

God's Will, Avoiding the Detours

by Shane Idleman

The sermon emphasizes understanding and aligning with God's will while avoiding spiritual detours through obedience and relationship with Him.

Duration: 45:26

Scripture: Matthew 12:46

Topics: "Gods Will", "Spiritual Guidance"

Description

This sermon focuses on understanding and aligning with God's will, emphasizing the importance of avoiding detours that hinder our relationship with God. It highlights the need to stay, pray, and obey God's principles to remain in His will, addressing common pitfalls like pride, rushing ahead of God, and developing a hard heart. The message encourages repentance and realignment with God's will, emphasizing the possibility of drifting back into His guidance and experiencing His peace and joy.

Transcript

Matthew chapter 12 verse 46 is where we left off. And I'm going to talk to you tonight about God's will. How to avoid the detours.

Is anybody interested in knowing what God's will is tonight? Not just me? Not exaggerating. So many people have asked me this week, actually two today, on what is God's will for my life in this area? What's going on? I don't understand this. I don't understand that.

I'm not too sure how much longer I can take this. I don't know what's going on with this. And what is God's will? I want to know what God's will is.

And before I get into this, let me just, two things, encourage you and let you know that in my experience in looking to the word of God, a lot of times there aren't immediate answers. We don't like that. I need to know today, or at least tomorrow, I need to know.

It's funny how people are praying for God's will in their lives. We have other children, right? And they want to know tomorrow, or the next day, or the next day. They don't want to just wait on God and His timing.

So I would just encourage you, a lot of times there aren't immediate answers. There's not a bolt of lightning that's going to write yes in the clouds, or no. There's not often that type of direction.

It's more of a building a relationship, and as you get closer to the Father, the heart of the Father, you begin to realize His will. And God's will for me now is not as challenging as it was 15 years ago. Number one, I've learned not to fight it.

Number two, I've learned to wait on Him. And let Him, He'll push you, He'll guide you, He'll lead you in certain directions. But sometimes we get in such a hurry that we get on what I call a detour, and that's the message tonight, is how to avoid these detours.

And I'm going to look, what we're doing really, this doesn't have a lot to do with where we're at in Matthew, other than Jesus made this statement about God's will. And I want to kind of springboard off of that and just stay there tonight. But let me read it real quick.

Matthew 12, 46, starting in verse 46 through verse 50, while He was still talking to the multitudes, this being Jesus, behold, His mother and brother stood outside seeking to speak with Him. Then one said to Him, look, your mother and your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak with you. Now at this, most of us would say, think He'd say, oh, great, let them in.

I want to talk to them as well. This is what Jesus says. But He answered and said to one who told Him, who is my mother and who are my brothers? And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, here are my mother and my brothers.

For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and my sister and my mother. In other words, He's saying, He's not being cruel. Number one, we know it's Jesus.

He's saying, listen, I'm not even of this world. I'm the Son of God. Everybody who does the will of the Father is part of my family.

And that's actually a real encouraging statement, because as we know, God doesn't have grandchildren. The first time I heard that, I think about that for a minute, wait a minute. That's true.

I mean, God doesn't have any grandchildren. All of us are children of God. And when we do God's will, we are part of that family.

Now here's the interesting thing. You don't have to do this and do that and I better make sure I'm doing, doing, doing. God's will is just the outflow of what's going on internally in our heart.

It's just walking with God, having a relationship with Him. We do His will. But many times we get sidetracked.

We get on detours and we start to go a different direction. And what happens when we go that direction? We know it, don't we? And we feel it. We can sense that we're not on the right path.

Now here's an interesting point in contrast. Jesus also said this about doing the will of the Father. In Matthew 7, 21, and this is a verse that might hurt, and that's okay.

It's good to hurt so healing can take place. But Jesus said, not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. So in Matthew, He's talking about those who are part of God's family.

They're doing the will of the Father. They're part of His family. Now He's saying, not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven.

And He gave an analogy there saying that they stood outside and they knocked and they said, wait a minute. You ate in our presence. You sat at our tables.

You went to church. I heard all about you. But Jesus says, depart from me.

I don't even know you. So you see how important this topic is. And that's on this point of Matthew 7, 21, where He said, not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven.

The real acid test is this. Do our actions line up with God's will consistently? Because many times our actions don't line up with God's will. We make choices that are contrary to His will, but the heartbeat is there of wanting to get back in right relationship.

I feel distant from the Father. I feel like a prodigal. I want to do His will.

So that's the real acid test. Do we do the will of the Father consistently or is our heart headed in that direction? And a lot of times when I speak, not necessarily at this church, but I'll be doing it in a few weeks at a firefighters conference down in Los Angeles. It's a marriage seminar they're doing.

And I'm going to talk a lot about this because a lot of people come to church and just because they're good people, they think they're in right relationship with God. And that's what Jesus says here. Listen, a lot of people are going to say, Lord, Lord, we did all these things.

I knew all about you, but Jesus says, depart from me. I don't know you. To me, that's very serious because that tells me a lot of people can come to church.

That's why I often say as if they're doing God a favor, right? Come to church. Let me check that off. I was raised in a Christian home.

I own a Bible. But the real acid test is, do you do the will of the Father consistently? Not who you are on Saturday or who you are on Sunday, but who you are on Monday and Tuesday and Wednesday and Thursday. Is our heart towards the will of the Father? And that's really where the rubber meets the road.

Now, before I get into the main body of the message, there are some things that are clearly God's will for our lives. If you read the Bible, you will see statements like this. This is the will of God.

This is the will of God. You'll read somewhere else. And this is the will of God.

But it doesn't say, this is who you're to marry. This is who you're, this is where you're to work. This is how you're to handle that child.

You need to, after 21 days of trying, kick him out on the 22nd day. And then wait, what do you do with all this gray area? That's the hard part. I mean, we know the stuff that's written in Scripture, but what about the gray area? But here's the things that are clearly God's will for our lives, in case you're wondering.

Number one, to be saved. And I have all the Scripture references there in your notes, 1 Timothy, 1 Thessalonians, Ephesians, Matthew, that you can look at later. But God's will is that nobody should perish.

His will is that nobody should perish, but that we all should come to repentance. So that's the will of God, that you be saved. So on judgment day, there's no excuses.

Well, God didn't want me to be saved. I wasn't one of the elect. There's no excuses.

His will is that we be saved, that we repent, be in right relationship with Him. And then the next point, His will is that we worship Him. That's His will, that we worship Him.

And I know it's interesting on this point, because worship sometimes is hard. We don't want to do it. We don't want to worship God.

And that's why we have the events on Monday and different things to kind of help break through that. Because after 15, 20 minutes, the heart either breaks through or you break out. You either head for that exit door, or the heart begins to melt and begin to worship God, and it takes time sitting in His presence.

I mean, we should handle God like when we begin dating our spouse, right? The time, the phone call, the energy, and energy, and energy. But with God, it's like He's a distant relative that lives in New York. And we don't have that relationship with Him.

We wonder why there's a drift, why there's a disconnect. So to be saved, to worship Him, and to be holy, and to be set apart for His glory. The Bible says that the will of God is that you be holy and set apart for His glory.

And holy is not some weird word. A lot of people think of the priests they see in these gowns and these little things on their head, and they're old, they're so holy. Holiness is being separated for God.

Come out from among them and be separate. The world lives like this, I've gotta live like this. And actually, I don't have to, I want to.

The desire of my heart is to not live like the world. So come out from among them, live different. There's a distinction there, that's the will of God.

That's His will, that we do that. And then to be filled continually with the Holy Spirit. In Ephesians, God's will is that you be filled with the Holy Spirit.

And this would take me a whole sermon to really exhaust this topic, but in a nutshell, for those who might be new or not quite understand this. As a believer, when you repent and you give your heart to Christ, and now you're a believer, God has saved you, has redeemed you. Fortunately, we receive the Holy Spirit.

As far as it's not some weird mystical force, it's part of the triune nature of God that resides with us. So as a believer, the temple of the Holy Spirit residing in me, I can quench and grieve the Holy Spirit by continuing to sin, by rejecting God's will, by not living right, by having wrong attitudes. And the Holy Spirit basically says, you want it, you got it.

There you go, live your life, and we're not led of the Spirit. We're not filled with the Spirit. But as we empty ourselves of basically ourselves, as we empty ourselves of me, as I said before, I'm not as afraid of the devil as much as I'm afraid of what's in me.

And as you empty yourself and say, Lord, I'm empty. That's a great thing for Monday night. I know I'm plugging it a lot, but it's not designed to plug this event.

It's designed for you to be here and to be filled with the Spirit. As you empty yourself, you're filled with the Spirit of God. Lord, not my will, but your will be done.

I'm gonna do things that I don't wanna do sometimes, Lord. I'm gonna follow you, I'm gonna worship you, I'm gonna get into your word, and I'm gonna be filled with your Spirit. That's how we're filled with the Spirit of God.

And then his will also is to witness to others and to make disciples. And that's why we often encourage people, if you've been coming at least six months, get plugged in somewhere. We need help everywhere, media, sound, ushering, children's ministry.

We need lots of helpers. And that's part of God's will is to be doing his will and doing things. Or not this church, go serve at Care Net, go serve at Grace Resource Center.

You gotta get plugged in somewhere doing God's will. We weren't designed to come to church and then we'll go watch the playoffs and the Super Bowl and this and that and this show. And let me come to church and go watch this, this, this, double fisting it, all that.

There's idle hands of the devil's workshop. And God wants us to stay busy for that very reason. But what about other areas? What about gray areas? How does God guide us? You guys still wanna know God's will tonight, right? On certain areas.

Should I quit this job? Should I take this job? What's going on here? Why is God doing this? What's God's will in this area? Well, I'm gonna do something a little different. I wanna pull from Numbers, the book of Numbers. And it's interesting, it's actually where I'm reading this month and it kind of correlates with this.

But I'm reading Numbers where the children of Israel were taken out of Egypt. Exodus, right? Exodus Numbers, Exodus Leviticus Numbers. And now they're in Numbers.

Now they're in the wandering stages of the wilderness. And God actually leads them with a cloud by day, a pillar of fire by night. But he'll rest the cloud over the tabernacle, his presence will be there.

And it could be days, it could be weeks, it could be a year. And as the cloud moves, the camp moves. As the cloud moves, the camp moves.

God says stay or says go. And that is a great analogy of how he can guide the believer if they're willing to be led like that. When God says go, you go.

When he says stay, you stay. And he'll, led by the spirit. That's what it, it's not some weird thing.

You're actually being led by the presence and power of God in your life if you wait on him and if you do things according to scripture. And here's what Numbers chapter nine says, verse 17. Whenever the cloud was taken up from above the tabernacle, the children of Israel would journey.

And in the place where the cloud settled, they would camp and pitch their tents. At the command of the Lord, the children of Israel would journey, and at the command of the Lord, they would camp. As long as the cloud stayed above the tabernacle, they remained.

Whether it's two days, a month, or a year, the cloud remained above the tabernacle. The children of Israel would remain encamped and not journey. But when it was taken up, they would journey.

And what I mean by led of the spirit is found in Romans 8.14. Romans 8.14 says this, for as many as are led by the spirit of God, these are the sons of God. To be led by the spirit of God, that is one of the most freeing things you'll ever experience. When you're not rushed, you're not in a hurry, you're led by the spirit of God.

But it's interesting, you've got to note this, when we're led, there has to be participation. Have you ever put a dog on a leash and they don't want to go? I can't have my little five-year-old dog or the little two-and-a-half-year-old, that dog will take off with them. They're not leading that dog, that dog's leading them.

So to be led that...well, we're not animals, but you know what I'm saying. To be led, you have to give over, you have to yield yourself to the direction of the one leading you. See, that's problem number one.

Many people don't want to give up. Here comes a word, submission. Ouch.

We don't want to give up and say, Lord, you lead me. You guide me. And that's how he leads, through open doors, through circumstances.

Listen, God's not going to be up in heaven going, I wish they would move. I don't know what I'm going to do, I'm confused. I can't really...darn it all anyway.

He'll push, he'll prompt, he'll move, he'll open doors. He'll lead you by the Spirit. Promptings or something like, you know, I just feel like I want to be...I just feel if God ever put something in your heart and you've just wanted to do something led of the Spirit.

That's what Romans talks about. So here's the four primary detours, but you have to remember that. Don't forget to be led requires participation.

You have to submit to the leading of the Holy Spirit, bottom line. We can't fight against that. So detour number one, we're going to get from the book of Numbers, chapter 11.

Detour number one happens when we make choices based on feelings or what others are doing. When we start to make choices on our feelings, you know you're in trouble. Right? You've heard me say, if you've been coming here a while, that feelings should be the caboose of the train, not the engine.

They don't lead, they should follow. Numbers 11, their cravings begin to influence their attitude. The children of Israel, their cravings begin to influence their attitude.

I want, I want, I want, I want. They're led by the cravings, not of the Spirit. And that happens to us too if we're led by, say, money or status or relationships or comfort.

If we're led by our cravings, it's going to be hard to be led by the Spirit because often they're going opposite directions. Now, there's nothing wrong with some of these God-given cravings. They were actually craving food.

They're craving meat, quail to be exact. And God said, okay, you want it, you got it. He gave them so much quail, it was coming out of their noses.

But also, I found it was interesting as I was reading, Moses also complained. But you know what the difference was? He took it to God. He didn't turn into this grumbling and complaining.

The children of Israel went 40 years in the wilderness because of grumbling and complaining. I wish you guys could realize how important that is, how profound that is. I don't think God appreciates grumbling and complaining.

We all do it, but consistently and over time, we become known as that type of person. Moses, when he complained, he said, Lord, why have you done this? Show me what's going on with these people. He would take it to the Lord, not other people.

So on that note, don't look to the culture for validation. Don't look to the culture for direction. Don't look to the culture for truth.

Many people make detours because they base it on how they're feeling and what others are doing. I don't feel this way. Look what everybody else is doing.

They're doing this. Oh, here comes tax season. They're lying on their taxes.

They're doing this. They're going here. Look what others are doing.

I don't feel this. And then we turn to grumbling and complaining. We get out of God's will.

That's a huge detour. And Jesus said, I have food to eat that you know nothing about to do the will of him who sent me. Jesus told his disciples, I have food.

I don't need to eat right now. I have food that you know nothing about to do the will of him who sent me. Doing God's will brings spiritual nourishment and energy.

Think about that. Doing God's will brings spiritual nourishment and energy. When we're doing God's will, there's energy.

There's excitement there. There's passion. But when we fall away from that, that's when the grumbling and the complaining come in.

Idle hands, as I said earlier, are the devil's workshop. Have you ever thought about that? Idleness, idle hands, doing nothing opens yourself up to basically... There's nothing wrong with rest. What he's talking about idleness here is laziness.

And as humans, we love to fill our time with something, right? All this idle time, the devil uses that as detours to get us off of God's will. Is some of that stuff bad? Of course not. But when you're investing hours and hours a day into it, you're on a detour because we're looking at what the world's doing.

We're judging it off what others are doing. And we begin to make decisions. Here's where you get out of God's will.

You begin to make decisions based on those feelings and based on what others are doing. Because God's word says this, people will say this. God's word says this, people will say this.

God's word says this, but my feelings say this. And this is a crucial area because we can't let our feelings guide us in this area. Detour number two, we become too distracted.

Here's a clear indication that you're on the wrong path. You're on a detour when you become too distracted, too busy, too rushed, and too in a hurry. And I wrote down numbers 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15.

They were always in a hurry. The children of Israel were always in a hurry. Get us there.

Do this. Do this. Do this.

Do this. And I stopped for a minute. I said, think about this.

These guys are pretty much retired. God's taking care of them. They're in the desert.

They're camping in tents. They can go fishing. They can go hiking with their kids.

They don't have anything to do. God's providing for them. But they still got into that grumbling and complaining too much in a hurry.

And it's interesting. Before somebody tries to deceive you, they will try to rush you. Did you know that? Before somebody tries to deceive you, they will try to rush you.

Have you ever heard, hurry up, sign this contract? You don't need to read all that stuff. Hurry up. Hurry.

I can't hold this deal much longer. Hurry. I need an answer now.

Now. Hurry. Hurry.

Hurry. And we get out of God's will a lot of times because we're in a hurry. We're in a hurry.

I mean, I met a family recently. Our son's going to be in Little League. And they've got four kids.

I mean, they're just everywhere. Practice here. Practice here.

And they're actually excited about how busy they are, as if that's the mark of success. I'm busier than you, so I'm more successful. That's not true.

If you're so busy that you can't hear from God, so busy that you have no time for Him, there's no way you can stay in the center of God's will. Because that busyness is sidetracking you. You're getting moved to the left and to the right.

Here's why. When you slow down, you can meditate, you can ponder, you can contemplate, you can consider, and you can weigh the options patiently and ask God for guidance. Then when you step out, there's confidence in your decision.

What about business deals? Some of you need to make some business decisions. Some of you need to make some financial decisions. Some of you need to make relational decisions.

What is God's will? Do I do this? Do I move? Do I do this? When you slow down and you meditate, that's what the Word of God says, meditate and ponder, contemplate, think things through. Think things through. That's where wisdom comes in.

And of course, we all know the Scripture. We like to quote, and especially here, I like to, Isaiah 40, 31, those who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. See there's a huge difference between waiting on the Lord and rushing through life.

It looks very different. When you wait upon the Lord, your life has purpose. You purposely set in time for the Lord.

You purposely have time for prayer. You're purposely not gonna get too busy. You're purposely gonna say no because I'm waiting on God.

Doesn't mean you're lazy sitting at home with your feet up on the bed. It just means you're making decisions that align with God's will and decisions that are not gonna take me away from God. Those who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, not lose it.

Those who wait upon the Lord, and waiting there is that imagery of a waitress. You're waiting on God. You're serving God.

You're staying busy with the things of God. You're putting Christ first. You're putting your family second.

You're putting job third. You're balancing the priorities. You're not focused on all these different things.

You're waiting on God. I remember there was a lady who told her husband, she said, man, everything you touch seems to turn to gold. God's just blessing everything.

He said, no, I just wait. I just wait. I just wait for God to answer yes or no.

And I found that sometimes we worry. We think, okay, God's, he's not gonna be able to handle this one. I don't think that, but I think that.

You don't say, ah, come on, God, you're too busy. I gotta get this going. Let me do this.

Let me get this. Let me push this a little bit, because I don't think you can make it happen. And every time I fall flat on my face when I rush ahead.

But when you wait on him, you allow him to have the person make the phone call. Or the email comes. Or the contract comes.

Or the timing's right. Or he opens all these doors when his will is orchestrated correctly. It's just a matter of waiting on him.

And I wish I could give more examples, but there's so many that apply to this. This aspect of waiting. First Peter 5.8. I wanted to quote this again.

I've quoted it many times over the last few months. The devil goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Right? You know, the devil goes around as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

But the first part of that verse is very interesting. First Peter 5.8. Peter says, be sober-minded and be watchful. Be sober-minded and watchful.

That's the way you're going to defeat the devil that goes about as a roaring lion. Sober-minded there is clear thinking. And watchful.

Watchful would be like the husband who locks up his house at night, checks the front door, checks the back door, checks the windows. Or his kid's in bed, he's watchful, he's careful. The other side of that would be somebody coming home, doesn't care.

Just leaves the door unlocked, goes to bed, doesn't check anything. There's no care there, watchfulness. And that's what we have to, in our lives, we have to be sober and open and sober-minded and watchful.

It's like you're looking, you're not being deceived, you're looking, you're on alert. Because the devil can come in as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour when they're not watchful. It's interesting, I read a quote, I don't know if I can quote exactly, but it said something along the lines of, the enemy usually attacks when we least expect it.

It's usually when we let our guard down that he comes in. When we're in vacation mode, or we're in lazy mode, and we're just, eh, it's no big deal. That's when he comes in.

He knows when we're sober-minded, we're watchful. So on that note, are you being rushed, pushed, right now? Are you anxious, are you having to be pushed? You don't have to rush, and everything's going quick, and I'm making these decisions, I step back, you might need to change your course. If you're being rushed and pushed, a lot of times, that goes against God's will.

Now it doesn't mean we won't feel friction in the middle of God's will, and there are times we have to make an important decision to feel rushed and pushed, and we're not gonna be able to just pray about it, you gotta make a quick decision. I have one example I can share with you. Last Sunday, I was, I guess I have to admit it, but I was watching the playoff game.

It doesn't happen very often, but, you know, I was watching it. What are you looking at me that way for? You were too, most of you, right? And all I know is I sure wanted fast food after that was over, all those commercials. I told you, selective programming, right, they know what they're doing.

Half a million dollars a minute. But anyway, I was watching Seahawks, and I look down, and we're in-laws, and I look in the fireplace, and it's the glass is reflecting out about 50, 60 feet, and I see my little five-year-old niece is over there, and she bends down in the pool to fill up her squirt gun and just keeps going, right into the pool. And she's panting, so I go, oh my goodness, I get off the couch, I run and slide the door open, I just run, I jump in the pool, and I've never felt that cold of water in my life.

They said it was in the 40s, and it was just, I'm going to die right now, too. I cannot get, you know, my clothes, I'm just soaking wet, I grab her, she's screaming, crying, put her up on the surface, and I just, I got out and just sat there with a towel, and I was like, wow, that is, you can't swim when it's that cold. You're just, you're in shock mode.

I've never, I mean, it felt like I jumped into a tub of ice water, because you picture this, I'm going to jump in and swim over there, just all elegant, and I was like, freezing, just thinking I was going to have a heart attack, and they're going to have to come get me out. The whole point of that was I had to rush. I was being pushed.

I had to. I wasn't going to say, oh, Lord, are you trying to teach her a lesson that we just told them an hour ago not to go by the pool? So I'm going to wait and see for a little while, let me pray, Lord, are you in this? Are you in this? Show me you're in this. Lord, I'm not going to move until you, I mean, that, I want to give you, there are exceptions to that rule, okay? Sometimes you need to make a quick call.

Sometimes you need to act impulsively and quick for those types of things, okay? And the kids cannot go by the pool. We made that very clear. That was, that was actually kind of draining.

I just, I almost felt like breaking down afterwards. It was such a high stressful environment. But also I thought of the scripture, be sober, be watchful, you know? Be sober, be watchful, watching what's going on, because the enemy's looking for an opportunity.

And here's the third detour. And I talk about this a lot, but it has to fit in here, because it's vitally important. We're often led by pride, not God's Spirit.

We're often led by self-focus and self-centeredness. Hey guys, listen, this is vitally important when it comes to knowing God's will. We have to remove, it's all about me.

I mentioned to my wife the other day that we've got a lot of people Facebooking or emailing now about marriage counseling, just having marital questions. And nine times out of ten, a lot of these problems are a result of selfishness. I'm trying to be eloquent, I'm trying to, you know, let me word this carefully, but I can't.

You know, they say things like, well, kids are resilient, kids, they'll bounce back. He's 15, he won't care if we get a divorce. Selfish, selfish.

One lady, praying, what is God's will for my marriage, divorced, probably, or separated, probably going to get divorced, has the audacity to go to Vegas with her boyfriend. And I'm wondering what God's will is with my marriage. What in the world is your problem? What planet are you on? That's the most ridiculous thing I've ever heard in my life.

Pride. Pride. You're not led of God's spirit, you're not going to know God's will.

I don't feel that convicted. No kidding, you don't feel that convicted. You so grieved and quenched the Holy Spirit that you think sin is good now.

And that's how dangerous this is. We're often led by pride. What's in it for me, not God's spirit.

A lot of times God's will aligns with what's better for others, not what's in it for me. I told the elders, they know, and the deacons, I had a challenge this week, I've been praying about, not a big challenge, but I was asked to coach my son's little league baseball team because they don't have enough managers. Like I have time for that, right? And, oh, there's no way I'm going to do that.

You know, I can't do that. And then they asked again, and they're going to have to put some of the kids behind or not let them play if we don't. And I tried all the excuses, you know, we can work around your schedule.

And I realized, you know, my wife finally said, but Shane, do you know how much of an influence you can make in those kids' lives? A lot of them, their dads won't be there. They're being yelled at at home. I'm like, well, that's true, you know.

Now, if my relationship with God was going to suffer my family, of course it's not. It'll help, you know, a couple months here will be difficult. And my son really wants me to do it.

But as I was seeking God's will, like, Lord, what is your will? I was not getting anything. Well, yes or no, nothing. And sometimes you won't get it.

That's what I meant. I'm not going to wake up, bing, bing, bing. Oh, yes.

Okay, great. It's written right here. Who wrote this? Carved in stone.

That's what the Ten Commandments look like. We're led of a spirit. Okay, Lord, I'm going to invest in these kids.

There's time there. I have the time. It's not going to take away from you.

I'm going to do something I don't want to do. The flesh doesn't want to do it. See, I always liked helping.

I could get to practice a little late, not quite, you know, leave a little early, not make all the gains. Oh, I've got to go. You know, there's no commitment there.

But to now to finally commit and invest in these kids, that kind of goes along with what I've been feeling with God's will. Numbers 12.22 on this point. Miriam and Aaron desired Moses' authority.

They said, hasn't God also spoken through us? Listen, you cannot promote yourself. When it comes to God's will, you cannot ordain yourself. You cannot call yourself.

You cannot promote and push yourself. I've seen or heard of a lot of church splits where somebody wanted to come and promote their self, and God's not in it. If a church ever plants a church or, you know, everybody's on the same page and the leadership agrees and, you know, but pride comes in.

Hasn't God also called us? And you see many denominations, Presbyterian or Episcopalian, they're ordaining, you know, gay clergy as if God is accepting that. You cannot, man cannot ordain themselves. They can't go against truth.

It's God who calls a man. It's God who calls a person. It's God's will.

He does it. You cannot call yourself. And this is huge when it comes to God's will because our self gets in the way, self-promotion, and we begin to try to circumvent authority.

We try to go around God's, and nothing's going on in the church, by the way. I'm just throwing it out there. But we begin to go around what God has put in place, and we want to promote ourselves.

Who doesn't want to promote themselves? That's why everybody has a, look at my business card. I've got, you know, we're promoting ourselves and we're trying to push, but that doesn't work in God's will. Led by the Spirit does not mean forced by the Spirit.

If we don't submit and humble ourselves to the direction of the Spirit, we will not be led of the Spirit. I'm reminded of this a lot with little kids. Some of you can definitely, you know, agree with this and understand, but a lot of times they want to fix things or do things, and like you don't know what you're getting into.

Let me do it. No, Daddy, I want to. There you go.

Go for it. Nine times out of ten, they come back crying because they got hurt. That's what the Holy Spirit does.

I can just go for it. Tough guy? You want to lead your life? Go for it. Tough woman? Oh, you say tough woman too? That doesn't flow as nice.

But that's the imagery there of quenching and grieving the Spirit. It's almost like he's going there. And so we make decisions not being led of the Spirit.

And we wonder, how did I get here? Pride, many times. Here's what should happen. Let me take this to God in prayer rather than let me post this on Facebook and seek feedback.

So many people I see put it on Facebook. What do you think if I do this? What does God say? Who cares what people say? And a lot of times you're going to get ten different opinions. Let me spend time in prayer rather than let me try to push this through and see what happens.

Listen, this is an important point. Prayer changes your heart, not God's. When I'm in prayer, my heart begins to align with God's will.

Things I came in there with angry, the anger subsides. Things I came in there confused, I finally said, Okay, Lord, I'll give it over to you. Prayer changes everything.

That's why we have prayer time after the service, for you to just take things to God. What about this? Let me spend time in God's Word for insight rather than spending countless hours listening to secular media. Let me set my heart to worship rather than staying busy going here and there.

See, it's all about setting our heart on certain things, getting counsel from the right area. It's the direction of our heart. Is it towards the things of God or towards the world? And some of you might say, Man, that's a lot.

That's a lot of stuff. Well, that's right. I'm talking to hungry people tonight.

I'm talking to people who are hungry for more of God. They want to know God. They want to know His will.

And we won't know God's will 100% on this side of eternity. All we can do is walk by faith, one step at a time, one day at a time. Do the will of God.

See, it's a very simple formula. If you can remember this, stay, pray, and obey. Stay, pray, and obey has always helped me.

Stay in the Word of God. Pray often and obey the Word of God. That's His will.

He actually told Micah, the prophet Micah, they asked, What does the Lord require of you, O man? But to love justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly before your God. If you can do that, love justice. What is right? What is fair? You know, all those things we just talked about.

To love mercy, to be a person filled with compassion and love, and to walk humbly before your God. That's His will. It's not this big, huge formula that you've got to have everything in order just to make it work.

It's living the Spirit-filled life. And tremendous doors open. Tremendous doors close.

And you look back and go, I'm glad that door closed. When you have hindsight. The fourth detour is a product of the other three.

And this happens often. It's a hard heart. Once we begin to resist, once we begin to be filled with ourselves, once we begin to complain and grumble, we have a hard heart.

And the heart becomes cold and calloused. And here's a sign of a hard heart. Are we always complaining? I'm going back to that point on purpose.

A hard heart often is the result of somebody complaining a lot. If we're just constantly complaining about everything, there's a hardness there that needs to be broken. How clear can I be? Because it happens to me too.

God used what they desired to actually judge them. They ate so much meat that it was coming out of their nostrils, the Bible says. God actually used what they wanted to judge them.

And I was reminded of this. What about if we do the same thing? We have to be careful what we ask for. People say, if I could just be on my own again, if I could just get my own place, if I could just be on my own again, or if I could just find a different spouse, or if I could just get a job where I make tons of money, and on and on, if I could just, if I could just, if I could just, if I could just, God might say, okay, there you go, now it's going to destroy you.

Because it can become idolatry. Idolatry is putting something where God should be. And God often used the idols to judge the people.

So He said, your idols of wood and silver, they'll judge you. Your idols that you make, they'll judge you. And God will give us over to that sometimes to teach us a lesson.

Numbers 14, they blamed God, if you can believe this, and those over them for their problems. Why did you bring us here to die? They had gotten to such a state, do they not remember that Moses, God through Moses just delivered them. Then He parted something called the Red Sea, not the aqueduct, the Red Sea, and then He makes provision throughout the wilderness, and then they say, you brought us here to die? I chuckled a little bit when I read it.

Are you kidding me? Did you see what just happened? But that's what happens with the hard heart. We look at right now, right now what's happening. We forget about everything that God, how great is our God has brought us through, and who He is, and who we look to, and who we serve, and we become hard and cold and callous.

And it filters into all other areas of our lives. Blaming God and others is a terrible place to live. Not only are you outside of God's will, but joy and peace will leave.

That might be a message to somebody here tonight, you need to stop blaming God and other people. It's very healthy to take responsibility for your own actions, for your own choices. And maybe sometimes it's not our fault, but it's okay to say that.

And say, Lord, I don't know if this is my fault, would you show me? And take it to Him, take the grumbling and the complaining to Him. And then the Lord said to Moses, and this was pretty eye-opening, how long will these people treat me with contempt? Basically, how long will these people disregard me? How long will these people disrespect me? How long? Because I will not keep putting up with this. And the hard heart caused them to fear the will of God.

Their hard heart caused them to fear the will of God. So when God said, okay, there's your promised land. There it is, go and spy it out, go see what you're getting into.

They came back and said, we can't take that land. There's giants there, except for Joshua and Caleb. We can't take that land, that's too hard.

God, you brought us here to die, and you're going to tell us to take a land we can't possess? So they start to fear the will of God. And doesn't it happen to us too sometimes? We actually start to fear the will of God, which is supposed to be good for us. And God's will is scary.

It is scary when you look through the lens of human understanding. If I look through my understanding, oh, this is very scary. I don't like this at all.

But that's why God says, He reminds us that often the challenge is so great in order that He gets all the credit. He doesn't call us to do things we can do in our own strength. I've noticed this before.

When it comes to God's will, He will not make things very simple where you take all the credit and all the glory. Say, oh, that was so easy, I did that. You should look back and say, that's impossible.

That's impossible. How did that happen? God, God, He gets all the glory, all the credit. So when you venture out into God's will or you're trusting Him, yeah, it's going to look scary.

But don't forget the man or the person, don't forget the God who holds the universe in His hands and owns all of our ways. And I love what Caleb said. If the Lord is pleased with us, He will lead us into the land.

If the Lord is pleased with us, He will lead us into the land. And that's why I often say three things about God's will. I hope you can remember these.

They've helped me tremendously. Stay, pray, and obey. Stay in the word of God, pray, and obey His principles.

Stay, pray, and obey. That will not lead you in the wrong direction. I've never met a person who stayed in the word of God, read it, applied it, prayed off, and obeyed His principles, and then was led astray all the time.

It's when we get away from those things that that happens. But as an encouraging note, many times we drift from trusting Him. Have you ever drifted from trusting Him? Drifted from His will? Well, guess what? The good news is if you've drifted away, you can drift back.

Did you catch that? If you've drifted away, you can drift back. The wonderful thing about God's will is you can once again reposition yourself in the center of God's will. God doesn't say, well, next year maybe I'll consider it.

He says, repent, get back in right relationship with Me, move these things out of your life, and I will again guide you. I will again lead you. I'm right here.

And you've heard me say before, that's why I'd rather run to God's arms of forgiveness than live outside of His will. I'd rather because you can get right back in the center of God's will. Listen, I've seen people overcome addiction, everything from heroin to porn to whatever, and within a week they're back in joy and peace.

They're back in the center of God's will. Yeah, there's consequences. Yeah.

But would you rather deal with the consequences in the center of God's will or outside? So that's the encouragement. If we've drifted away, we can drift back. If we're on one of these detours, we can get off the detour really quick.

And that's why we have a time of prayer and worship.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/R9Sthm4W1-k.mp4>

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