things I have heard from My Father I have made known to you." (John 15:15)
- "The secret of the Lord is with those that fear Him." (Psalm 25:14)
- "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord..." (Psalm 37:23)
- [God] "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee..." (Psalm 32:8)
- "The holy God of Israel, the LORD who saves you, says: "I am the LORD your God, the one who wants to teach you for your own good and direct you in the way you should go" (Isaiah 48:17)
- "When, however, the Spirit comes, who reveals the truth about God, he will lead you into all the truth" (John 16:13)

## **God reveals His plans in many different ways**

- **Dreams/Inspiration** (Daniel 10-12)
- His Word (Psalm 119:1-16, 105)
- Seeking Him (Jeremiah 29:13; Judges 18:5)
- The counsel of the godly (Proverbs 11:14, 15:22, 19:20)
- Confirmation (Judges 6)

## **Possible hindrances to perceiving God's leading**

- Sin (Psalm 36:1-4; Isaiah 57:17)
- Wrong motivation (Matthew 15:8; James 4:3; Romans 12:1-2)
- Impatience (Genesis 12-20)
- Limited prayer life (Isaiah 65:1)
- Fear (Joshua 1:6, 7,9,18)

## **Remember, God is sovereign. His will/way/timing/choice for you is perfect**

God is never late—He never forgets or falters. His plans exceed our dreams. We can put our trust in Him.

- *"How great are God's riches! How deep are his wisdom and knowledge! Who can explain his decisions? Who can understand his ways?"* (Romans 11:33)
- *"This God—how perfect are his deeds..."* (2 Samuel 22:31)

## **Summary:**

Discerning God's will can be difficult—but it is essential to being able to live a life of peace and purpose. The challenge is twofold: We must be able to discern His will *and* have the courage to embrace and follow His leading. The wise pray daily that the Spirit will aid in these two key areas.

Help comes from the Holy Spirit. Scripture promises that the Spirit imparts power (Acts 1:8), wisdom (James 1:5) and a special connection to God via prayer (Romans 8:26).

Motivation comes from remembering God's Plans. 1) God loves you and has a plan for you. 2) His plan for you is not good—it is great. 3) His path for you will not be the easiest, shortest, most comfortable or most convenient. Great hardship is to be expected, but so is a great reward.

Our God is wondrously creative. Expect Him to reveal His leading in wondrously creative ways. Be open. Be careful. Be prayerful. Be plugged-into a ministry that can pray with you and help you discern His leading—*particularly on the difficult and larger issues*. Be patient, and remember the Scriptural principle: If you seek Him, you will find Him (Jeremiah 29:12-13).

As noted early-on in this article, discerning the will of God is not about following a formula, but there are steps one must take (the paragraph above notes a few). The first step in being able to discern His will is to be in relationship with the one who referred to Himself as “the Way, the Truth and the Life” (John 14:6). His name is Jesus Christ. Entering into relationship with the Lord begins when one confesses their sins, turns to God, and accepts Jesus into their heart as Lord and Savior. From that decision flows forgiveness, joy, hope, the promise of eternity in heaven, and the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit which, among other things, provides guidance, peace, strength, wisdom, and direction to the believer.

Following the will of God guarantees earthly blessings and eternal reward, but does not guarantee an easy life. As we approach the end of time, Scripture notes that there will be wars and rumors of wars, oppression, persecution and a great falling away from the truth. At the appointed time Jesus will return and rapture (rescue) His church from this world. Are you ready? Will you be ready when He comes? Are you strong enough to persevere even when being faithful is difficult? Will you commit to being [ALL IN for Him](#) (which means you are committed to making serving Him, growing in Him, and witnessing for Him the priority of your life)? Remember, a great reward awaits those with great faith.

*“So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him. Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns.”* Matthew 24:44-46