

"Finding Purpose in God's Will"

Romans 12:1-2

I. Introduction

- A. Many of us are searching for God's plan for our lives
 - 1. Have you ever looked at your life and asked:
 - a. Is this who I'm meant to be?
 - b. Am I living to my fullest potential?
 - c. Have I missed out on my purpose for living?
 - 2. This quest for purpose is a driving force in our lives and our economy
 - 3. We want to make sure that we're making an impact where we need to be
- B. So many people get caught up in the glory days
 - 1. Where they've been, who they used to be, and what they could have done or been
 - 2. They get so caught up in the past they forget about the present and miss out on their purpose
- C. Have you ever tried to run from God and His will for your life?
 - 1. Maybe you thought your plan for your life was better than His
 - 2. Maybe you were trying to ignore certain truths in Scripture, or His call to do something or go somewhere
 - 3. Why do we think we know better than God?
 - a. Maybe we have a warped concept of who God is
 - b. Sometimes we question God the way kids question their parents
 - c. Sometimes the direction God leads us in doesn't make sense
- D. Does God still speak to us today?
 - 1. Is God interested in what happens to us as individuals?
 - 2. Can we know the will of God?
- E. We all need guidance in life
- F. There are important questions in life that are not easily answered:
 - 1. Who should I marry?
 - 2. Should I make a certain move?
 - 3. Should I take that job?
- G. The will of God will be revealed as we take steps of faith and live by Scripture
 - 1. God will direct your footsteps as you make decisions to follow His will for your life
 - 2. Romans 1:17
- H. God can and does speak to us in real and tangible ways today
 - 1. He has a unique plan and purpose for your life
 - 2. We need to learn to find our purpose in God's will
 - a. He wants to lead us just as He led men and women in Scripture
 - b. The problem is that we face a barrage of voices which urge us to do certain things or go certain ways, and many of those voices will lead us astray
- I. Which voice are you following?

1. Who are you trying to please?
 2. John 10:27
 3. If we're having a hard time finding the voice of God, it's probably because:
 - a. We're not listening to what He's already said to us, or
 - b. We're not following Him
 4. Are you hearing His voice?
- II. The Prerequisites of God's Will
- A. Paul laid out an order in which we can discover the will of God
 1. First is the "living sacrifice" (v. 1)
 2. We must offer our lives to Him first, then we will find the perfect will of God
 - a. When we understand this truth, we will be ready for the exciting life that God wants for us
 - b. If you're focusing on the voice of the Lord and pay attention to what God is speaking into your life, eventually that voice will become so loud that the temptations of the world will begin to quiet
 - c. When we saturate our lives and thoughts with the Word of God, we will begin to know the will of God for our lives because we will finally be able to hear it
 3. Some people don't know, and can't hear, the will of God for their lives because they've given voice to so many things in the world
 - B. We need to realize that our prayers can't be divorced from our lifestyles; our prayers flow out of a close walk with God
 1. Psalm 66:18
 2. Obedience to God plays a part in answered prayers
 3. 1 John 3:22
 4. If we listen to what God is saying to us, He will listen to what we pray
 - C. Rejecting conformity to this world's system and being transformed into the image of Jesus will cause us to begin to know God's purpose for us
 - D. How does God speak to us?
 1. God speaks through His Word
 2. Psalm 119:105
 3. God will never lead us contrary to His Word
 - a. If you've neglected to study the Word and aren't hearing His voice, the truth isn't that God hasn't spoken; it's that you haven't listened
 - b. How you respond to what God says affects how God responds to what you pray
 4. Be careful not to take His Word out of context
 - a. Luke 4:9
 - b. The Devil knows and is capable of quoting Scripture
 - c. Be careful as you read the Word, and ensure that you're reading it properly
 - d. Scripture will never contradict itself; if you use a certain text to justify your sin, ask yourself if it coincides with the rest of Scripture
 - e. Too many Christians are cavalier with what the Lord has supposedly told them; be very careful before you say the Lord told you something (see Ezekiel 22:28)
- III. The Principles of God's Will

A. God's will for us is good

1. Psalm 34:8
2. Jeremiah 29:11
3. No plan of ours can improve on the perfect plan of God for our lives
4. It's one thing to say that God's will is good when things are going well, but it's another thing to say it when things are going poorly
5. We can only see bits and pieces of the situation, while God sees the complete context and controls all circumstances
 - a. How easy it is for us, in our finite knowledge, to find ourselves praying against the will of God, even if we have the best interests of someone else in mind
 - i. Had Joseph never been sold into slavery, he wouldn't have been able to save thousands, including his own family, in a time of famine
 - ii. Had Moses not been taken into Pharaoh's court, he would have missed a vital part of his training to lead Israel out of slavery
 - iii. Had Jesus not been crucified, we would have all remained dead in our sin (see Matthew 26:39)
 - b. This is why it's important to always pray, "Let Your will be done"
 - i. Prayer according to His will can dramatically change situations, people, and sometimes even the course of nature
 - ii. Some examples include Hannah, Samson, Elijah, Paul and Silas, and Peter

B. If you're grappling with doubt, remember there's a light at the end of the tunnel

1. When difficulty tackles you on the field of life, don't sit on the sidelines thinking how things should have gone; with Jesus, there's always another do-over
 - a. Stop looking at what has happened, and start looking at what's happening now
 - b. Turn your fear into faith because God wants to turn your interruption into an opportunity so that He can show Himself strong on your behalf
2. The Bible is full of instances of God changing people's stories
3. God takes our objections and uses them as qualifications to show Himself strong
4. Your interruptions are God's opportunities, so it's time to stop doubting the interruptions and start trusting the opportunities
 - a. Stop looking at your problems through the lens of interruption and start looking at them through the lens of opportunity
 - b. Genesis 50:20
5. Life's pain will always point to the Lord's purpose, and we need to find purpose in God's will for our lives, even when it's painful
 - a. Don't ask God to change your circumstances; ask God to change you
 - b. Don't be afraid to completely surrender to the will of God for your life

IV. The Particulars of God's Will

A. What is God's specific will for my life?

1. God might be waiting to reveal the specifics of His will for your life until you act on what He has already revealed through Scripture
2. Oftentimes, God's will is clearly stated in the Bible, but we don't like what He's said
3. If you want to know God's specific will for your life, start by abiding in His Word

- B. To know His will for your life, you must be a believer
 - 1. 2 Peter 3:9
 - 2. God doesn't send people to hell—they choose to go there (see 1 Timothy 2:4)
 - 3. If you choose not to have anything to do with God and His will for your life, He will honor that choice in the afterlife
- C. To know His will for your life, you must be filled with and controlled by the Holy Spirit (see Ephesians 5:18)
 - 1. The phrase "be filled" is in the present tense, so the accurate translation is "Be constantly filled with the Holy Spirit"
 - 2. This is also a command; to be a true believer in Jesus Christ, you must be constantly filled with the Holy Spirit
- D. To know His will, you must live a pure life
 - 1. 1 Thessalonians 4:3
 - 2. The word *sanctification* means holiness, consecration, and dedication to God
 - a. This speaks to single people who are to remain sexually pure until marriage and faithful in marriage
 - b. There are no exceptions to this—God won't lead you to do something that He clearly forbids
- E. To know His will, you must have an attitude of gratitude
 - 1. 1 Thessalonians 5:18
 - 2. This is an attitude of recognizing that God is in control of all your circumstances
 - a. He leads us to both still and stormy seas; we are within the will of God in both the good times and the bad
 - b. We must find the ability to be thankful
- V. Conclusion
 - A. We need to prepare the soil of our hearts for His will by acting on what's already been revealed in Scripture
 - 1. Dedicate yourself to Him—don't be conformed to this world's system
 - 2. Search the Scriptures to find what He has clearly told you
 - B. The chief will of God for our lives is that we would love Him with all of our heart, all of our soul, and all of our mind, and the next step is to do whatever you want
 - 1. If you are loving God with all of your being, the things that you want to do will naturally be the things that God wants you to do
 - 2. Finding the will of God is simply living in the sovereignty and grace of God, then moving—taking steps of faith, trusting that the decisions you make will be the decisions that He wants you to make
 - C. Finding purpose isn't about rerouting God's GPS for your life; it's about sitting in the back seat as you live in the joy and the purpose of God's will
 - D. Instead of doubting our heavenly Father, we should trust Him
 - 1. Because at the end of the road is our Father's house
 - 2. Psalm 23:4
 - 3. Once you let God lead, He will lead you to knowing His good and perfect will for you

4. Stop trying to find your future for yourself and let Him do it for you

Figures referenced: Jon Courson

Cross references: Genesis 50:20; Psalm 23:4; 34:8; 66:18; 119:105; Jeremiah 29:11; Ezekiel 22:28; Matthew 26:39; Luke 4:9; John 10:27; Romans 1:17; Ephesians 5:18; 1 Thessalonians 4:3; 5:18; 1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9; 1 John 3:22

Topic: God's will

Keywords: faith, future, interruption, gratitude, joy, lead, live, love, opportunity, purpose, trust, reveal, will