

# (Finding God's Will) 1. God's Plan for Your Life

by Zac Poonen

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*The greatest honour and privilege of a Christian is to do the will of God, and seeking His will is crucial to living a victorious life and being of maximum use to the Lord.*

**Scripture:** Genesis 5:22, Matthew 7:21, Matthew 11:28-30, Matthew 12:50, Ephesians 2:10, Ephesians 5:17, Colossians 1:9, Colossians 4:12, 1 Peter 4:1-2, 1 John 2:17

**Topics:** "God's Will", "Guidance in Life Decisions"

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## Description

Zac Poonen emphasizes that the greatest honor for believers is to do God's will, as taught by Jesus and the apostles. He warns against the folly of pursuing our own paths without seeking God's guidance, especially when making significant life decisions. Poonen highlights that many miss God's perfect will due to disobedience and compromise, urging believers to earnestly seek God's plan for their lives. He illustrates this with biblical examples, including David and the Israelites, and encourages a life dedicated to fulfilling God's will. Ultimately, he calls for a commitment to walk in God's appointed path, assuring that it leads to true fulfillment and purpose.

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## Transcript

Man's greatest honour and privilege is to do the will of God. This was what the Lord Jesus taught His disciples. He once said that only those who did His Father's will would enter the kingdom of Heaven (Matt. 7:21). He also said that His true brothers and sisters were those who did the will of God (Matt. 12:50).

This emphasis was duly passed on by the apostles to their generation. Peter declared that God sets men free from sin so that they can do His will (1 Pet. 4:1,2). Paul asserted that believers are created anew in Christ Jesus so that they can walk in a path God has already mapped out for them. He therefore exhorted the Ephesian Christians not to be foolish, but to understand what the will of the Lord was for their lives (Eph. 2:10; 5:17). He prayed for the Colossian Christians that they might be filled with the knowledge of God's will. He told them that his co-worker Epaphras was also praying for them that they might fulfill all the will of God (Col. 1:9; 4:12). The apostle John taught that only those who did the will of God would abide forever (1 John 2:17).

This emphasis is unfortunately rare in our day and generation. Hence the shallowness and powerlessness of the average believer today. Men are urged to come to Jesus merely to receive forgiveness. In apostolic times, people were told that forgiveness of sins was to be only a prelude to a life dedicated to the fulfillment of the whole will of God.

Acts 13:22 seems to imply that David was called "a man after God's own heart" because he desired to do the will of God alone. David himself tells us elsewhere that he delighted in doing God's will (Psa. 4:8). He was not a perfect man. He committed many sins, some very serious ones, for which God had to punish him severely. Yet God forgave him and found pleasure in him because basically David wanted to do all of God's will. This encourages us to believe that in spite of all our imperfections, we too can be men and women after God's own heart - if only our hearts are set on doing His will.

The New Testament urges believers to walk as Jesus walked, following His example. The guiding principle of Jesus' entire life and ministry was to do the will of His Father. He never moved until His Father told Him to. And when He did move, neither the threats of His enemies nor the pleadings of His friends could stop Him from doing what His Father required of Him. His daily food was to fulfill His Father's will (John 4:34). As men crave for food to nourish their bodies, He craved to do the will of the One Who had sent Him.

Every believer should have a similar hunger to fulfill all the will of God. How easy it is to pray, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven," and then to do just as we please, without seeking God's guidance in our daily lives.

God's plan is the best

It is the height of folly not to seek God's guidance. If you were alone in the middle of a thick forest on a pitch dark night, not knowing which way to turn, you would be glad to have with you someone who knew every inch of the forest and whom you could trust fully. You would soon follow without question whatever way he took. It would be foolish to ignore his advice and to move on your own into that dark and dense forest, full of hidden dangers. Yet many believers do just that sort of thing.

The future that lies before us is darker than anything on earth could possibly be. We can see nothing ahead. Yet we have to move forward.

We sometimes come to crossroads in our lives, where we have to make decisions with far-reaching consequences. Decisions such as the choice of a career and a life-partner affect our entire future. How are we to decide at such times? We know nothing of the dangers and the hidden pitfalls along each path. We know nothing of the snares Satan has laid for us. And yet - we have to decide which path to take.

It would therefore be not only desirable but necessary for us to have someone beside us at such times whom we can trust fully, who knows the entire future. In the Lord Jesus Christ, we have just such a Person, and He is more than eager to guide us along the safest and best path.

The Bible teaches that God has a specific plan for each of our lives (Eph. 2:10). He has planned a career for us, chosen a life-partner for us and even planned where we should live and what we should do each day. In every case, His choice must be the best, for He knows us so well and He takes every factor into consideration. It is wisest then to seek His will in all matters - major as well as minor.

It is not only foolish but dangerous to follow the reasoning of our limited intellects and the dictates of our emotions alone. Unless we are gripped by the conviction that God's plan is indeed the best, we are not likely to be in earnest about seeking it.

Many have made shipwreck of their lives by failing to seek the will of God right from their youth. It is indeed "good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth" (Lam. 3:27). In Matthew 11:28-30, Jesus invites

us to take His yoke upon us. What does it mean to take the yoke? Oxen that are used to plough fields are kept together by a yoke upon their necks. When a new ox is to be trained to plough, it is yoked together with an experienced ox. The new one is thus compelled to walk in the same direction and at the same speed as the older ox.

This is what it means to take the yoke of Jesus upon us. We shall have to walk with Jesus in the path that pleases Him, never rushing ahead to do anything without His leading, nor lagging behind when He calls to some new step of obedience. Few understand this meaning of the yoke. Fewer still are willing to accept it. The ox is forced by its owner to take the yoke upon its neck. But Jesus invites us. There is no compulsion here. How foolish we are to reject this invitation! We would rather take the heavy yoke of our own self-will with its accompanying frustrations, defeats, and regrets, than the light yoke of Jesus that brings true liberty and deep rest!

"Come to Me and I will give you rest - all of you who work so hard beneath a heavy yoke. Wear My yoke.....and let Me teach you (as the older ox teaches the inexperienced one)....and you shall find rest for your souls; for I give you only light burdens" (Matt. 11:28-30-TLB).

We read of Enoch that he "walked with God" (Gen. 5:22) - i.e., he did not rush ahead nor lag behind, but walked in God's appointed path as one under the yoke - for three hundred years. As a result, God testified that He was pleased with Enoch's life (Heb. 11:5). This is the only way that we please God - by living and moving under His yoke, in His perfect will. Only thus shall we be able to stand before Him without regret when He comes again.

#### Missing God's Plan

It is possible for a believer to miss God's perfect will for his life. Saul was chosen by God to be king over Israel, but eventually as a result of his impatience and disobedience, God had to reject him. True, he remained on the throne for some years more, but he had missed God's will for his life. Solomon is another example. He pleased God in his earlier years, but fell away later through marrying heathen women.

Twice in the New Testament we are exhorted to take a warning from the example of the Israelites who perished in the wilderness. God's perfect will for them was that they should enter Canaan. But all except two of them missed God's best through unbelief and disobedience (1 Cor. 10:1-12; Heb. 3:7-14). Many believers have similarly missed God's perfect plan for their lives through disobedience and compromise - often in marriage or in the choice of a career.

G Christian Weiss in his book, 'The Perfect Will of God', tells of a teacher in a Bible School who told his students one day, "I have lived most of my life on God's second best". God had called him to be a missionary in his younger days, but he had turned aside from that calling as a result of marriage. He then began a selfish business life, working in a bank, with the primary purpose of making money. God continued to speak to him for a number of years, but he refused to yield. One day his little child had a fall from a chair and died. This drove him to his knees, and after a whole night spent in tears before God, he put his life into God's hands completely. It was too late for him to go to Africa now. That door was closed. He knew that had been God's best for him, but he had missed it. All that he could do was to ask God to put the rest of his life to some use. He became a teacher in a Bible School, but could never forget that this was only God's second-best.

Weiss continues to say, "I have since met numerous people who have borne similar testimony. Usually these testimonies have been bathed, or at least marked, with bitter tears. For while, thank God, He has ways of using even those who have sinned and have gone past that single entrance into the channel of His perfect will, life can never be the way He originally intended it. It is a tragedy to miss the perfect will of God for one's life. Christian, mark well these words and this testimony lest you too miss His first choice. God, doubtless, will use any life that is submitted to His hands, anywhere along life's pathway, but let us be among those who have sought and surrendered to His will at the outset of life's journey, and thus avoid those painful and shameful detours along the way."

We just cannot live the victorious life or be of maximum use to the Lord, or be a blessing to others in any place we choose. Some may feel that they can choose their own career and their place of residence and then seek to be a witness for the Lord wherever they are. The Lord may in His mercy use such believers in a limited way. But their usefulness in God's vineyard will be only a fraction of what it could have been had they earnestly sought His plan and remained in the center of His perfect will. Stunted spiritual growth and limited fruitfulness are but the consequences of a careless disregard of God's laws.

If you have disobeyed God in some matter, turn to Him in repentance now, before it is too late. It may yet be possible for you, as in Jonah's case, to come back into the mainstream of God's plan for your life.

Each of us has but one life. Blessed is the man who like Paul, can say at the end of it, that he has finished his God-appointed task (2 Tim. 4:7).

"The world and all its passionate desires will one day disappear. But the man who is following God's will is part of the Permanent and cannot die" (1 John 2:17-JBP).

"Live life then with a due sense of responsibility, not as men who do not know the meaning and purpose of life, but as those who do. Make the best use of your time, despite all the difficulties of these days. Don't be vague but firmly grasp what you know to be the will of God" (Eph. 5:15-17-JPB).

## Summary

1. The Lord Jesus and His apostles taught that man's greatest honour and privilege is to do the will of God.
2. It is foolish to move into the future on our own when God is waiting to guide us. His plan is the best. If we yield to Him, He can save us from Satan's snares.
3. It is possible to miss God's perfect will for our lives through carelessness or disobedience.

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