

Discerning God's Will

By Laura Krokos

Romans 12:1-3 speaks of giving ourselves entirely to the Lord. Having our minds (thoughts, hopes, dreams, and aspirations) transformed by Christ. (Christ on the throne.) Then, the passage says, we will know and be an example of what God's will is. So the question is not "*what is God's will for my life*" but "*how does my life fit into God's will*". This is saying "*I've surrendered all I have, where do I go to fit into God's work*", rather than saying "*what does God have for me to make me happy or have an abundant life.*"

Ask yourself:

- a. Is He really Lord of your life? Are you willing to go anywhere or do anything He might want for you? Mt. 16:24-25
- b. Is there any unconfessed sin that has broken your fellowship with Him? Isa. 59:2
- c. Are you being fully controlled by the Holy Spirit through faith? Gal. 5:16, Rom 12:1-2

Why should we trust God for His plan over ours?

Jer. 29:11, 1 Cor. 1:25, Prov. 3:5-6, Rom. 8:28

There are two kinds of God's will:

1. *God's moral will*- This is God's best intention for all people at all times.
2 Peter 3:9- God's will is that all to be saved.
1 Thessalonians 4:3- God's will is our sanctification (being made like Christ).
1 Thessalonians 5:18- God's will is that we would always give thanks.
1 Peter 2:13-15- God's will is for us to live a right life.
2. *God's personal will*- This is God's best intention for a Christian at a specific time or range of time.

Ps. 32:8- He doesn't want His will to be a secret, but wants us to live it.

Practically living God's will:

God has given us a sound and sanctified mind (2 Tim. 1:7, 1 Cor. 2:14-16) that He expects us to love Him with and be a good steward using. Using wisdom and reason we will follow the examples of the apostles:

- 1 Thes. 3:1-2 "we thought it best..."
- Phil. 2:25, 26 "I thought it was necessary..."
- 1 Cor. 16:3-4 "if it is fitting..."
- Acts 6:2-4 "it is not desirable..."
- Acts 15:22, 28 "it seemed good..."

Where should believers turn for direction?

As we seek God's will, we ought to actually ask Him for wisdom. Wisdom is the right application of knowledge, not a special revelation. However if we don't ask in faith (acting on what you know to be true) we might as well not expect anything from God. We must be committed to act on the understanding that He gives us. Jam. 1:5-6

G.A.S. acronym- Gives the "fuel" (or confidence) to walk out what God has for us.

1. **God's Word-**

2 Tim. 3:16-17- God's written word is our ultimate source of authority in all areas of life. What decisions has God already given us clear direction based on the Bible? (Ps. 119:105) Ask God to lead you to specific passages of how you fit into His plan.

2. **Ask Mature Believers -** Ask for advice from mature Christians who are viewed by many as mature, who are informed about what God is doing around the world, someone who knows you well, someone who will be objective with you and someone who knows and walks with God and knows His ways.

Prov. 11:14, 15:22, 15:31-33, 12:15, Ps. 1:1

3. **Spirit-filled Reasoning-** With Christ on the throne think strategic.

Prov. 14:15-16, Matt. 25:14-30, Luke 14: 28-32, Acts 19:9, 1 Pet. 4:10

Ask yourself questions:

*How does it fit in the overall plan of God? What would be the most strategic choice as an investment of my life? How much _____ will it take? Is there a need? Is there a way? Are there enough people, finances, materials? What would prepare and develop me in the future? What are my motives? Is it to gain approval or acceptance from someone, money, power or to stay comfortable?

* What is my S.H.A.P.E.? Spiritual gift, Heart (passion, what you get excited about), Abilities(strengths and weaknesses), Personality, Experience(background and training). We can't do everything, and for some things we would be more useful than others.

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding." Prov 3:3-5 Our "own understanding" is what we are and think apart from the Holy Spirit. (Rom. 3:10-11). When we have Christ on the throne and are living by His mind, will and emotions, we can be confident that we are walking in the Spirit, which is His will.

Be careful of authoritative reliance on subjective means:

*"The open door policy". Saying that God's will is whatever opportunity works out for you. When Moses was leading the Israelites out of Egypt and ran into the Red Sea, that very well could have looked like a "closed door". Sometimes a "closed door" may just be an opportunity to give God more glory. Just because an opportunity comes up, doesn't mean it is the best option for your time and resources. Acts 16:22-40

- * Judging God's will by your "feelings of peace". This is not scriptural (and when it says that God will give us peace that passes understanding it is not talking about decision making but worry). If our feelings were the authority of God's will, Jesus would not have died on the cross. Lk 22:42-44, Heb. 12:1-4
 - God can use our feelings and often times our desires can be in line with His desire, but when making decisions, it is unwise to use them alone.
 - Acts 21:10-14, 20:22-23 In vs. 12, the Christians let their feelings try to govern Paul's decision, but Paul would not let the fear of hard times change his decision.

Faith is established on truth, and truth is not relative but established on fact, not hunches, feelings, impressions, looking for signs, or mystical experiences.

Step out in faith. Faith is not waiting until you know 100%. Genuine faith is moving in that direction, putting confidence more in God's ability to guide or re-direct than in your ability to decide. Acts 16:6-9, 8:25-30, 2 Cor. 4:7

The Bottom line of making a Godly decision-

Romans 14:22-23- Making a decision in faith means putting your trust ultimately in God and not in self, circumstances, or others. This is developing a conviction before God. The more we grow as Christians the more decisions we will make by faith in God, from seemingly big ones like who you'll marry, to seemingly small ones like what should you watch on TV. It is important to be ready to trust God in your decision whether it turns out the way you expected or not. With God the process is as important as the product.