

(Words Of Life) 59. Finding Gods Perfect Will

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding and following God's will in our lives. It highlights the need for wisdom to discern God's plan, the role of the Holy Spirit in guiding us, and the transformation of our minds to align with God's ways. Practical steps and questions are provided to help believers seek and walk in God's will, ensuring that every aspect of their lives glorifies Him.

Scripture: Ephesians 5:17, Proverbs 4:12, Romans 12:2, Proverbs 3:5, 1 John 3:21, 1 Corinthians 10:31, Colossians 3:17, 2 Corinthians 9:8, 1 John 2:27

Topics: "Understanding God's Will", "Guidance of the Holy Spirit"

Description

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Transcript

Welcome once again to words of life. Today we want to consider the subject of finding God's will. To begin with we will read Ephesians 5 verse 17.

Here it says, don't be foolish but understand what the will of the Lord is. What does that mean? A person who does not understand the will of God is foolish. Wisdom is to understand the will of God.

If you want to live as a wise person, you must understand the will of God first. Because God has made a plan for your life. Just like fathers make plans for their children.

They go and get admission for them in a kindergarten class. And then they go and get admission for them in a college. Encourage them to write competitive examinations.

They guide their children into a career. They guide their children into marriage. And many areas, parents guide their children.

They don't bring their children to birth and say, okay take care of yourself. A lot of animals are like that. But not human beings.

God is much better than any earthly father. He has got a plan for your life from the time you are born again. He has planned whom you should marry, what job you should have.

Where you should live, what you should do. Now whether you fulfill that plan or not is up to you. Because God doesn't force anybody.

The Bible speaks of the Holy Spirit filling people and demons possessing people. There is a lot of difference between demon possession and spirit filling. The difference is this, that when a demon possesses a person, the man loses control of himself.

He doesn't know what he is saying, where he is going. When the Holy Spirit fills a person, he has more control over himself than before. He can control his tongue, he can control his eyes.

Because the fruit of the spirit is self-control. The Holy Spirit does not control him. He gives him the power and allows him to choose.

He does not rule him like a demon possesses a person. So God's plan for your life, God doesn't force you to live according to it. You are converted when you are young.

And from that time you realize God has got a plan for your life. And you seek his will. By the time you come to the end of your life, you can look back on a life that is really lived in a worthwhile way.

But if you spend your life doing your own will, even if you read the Bible and go to meetings, at the end of your life you can be very frustrated. Even if you made a lot of money, even if your children are all born again, the question is at the end of your life, did you do the will of God for your life? So it says here, don't be foolish but understand what the will of the Lord is. And therefore, verse 16, make the most of your time.

Verse 15, don't walk as unwise men but as wise men. And in order to live like this, you need to be filled with the Holy Spirit. So you need to be filled with the Holy Spirit and understand God's will.

Now in Ephesians chapter 2 and verse 10, it says here, that God has earlier itself planned certain works that we should walk in them. He has prepared them. His circumstances, the people are all prepared.

God has marked out a path for you. You got to walk in it. He doesn't give you a blueprint for the whole thing right at the beginning.

When the Lord brought the Israelites out of Egypt, He didn't give them a map of the wilderness and say this is the way to Canaan. No, that's the way we would guide people today. But He had a better way.

He gave them a pillar of cloud and fire to lead them day by day. And that is a picture of the Holy Spirit. To guide them day by day, now stop, now go.

If you get a map, it doesn't tell you when to stop and when to move. But when you have the Holy Spirit, it tells you where to stop and when to move on. When you are too tired to move on, the pillar of cloud will stop.

But the map can't show you that. So God leads us day by day by the Holy Spirit. If you obey one day, He will lead you to the next day.

Step by step, He opens up the way before us. That is the paraphrase of Proverbs 4.12. As you go step by step, I will open the way before you. That is how God leads us.

And each point you must say, Lord what is your will? Whom should I marry? Which of these jobs should I take? Now Lord, what is the gift you have for me? He doesn't speak from heaven. But He renews our mind and shows us His will. See Romans chapter 12 and verse 2. It says here, if you allow your mind to be renewed, you can find out what is the perfect will of God.

So, it's not by a voice from heaven that we find out God's perfect will. That was in the Old Testament. Sometimes by a voice from heaven.

Sometimes through a prophet who found God's will and told you what it was. But that old covenant has been abolished. That old method has been changed.

Now it says in Hebrews 8.11, all will know me personally. Now, you can know God's will yourself without going to a prophet and without a voice from heaven. By the renewal of your mind.

We thought about that in an earlier session. Our mind is renewed as we read God's word in the New Testament particularly. We begin to understand God's ways.

We begin to think like God thinks. And as we begin to think like God thinks, we begin to know His will. That is God's way.

That means, we are not conformed to this world's way of thinking. That's what it says in this verse. Don't be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

Worldliness is not found in our dress. Worldliness is found in our mind. From the mind, it affects our dress and so many other things.

It's in the mind that worldliness comes. And it's in the mind that we are renewed to think like God thinks. So, we've got to get out of our mind all these worldly values.

Otherwise, we'll never find the will of God. See, we've grown up from childhood acquiring worldly values. Money is important.

The opinion of men is important. We must keep people happy. And we must live a comfortable life.

We must save up plenty for the future. Now, these are all worldly sense of values. But when we come to Christ, Jesus doesn't say you shouldn't save any money for the future.

He says your trust must not be in that money, but in God. And he says you must seek to please God now, not man. If man is offended, we are not bothered.

We don't go out of the way to offend people. We try to please people, to be pleasant to them. But that is not our goal.

Our goal is to please God. And God's opinion becomes the only thing that matters. Although we are careful not to do anything that will unnecessarily offend men.

Because in the testimony, he must be good before men also. But the whole value system in our mind changes. Then, it says we will know what God's will is.

So, to begin with, we start with scripture. Means that are clearly taught in scripture, we obey. And then, we will know God's will in other areas.

The other passage is Proverbs chapter 3. In Proverbs chapter 3 and verse 5 and 6, we read, that we must trust in the Lord with all our heart. And not lean on our own understanding. That means when I am trying to find God's will, don't think that my human reason will guide me.

I must lean upon God and say, Lord, you guide me. And I am confident that you will guide me. If I don't have faith, we will not get anything.

James 1, it says, if we lack wisdom, ask God. James 1, verse 5. But let us ask in faith, he says. To seek God for wisdom is to say, Lord, what is your will? In faith, he says, you must trust him, otherwise you will get nothing from the Lord.

So, it says, trust in the Lord, and don't just lean on your reason. Faith is not against reason. Faith is beyond reason.

Like in mathematics, calculus is not against multiplication. It is beyond multiplication. So, if a person who has only studied multiplication does not understand calculus, because he is only in third standard, that doesn't mean calculus is wrong.

He has not come to the place where he has understood it. So, reason is like a third standard student. Faith is like a PhD student.

It is ahead of this reason. So, don't depend on reason. Trust in the Lord.

Trust in his word. Then, it says in verse 6, all your ways acknowledge him. God's will is just in one area.

In every area. Lord, I want to know your will. Then, he will guide you.

What if you are selective? Lord, I want to know your will in this area, but not in this area. You may not know his will, because this is not like going and picking one thing from a shop. Our whole value system has to change.

Lord, how do you want me to spend my money? Lord, how do you want me to spend my time? How should I speak? What sort of things should I meditate on? What sort of books should I read? What sort of television program should I watch? What sort of friends should I keep? Which church should I attend? What job should I take? Everything. All your ways. Acknowledge him, and he will direct your paths.

He will make your paths straight. There will be no crookedness there. So, there are some wonderful promises like this that God will guide us.

He wants us to know his will. See, in Jesus' life, very often you read this expression. We did this or this happened so that the scripture might be fulfilled.

The greatest truth in scripture is John 17, 23 that God loves me as he loved Jesus. You must say that. God loves me as he loved Jesus.

And that's the greatest truth you must confess to the end of your life. Whatever may happen, whatever you cannot understand, God loves you as he loved Jesus. And so, if God had a plan for Jesus' life, he has a

plan for yours and mine.

I was not born accidentally in one place. Jesus was born according to God's plan. So was I and you.

At a particular time in a particular country. And so, you and me. Every detail of our life, God has planned.

It will not automatically be fulfilled. You have to deny yourself and choose God's will. You have to say, Lord, not my will, but thine be done.

If you choose God's will in every situation, then it will be fulfilled. Now, there are many things where the Bible is very clear. We should not tell lies.

We must love our enemies. We must not harm others. We must not love money.

We must not judge others but judge ourselves. Many, many things. But in some areas, God's will is not so clear.

Who should I marry? Shall I do this or that? Some people are a bit questionable. Is this black or white? I don't know. This one looks a bit gray.

So in some of these areas, let me give you some rules to find out how to find God's will. When you are not sure of God's will in some areas, ask yourself these 12 questions. And if you want, you can write them down.

Number one, ask yourself, is this thing that you are doing contrary to some New Testament teaching? Is this thing that you are doing contrary to some New Testament teaching? 2 Timothy 3, verse 16 and 17. All the words of God to the righteous man. So, if you know this is contrary to the teaching of the New Testament, then don't do it.

That's the first question. Can I do this with a clear conscience? 1 John 3, verse 21. If our heart does not condemn us, then we have confidence before God.

As you think of doing that, you find your conscience is troubling you. Don't worry. Don't bother the fact that a hundred people tell you to do it.

Don't do it. They may have freedom to do it because their conscience doesn't trouble them. You have a more sensitive conscience.

But you must live not by their conscience but by your conscience. Don't judge them. It may not be sin for them.

But it may be sin for you. In Romans 14, the last three verses, Romans 14, the last three verses says very clearly that some things are not sin for others but can be sin for us because our conscience troubles us. The third question.

Is it something I can do for the glory of God? 1 Corinthians 10, verse 31. Whatever you do, whether you eat or drink, do all for the glory of God. See, that's a very good question, this particular thing, can I glorify God with this? Then a fourth question, can I do this in fellowship with the Lord Jesus? The Bible says in Colossians 3.17, everything that we do, we must do in the name of the Lord Jesus.

So if I can't do this in fellowship with the Lord Jesus, then I should not do it. I should avoid it. Then a fifth question, can I ask God to bless me as I do it? 2 Corinthians 9.8, where it says God can make all grace abound to you that you have an abundance for everything you need to do.

So can God give you grace to do this particular thing? Can he bless you as you do this? If you cannot ask God to bless you as you do this, don't do it. Number six, sixth question, will this dishonor God's name? The Bible says in Romans 2.24, in the name of the Lord is blasphemed among the heathen because of you. And 2 Corinthians 8.21, we must have regard not only for things which are honorable in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.

So if I do this, will it dishonor God's name? Then I must avoid it. Then number seven, would I do this if the Lord Jesus were to return right now while I'm doing it? It says in 1 John 2.28, when he comes, we should not be ashamed at his coming and shrink away. No, we should be able to be bold when he comes.

So this particular thing you are contemplating, would you be happy to be found doing it when Christ comes right now? If you say no, I wouldn't do it when Christ comes. Then don't do it. Number eight, is it spiritually profitable and edifying? 1 Corinthians 6.12 and 1 Corinthians 10.23, all things are lawful, but all things do not edify.

All things are not profitable. See, there are some right things which we still should not do because it's not profitable. For example, it says there about eating too much.

There's nothing sinful about it, but it will make you unhealthy. You can become a slave to food. I should not be mastered by anything.

This particular thing I'm thinking of, is there a comfortable way of spending my time and my money? Number nine, will this blunt my spiritual edge in any way? Paul said to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2.15, present yourself to God as a workman who doesn't have to be ashamed. That means as a sharp instrument, present yourself to God. Avoid things which will hinder you from being a useful vessel in God's hands.

It goes on to say, if you cleanse yourself, you can be a useful vessel. And then number 10, will this cause other people to stumble? In Romans 14 and verse 13, it says there, let us not put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother's way. Let us not do something, even eating something, which will cause another person to stumble.

1 Corinthians 8 verse 9. So, we should consider. I'm not saying that we should try to please everybody in the world. Some things we do will always cause people to stumble.

But we should avoid it, if there's no benefit from it. If I have to please God and other people are offended, I can't do anything about it. 11.

What do wiser brothers think about this? There are many verses in Proverbs concerning this. Proverbs 11.14, Proverbs 15.22, Proverbs 24.6. With wise counsel, we should go to war. With many counselors, there is safety.

Consult other wiser brothers. Not young brothers. Rehoboam consulted young brothers and split the kingdom.

Consult godly wiser brothers. You don't have to obey them. There's nothing wrong in taking advice from 10 godly brothers.

And last of all, which is the ultimate test, do you feel free in your spirit to do it? Do I feel free in my spirit to do this? 1 John 2 verse 27. You don't need anyone to teach you. The Holy Spirit, the anointing will teach you all things.

So that's the question you need to ask yourself. Do I feel free in my spirit to do it? And if you feel free in your spirit to do it, after having gone through this checklist, and you say yes, then you can go ahead and do it. I'm not saying you'll never make a mistake.

Very often God allows us to learn from our mistakes. I have made many mistakes in my life, even when I was sincere. But because I was sincere, those mistakes did not destroy me.

And because I was quick to come back to God and say, Lord, I made a mistake, forgive me. I have made mistakes in my speech, in my actions, in my assessment of people. Many mistakes.

But as soon as I realized it, I come to God and say, Lord, forgive me. Wonderful, he cleanses, he does not remember the past, and he brings us back into his perfect will. So God has got a perfect plan for your life.

It must be your passion to fulfill it. So you can come into the end of your life and stand before God, and God says, well done, good and faithful servant. You fulfilled my will.

Will you pray that God will help you to fulfill his will in your life? Stop for a moment and pray. Lord, help me to fulfill your will in my life. In Jesus name, God bless you.

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