

# Found: God's Will

Summary of John MacArthur and Marsha West

Is it possible for a Christian to know God's will and not have to agonize over it? Should a Christian:

- (a) make a decision without first spending hours in prayer, asking God to reveal His will?
- (b) avoid making a decision until he or she has a "peace about it"?
- (c) wait for a "sign" from God?
- (d) consult a psychic or a Ouija board to seek God's guidance?

"The will of God is not meant to be a secret we must uncover," says John MacArthur, president and featured speaker of Grace to You, "God wants us to understand His will far more than we want to understand it. He always makes His will clear to those who seek it with an obedient heart. Most of the real problem areas in the question of God's will are settled for us in Scripture.[1]"

So, what does Scripture tell us about seeking God's will for our lives? According to noted Old Testament scholar Bruce Waltke,

"There are no examples of explicitly seeking or finding God's will after Acts 1:24-26, in which the disciples drew lots to select Matthias as a replacement for Judas. There are dreams, visions, and revelations after this, but never in the context of explicitly seeking God's will. From this point onward it is not divination (seeking to probe the divine mind) but revelation given by God to His people. After Pentecost there is no instance of the church seeking God's will through any of the forms of divination? The problem of using divination today is that the techniques Christians use, like promise boxes and seeking signs are not examples offered to those living under the New Covenant. So when a believer is told to "not take a job until you have God's mind," I think he may be led astray. His faulty logic and faulty exegesis cause him to believe in divination, but there is no such biblical example to follow for Christians." [2]

Nowhere in the New Testament does God tell His followers to "seek his will." Christians are commanded to seek His kingdom and do His will.

The means God used to reveal His will before Pentecost is not normative for the church today. According to Waltke, "God does not administer His church in the same way He administered old Israel. He administered old Israel by the Mosaic Law, but we are no longer administered by that law. He administers us by the Spirit, not the Law, and this changed at Pentecost."

God operates differently today because we are under grace, not under the Law. "For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace" (Romans 6:14). Born again Christians are controlled by the Spirit of God. Through the work of the Holy Spirit in us, we know how to tell right from wrong. Hebrews 8:10 says, "I will put my law into their minds, and write them on their hearts."

Many Christians fall into the same trap as the cults and New Agers. Their trust is placed in subjective experiences rather than the objective Truth of Scripture. For cultural Christians, it's not about knowing God; it's about *experiencing God*. For many believers, feelings and experiences are what matters most. Forget about reading the Bible. Excuse my bluntness, but that's just plain dumb! How will Christians be able to discern truth from fiction if they're biblically illiterate? "A thorough study of the Bible will equip the believer with understanding and wisdom that leads to maturity. Christians who don't take time to study are unable to differentiate between God's purpose and desire for their lives from their own aspirations."

Which brings me back to the burning question, What does Scripture tell us about seeking God's will for our lives? According to John MacArthur (Plan of My Life: God's Will), the Bible reveals that it's God's will for all of us to be:

**Saved** --1 Timothy 2:3-4: This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. 2 Peter 3:9; The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

**Spirit-filled** -- Ephesians 5:17-18: Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.

**Sanctified** -- 1 Thessalonians 4:3-7: It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God; and that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him. The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you. For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life.

**Submissive** -- 1 Corinthians 10:31: So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. 1 Peter 2:13-15: Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men.

**Suffering** -- 1 Peter 4:15-16: If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name. Philippians 1:29; 29: For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him. 2 Timothy 3:12: In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

“If all those things are true in your life,” says MacArthur, “you may do whatever you want. Psalm 37:4 says, ‘Delight yourself in the Lord; and He will give you the desires of your heart.’ That means that if you are conforming to God's will in all the five ways listed above, He will place in your heart desires that reflect His will. So do what you want to do!”[1]

There you have it. The qualifications for knowing the will of God are first and foremost a person must be saved. What follows is the infilling of the Spirit, sanctification (being made holy) submission to Christ's Lordship (emptying ourselves) suffering that glorifies God. When we do these things we are demonstrating that we genuinely love God. Thus, God will give us the desires of our hearts.

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God -- this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is -- his good, pleasing and perfect will” (Romans 12:1, 2).

1. The Plan of My Life: God's Will By John MacArthur

2. Knowing the Will of God By Bruce Waltke, with Jerry MacGregor Published by Harvest House Publishers, Eugene OR.