

How to Know You Are Walking in God's Will

Psalm 37:1-5, 23

1 Do not fret because of evildoers, Nor be envious of the workers of iniquity.

2 For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, And wither as the green herb.

3 Trust in the Lord, and do good; Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness.

4 Delight yourself also in the Lord, And He shall give you the desires of your heart.

5 Commit your way to the Lord, Trust also in Him, And He shall bring it to pass.

23 The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, And He delights in his way.

Introduction: Nothing is more important in a believer's life than finding and doing the will of God [not just for preachers, but also plumbers!]

God's will is not like taking Alka-Seltzer [good for me, but not enjoyable]

The will of God is not something we HAVE to do but something that we GET to do if we play our cards right!

In others words, the will of God is what we would choose for our own lives if we had sense enough to choose it.

John 4:34 New King James Version (NKJV)

34 Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work. [bread and butter]

God's will for your life could be defined as: "you, as a believer, walking in the steps that God has ordered for your life."

We live in dark days, but God wants for us to be able to walk in the light.

Proverbs 3:5-6 "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths."

Isaiah 58:11 "The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your soul in drought, And strengthen your bones; **(big bones)** You shall be like a watered garden, And like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail.

Success is finding God's will [as early in life as possible], following God's will, and finishing God's will [well done, good and faithful servant]
Some try to spell success with only 5 letters: M-O-N-E-Y

Psalm 32:8 “I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye.” **[He can see further ahead!...]**

Ephesians 2:10 “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”

Here is the classic fear that freezes so many in their tracks: if I surrender, God will make me be a missionary to Africa. [if it's God's will, you'll end up wanting to do that, **if you've surrendered!**]

v. 4 Delight yourself also in the Lord, And He shall give you the desires of your heart.”

As a kid, I wanted to be a professional baseball player for the St. Louis Cardinals.

I surrendered [not a bad word!] and God gave me new desires!

Africa is the best place on earth for you if it's His will. You see, we have bought a lie from the pit of hell, namely, that God's will makes one's life miserable! No, it will be a life filled with joy, contentment, and fulfillment!

When you're in God's will, He changes your “wanter”!

When I surrendered for ministry, I wanted to be a pastor. And if you asked me then where I wanted to pastor, I would have said something like Minnesota, Alaska, or maybe Honolulu! I'd never have thought of Blackwell, MO! But now that we're here, we can't imagine why everyone doesn't want to be here!

Phil. 2:13 “for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

Some people say: “God isn't showing me His will!”

If God has a will for our lives, then it stands to reason that He wants to reveal it! [He is not playing “keep-a-way” w/ His will.]

When I want Kathy to find her way around town [a little geographically challenged], do I make it difficult, or clear? N/S/E/W? Wal-Mart or the Mall, Kohls or Gravois Bluffs?!

I will tell you that there are some pre-requisites to being in God's will...you don't just stumble into it, you have to find it/seek it/want it!

How do we find God's will? **Not the world's way:**

Hollywood says, “follow your heart”...what does your heart tell you?/date that person?/go to that school?/participate in that at church?

The Bible says, the heart is deceitful and desperately wicked!

Or, modern psychology--"Let your conscience be your guide"
The Bible says, your conscience may be seared w/ a hot iron!

So what are the pre-requisites to finding God's will: There are three key things that must be present in the life of a Christian before he can know that he is walking in God's will.

I. First, a Godly, pure lifestyle. V 23 "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, And He delights in his way."

A. The Bible clearly teaches that the steps of a "good" man are ordered by the Lord.

B. We see this principle throughout this entire psalm. vs. 3, 8-9, 16-18, 27, 29-31, 34, 37-40

Now understand this "A Good Man"—does not mean perfect...but nowhere does the Bible promise guidance to a believer with known sin in their life.

We can divide God's will into 2 parts:

**God's personal will for my life [my direction]
God's moral will for my life [God's directions!]**

It is impossible to zero in on God's personal will for your life if you are living in rebellion to His moral will for you! In other words--more important is what you are than what you do...and what we are is much more important than where we are (physical location)

God's moral will for us is oftentimes spelled out for us in His Word:

I Thess. 4:3 "For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality;"

After salvation comes sanctification...it is God's will that we live holy lives!
[examples?]

God's personal will for your life will elude you until you get that nailed down...and some Christians will go to the grave, never having let God do spiritual surgery on their life after salvation: "well, that's just how I am/like it or lump it/I ain't changin'!"
You will never be able to zero in on God's personal will for your life as long as you are harboring sin, and living in rebellion in a certain area of your life.

This means we must acknowledge His Lordship over every area of our lives...not talking about sinless perfection/not saying we'll never stumble and fall...but that we have no sin we've grown comfortable with/nurturing/harboring/no habitual sin/too familiar with.

And are we doing the basics? Tithing/practicing biblical morality/faithfulness/Bible study./daily devotions/ Right Priorities/ dedication/service/right attitude/forsaking bitterness/gossip/prejudice/ fornication//unforgiveness/pride/lust/bad friends/wrong associations?

One of the biggest mistakes you as a Christian can make is to try to make a decision regarding God's personal will for your life, while you knowingly and willfully have sin in your life.

Here's why: because the channel of communication has been short-circuited (sin does that). [spiritual earplug/cataract that clouds vision]

You see, God does not reveal His will to us that **we might consider it** (tho' that's what we want...freedom to consider whether we like His way)...no, it doesn't work that way.

God reveals His will to us when He knows that we are willing to obey!

Why in the world would God reveal His personal will to you, when you are blatantly and repeatedly violating His moral will? Why should God direct your future paths if you've purposefully avoided doing what He's told you to do already...maybe when you cross the first bridge He'll show you where the next one is!

Are you rebelling against God in some area of His moral will?

If you want to know His personal will, you must first obey Him in His moral will.

"The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord!" [this assumes you are obeying in the moral will of God...now He will show you His personal will!]

How to be in God's will 15 years from now...: be in His will

15 minutes from now! [the steps...]

God's will begins today for you, not yesterday!! [no looking back!]

C. Romans 12:2 **"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."** This teaches that if we are to prove (experience) the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God, we must:

1. Be not conformed to this world.

2. Be transformed by the renewing of our minds.

So first of all...a Godly, pure life...

II. Second, a yielded heart. Vs. 5 [commit, trust]

A. To yield means to surrender or submit to the physical control of another...to hand over possession of. So the Bible clearly indicates we are not our own...God is the owner, we shouldn't insist on our way...or He may let us! So...

B. Are you willing to hand over control of your life to God and do whatever He wants you to do? Romans 6:13, 19

“And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.”

“I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness.”

Can you honestly say you are surrendered fully? ***[hand God a blank check of your life for Him to fill in!]***

Do you trust Him enough to do that? V. 3 and v. 5 say trust is the issue! [Prov. 3:5]

If you have trouble giving Him control it's because you don't trust Him enough...if you have trouble trusting Him it's because you don't KNOW Him enough! [trust takes time/experience]

Is He trustworthy?

A stranger asks you to give them \$20... “just trust me, I'll explain later” Do I have good reason to trust him? But say our wives ask for \$20 and say, trust me...ok, that's not the best example!

“As we know Him, we come to love Him, as we love Him, we come to trust Him, as we trust Him, we come to obey Him, and as we obey Him, we are blessed by Him!”

III. Third, you'll have to come back! vs. 4 [we'll look at...]

Delight Yourself in the Lord

When we delight ourselves in the Lord, our will is conformed to His...He merges His will and our desires...transforms our desires, and then gives us our desires!

How did I know I was supposed to marry Kathy? It wasn't spooky/mysterious...I didn't read her name in the Bible/hear a deep voice thru the ductwork...I was walking in the will of God and I wanted to marry her!

[My desire for her may have come before her desire for me!...so, I was obviously closer to God than she was...but she finally came around and saw the light]

Also: What about the call to preach [if a man desires the office...]/pastoring here/what to preach/ give to missions?/where to go to college!/when to say no/slow/grow/go!

Read the missionary journeys of Paul: over and over it says he went to a place "because he had a mind to go" [desires of heart...if walking w/ God!]

A. There are three spiritual habits that Christians have built into their lives if they are delighting in the Lord. They are essential to knowing the will of God:

1. God leads through His Word.

Psalms 119:105 "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."

Hebrews 4:12 "For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

The only thing that can divide the soul from spirit is the Bible! What's the difference? **Well, the soul needed to be saved, and it was saved by the Spirit of God, which resurrected our dead spirit!**

The soul part of man is "what I want to do" [MY dreams, MY goals/ambitions/desires]

Before I surrendered, there were all kinds of things I wanted to do w/ my life. The spirit portion of man is "what God wants me to do". There have been times in my life when my soul was tempted to do something else, but the spirit part of me knew better, and corrected the soul. [in the ministry, same temptation at times, go get a secular job, go to a bigger place...but the spirit knows God wants us to lead you to **BE that place!**]

A big part of knowing God's will is knowing whether the "peace" you feel is what YOU want or **what GOD wants**...and so you must immerse yourself in megadoses of God's Word! Only His Word can divide soul from spirit!

So...delight yourself in the Lord/Word...

a.) Appreciate the Word: Recognize it as the love letter that it is, inspired, infallible, powerful...realize what you've got!

It is unbelievable the people who don't even carry it to church! [many don't crack it open except at church...should have daily walk!]

You'll never know God's WILL/WAY, until you know God's WORD!

b.) Appropriate the Word [means receive or welcome]

The truths of the Bible do you no good if you do not receive them. Some appreciate the Bible but don't approach it willing enough to be changed, touched, offended, operated on! [cafeteria style!]

Ex.: "I know the plan of salvation" "I believe in the plan of salvation" You can say this and still go to hell...head knowledge doesn't save you...it's not the plan of salvation it's the man of salvation!

Like a gift...make it yours...appropriate it!

c.) Apply the Word [Bible is powerful...the Word of God does the Work of God, but only in the lives of those who APPLY it!]

Ex.: Jesus told Peter to walk on the water, but what did Peter have to do? [get out of boat!]

Lame man at pool of Bethesda was told to take up his bed and walk, but would still be lying there had he not obeyed!

Israel in Egypt could have killed the Passover lambs, prepared and ate, even drained the blood into a bucket, but if they didn't apply it to the doorposts the death angel would have visited them!

So, you'll never know God's WILL/WAY, until you know God's WORD! [appreciate it/appropriate it/apply it!]

2. God leads through prayer.

Prayer is a 2 way street, if we will be still, we will hear His still small voice in our hearts! [not just talking AT God, or even TO God, but talking WITH God!]

Acts 8:29 "Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go near and overtake this chariot."

Neh. 7:5 "Then my God put it into my heart to gather the nobles, the rulers, and the people..."

Difficult, esp. if you're hyper like me, motor always running...ever talked to someone

and they did all the talking? It's not a conversation, it's a monologue! [self-centered, egotistical, always about me!]

3. God leads through preaching.

“the supernatural foolishness of preaching”—God uses the most unlikely things in powerful ways!

The most important decisions of my life came at the close of a service at the altar, not in private, but thru preaching!

Never underestimate the eternal value of any particular church service...you have no idea how many times there is a message specifically needed by someone and they were so weak that Satan, who knew the topic, was able to divert them from that life-changing message!

Some will find out in heaven just what God had planned for them on that wed. nite! Some take advantage of tapes or transcripts, but for many, going to church is just a habit, a duty, if I missed, I missed...but the mature say, even if I couldn't be there [work, sick, whatever] my church even has a way to help me not miss out on what God is doing thru preaching! I'm gonna take advantage of it!

The preaching hour is a supernatural time when God speaks thru His man, even despite his man, do you believe that? Yes! It's a supernatural time when Heaven touches earth. And God always makes His Word relevant, never returns void...He applies it to every listening heart...I may be trying to make one point, but everyone hears it thru the filter of the Spirit!

I'll preach and at the door, or later in an email, someone will say, God really spoke to me when you said... [and I'll know for a fact, I didn't say that!]

Delight yourself in the Lord...immerse yourself in megadoses of God!

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- How many of you today who would say, I'm guilty of making major decisions w/out really taking God's will into serious consideration...seeking the face of God.
 - “There's a major decision looming, we want to find and do God's will, whatever it is”
 - “Help me Lord to know you will/way by knowing your Word, applying it, making prayer a constant 2 way street/by immersing myself in the foolish but supernatural phenomenon of preaching, and delighting myself in You, Lord!”