



***Direction For
Knowing
God's Will***

One of the most persistently puzzling questions for Christians is: “How can I know God’s will for me in this situation?” And each one of us can supply his or her own particular situation. For one it might be, “Should I look for another job?” Another might ask, “Is this the man God wants me to marry?” Whether buying a car, selecting a college or moving away from home, for the Christian this question is inevitable: “How can I know what God wants me to do?”

His Will or Ours? Before considering from God’s Word three helpful essentials for discerning His will, it is important to ask ourselves a few hard questions. Do we really desire to know His will, or are we more interested in justifying our own will? Are we continuing to ask for God’s will on a certain matter because we don’t like the answer we’ve already gotten? Are we hoping that if we persist in asking, He’ll change His mind?

Psalm 106 tells us what happens to those who do not heed God’s counsel but, instead, press their own will on God: “He gave them their request, but sent leanness into their

soul” (vv. 13-15). If we are really more interested in our own will than God’s on a given matter, He may grant us our request; but our relationship with Him will suffer and a shallowness or emptiness will result in our spiritual life.

Do we want this to happen? Or do we want to know His will for us? If the latter is the case, then there are three essentials to which we must pay attention.

1 Know God’s Word. In attempting to know God’s will in a particular situation, we must remember that we will always get right guidance from His Word, because His will for us will never contradict His Word. If what we want to do contradicts the Word of God, either directly or in principle, then we can be sure it is not God’s will for us. For example, fornication is expressly denounced over 30 times in the Bible. Even thinking about it is clearly prohibited: “Whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (Mt. 5:28). Therefore, no matter how convinced we may be of the rightness of sex

outside of marriage in a given setting, we are wrong; the Bible is right and it is definitely against God's will.

There are principles in God's Word that should govern our activities as well. For instance, since it says, "I want you to be wise in what is good, and simple concerning evil" (Rom. 16:19), we can be sure it would never be God's will for us to fill our minds with music, TV, books and movies containing demonic activity, brutality, illicit sex and other sinful behaviors. If we look to the Word for guidance, and are willing to accept it, we will be blessed, because we are told that His Word is "a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Ps. 119:105).

As we walk through this world, if we go only where His light leads us and do only those things that are illuminated by His light, we will be in His will. His will and His Word never disagree. And if we are in the light of His Word we will not be in the dark. Clouds may obscure our view for a time, but if we are patient they will pass. Solomon, in all his wisdom, gave us this direction regarding God's

will: "Lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths" (Prov. 3:5-6). Knowing God's will requires involving Him in everything we do.

2 Get Close To The Father. Another criterion for knowing God's will is intimacy. The closer we get to God the easier it is to know His will. When family members enjoy a close relationship each knows how the other thinks—what is needed, what words should and should not be spoken and who is hurting—without even asking. Our relationship with God should be as close as that of obedient children in the presence of a loving, caring Father.

"I knew you'd agree with me!" exclaimed a daughter happily just after her father gave her his thoughts on a matter. And a grandson was heard to whisper at the table: "I can tell by Daddy's look that he wants me to eat all my vegetables before Mommy brings dessert." These examples show us that those who are close to their father know how he thinks and what he will say; and they can tell

by the look in his eye what his answer is even before they ask. Shouldn't it also be that way with us and our heavenly Father?

In Psalm 32:8 David quotes the Lord as saying: "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye." This is His desire. He does not want us wandering aimlessly or wondering fretfully without His sure direction. If you are close enough to the Father to let His eye look straight into yours, and if you are humble and obedient enough to let His eye direct you, you won't have a problem knowing or accepting His will.

3 Think Like Christ. Is there any difference between knowing the will of God and having the mind of Christ? The truth of Scripture teaches that if you have the latter, you will not be puzzled by the former. They are the same. It was the mind of Christ to do the will of the Father—nothing more, nothing less. "I come to do Your will" was His purpose. "Not My will but Yours" was His motto. Wherever the mind of Christ is, there also will be the understanding and accept-

ance of the Father's will. But sometimes we must wait patiently to know.

In Philippians 2:5-8 Paul tells us that humility and obedience characterized the mind of Christ. Paul also exhorts us to let His mind be in us. In 1 Corinthians 2:16 he writes: "Who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ." If we are humble and obedient we can have the Lord's mind on any matter, but we should never presume to know His mind so well that we can tell Him what to do. If we are going to think like Christ, we need constantly to ask ourselves these two questions:

- What would the Lord do in this situation?
- Is this what my Father wants for me?

I t is not God's intention to keep us in the dark. He does not play guessing games. He wants us to know His will. The next time we are having trouble discerning His will, instead of asking God more questions, or begging Him repeatedly to give us the answer we want, let's begin by examining ourselves with three more questions:

- Is what I want supported by God's Word?
- Am I close enough to my Father to know what He is thinking, to let His eye guide me?
- Am I thinking and acting like Christ would on this matter?

Our honest answers to these questions can go a long way toward helping us know God's will for our lives. – L. J. Ondrejck

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