

How Do I Know God's Will in my Life?

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Preacher: Alistair Chalmers

[0 : 00] This evening, as we dive into our question, I want us to have a little think over our lives. And I'm sure that each of us will remember a time where we've asked that question, God, what is your will for my life?

You know, those excruciating times where you have no idea what to do. You're looking for direction, you have no idea and you feel lost at sea.

You've got questions, you've got decisions, all these factors running through your mind at 100 miles an hour. Should I make that radical career change? Should I quit my job and go to Bible college? Which university should I apply to? Which course should I go on? Is that person really the one that God wants me to marry? And with all of these questions racing through our minds, you're running through all the potential outcomes and you feel as if you're going crazy.

You're pulling at your hair and in absolute desperation, you crash to the floor and you cry out at the top of your lungs, God, what is your will for my life? And yet there's no answer.

[1 : 18] And so you keep on asking. And you wait for some kind of peaceful feeling that never really comes. You search scripture day and night and with every single prayer, you're asking God, what is your will for my life?

Help me decide, lead me in the right direction. Now I know that I'm not the only one who's been there before. This is a question that many people want to know the answer to.

What is the will of God for my life? And this is a massive question. And so in the 25 to 30 minutes we have together, we will only be able to skim the surface of it.

So please do ask questions later on. We'll have a Q&A; session together. But also please speak to the people next to you and pray together. So to answer that question, what is God's or how do I know God's will for my life?

We need to ask two questions. What is the will of God? And then how do I live it out? So the first question we need to ask is what is the will of God?

[2 : 32] And the Bible speaks of two wills of God. We have his sovereign will and his moral will. So God's sovereign will. And we see this in many different passages in the Bible.

But tonight we're going to focus on two verses from Ephesians chapter 1. They're on the screen behind me. But if you have a Bible, please do turn to them. And God's sovereign will basically means that God is in control.

So look at Ephesians 1 verses 11 and 12. It says, In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will.

In order that we who were the first to put our hope in Christ might be for the praise of his glory.

God's sovereign will can be defined as God's eternal decree set out before the foundation of the world.

And that is what Paul is explaining to the Christians in Ephesus. That they were chosen before the creation of the world. Called to be holy. Set apart before they were even born.

[3 : 53] God's sovereign will means that he knows who his people are. That he has called them to repentance and to belief in the gospel.

And they have responded in accordance with the will of God. So God's sovereign will stretches right from Genesis chapter 1. And goes all the way through to Revelation 22.

Which is the future that awaits us that has not yet come to pass. God is sovereign. His plan will happen. People will repent and put their trust in Jesus.

There will be a day where God will judge the world. And those who follow him. He will take to an eternal glory in his presence in the new creation.

And those who reject him. He will send to an eternal punishment. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Those are a few of the elements of this grand sovereign plan of God that we know.

[4 : 59] But maybe you're like many others in the world. And you're outraged. At this thought that God can be in control of all things. And you're thinking, well, if God is in control, why did he let that happen?

Why did he let this happen to me and my family? And those are good, good questions that we will be thinking about in this series. We think that no sovereign God would allow suffering. But just imagine for a moment what the disciples felt as their promised Messiah and friend Jesus Christ nailed to a cross in the most brutal form of murder and execution that exists. You can imagine them asking the same question, can't you? God, why is this happening? How can this really be part of your good plan?

God, why is this? God, why is this? Now they didn't know it at the time. But because of our point in history, we can know that the cross, which was the greatest event of suffering that this earth has ever seen, brought about the greatest event of forgiveness that this earth has ever seen.

[6 : 13] That sinners like you and me can be called, can be forgiven, can be set free from the punishment of sin that we rightfully deserve.

God's sovereign will isn't always apparent, but scripture tells us that the God behind that sovereign will is good and he is in control.

Now I personally find this to be one of the most comforting truths because regardless of what is happening in my life or how difficult it is, God is using it to serve his sovereign will.

And the alternative to this, friends, is that God is not in control and that both good and bad things happen to us by coincidence.

That everything is just random and that there is no justice in the end because who is God? That is not what God has promised. God is in control.

[7 : 18] He knows all things. He sees all things. And there will be a day when every wrong will be made right in his presence. God's sovereign will means that we can have absolute assurance that he is working out our good, as Romans 8, 28 tells us, and that nothing, absolutely nothing in this world can thwart his plan.

And it means that our suffering is not meaningless. We just don't see the whole picture as he does. One of the reasons that many people don't like this teaching is because it leaves us in the passenger seat and it leaves God behind the wheel.

And whilst we know the destination of an eternity with him, we don't know all the stops on the way. We don't know the details of his plan. And if we're honest, I think that scares us because we like to be in control.

We like to know what is happening. We don't know God's sovereign will until we look back over our lives and we might still look back and not understand any of it.

But the freedom is that we don't need to understand. Because our creator, our sustainer, our heavenly father, he knows the plan. And his wisdom is far greater than mine.

[8 : 51] His power and his plan are far greater than we can even begin to comprehend. Scripture calls us to trust God because only he is all-knowing and sovereign.

And if we don't or can't believe this, then I think we need to question ourselves whether we have a problem in our own hearts because we're not willing to acknowledge God as Lord of our lives and acknowledge that he has control of all things because he is all-powerful.

God's sovereignty doesn't mean that we are mindless robots, but it means that we are beloved children who've been called and adopted into his family. Part of God's sovereign will is that we have been made disciples of Jesus Christ, that we have been forgiven, but it also means that we have to play our part in what we read in Matthew 28, the Great Commission, that we are to be disciples that make disciples.

We are to extend that same call to the world to repent and believe the gospel. That is the call to every single human being that is alive.

And we are to be ambassadors of Christ wherever we go. That is God's sovereign will. But the Bible also speaks about God's moral will.

[10 : 23] God's moral will can be defined as the way God wants or wills his people to live. God's moral will is revealed to us in Scripture.

And part of that is Matthew 28, that we as Christians have been called from darkness, death, to light and life.

And we have responded to the gospel and now we are to take that message to the world. But we still want to know God's specific will for our individual lives, don't we?

That's the desire of every heart. But do we really? Or do we actually just pick and choose where we think God can have a say?

We say we want to know God's will. Yet all too often we act like hypocrites because we only want to know God's will and involve him in situations that we find ourselves at a loss in.

[11:30] We don't know what to do. Then we cry out for God's will. How many of us ask God if we should accept a promotion at work? Or which school to send our kids to?

Or when and where to go on holiday? Or which model of a car we should buy? More often than not, we exclude God and we are very selective in where we want a specific will for our lives and where we don't.

When it comes to grasping the will of God, we can often have some misconceptions that go beyond what Scripture teaches us. For example, there's the idea that God has a specific marriage partner out there for you and you must be careful not to marry the wrong person.

But the Bible doesn't teach us that. Maybe God won't tell you to go and marry Harry or Sally or Joe or any of these other names that come to mind.

But do you know what God does tell you to do? He makes it crystal clear that as a Christian, you are to marry someone of the opposite sex. That you are to marry someone who is godly.

[12:52] But God also says that singleness is good. And that is God's moral will for marriage and singleness. God probably won't tell you the address of the new house you should buy or necessarily the neighborhood that you should move to.

But what he does tell us in his word is that we are called to be a community that worships God. And so if you're thinking of moving house, you need to think about how far away am I from a Bible-believing church?

That is God's revealed moral will. Or we need to make a conscious effort to make the trip in on a Sunday to gather with our church family.

God probably won't tell you which job to apply for. But he does tell you to be the best employee you can be for his glory. And to honor your boss.

Now maybe you're sitting there thinking what on earth has gotten into Alistair? Why is he telling us all of this as if it is good news? Well friends, because it is. It means that we're not constantly having to worry or question ourselves if we're in the will of God.

[14:12] And it means that we follow or it means that we have God's moral will revealed to us in Scripture. We need to be obedient to it.

So how do we know God's moral will? Well we turn to Scripture. As Psalm 19 says in verses 7 to 9. The law of the Lord is perfect, refreshing the soul.

The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The precepts of the Lord are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the Lord are radiant, giving light to the eyes.

The fear of the Lord is pure and enduring forever. The decrees of the Lord are firm and all of them are righteous. So if you want to know God's will, turn to his word.

Because it is right there in black and white for us. We're not left guessing. But God's commandments give light to our eyes, meaning that we know where we're going.

[15:25] God's sovereign will might be a mystery to us and we only see it as we look back. But God's moral will is revealed in the pages of Scripture. It is clear and we cannot ignore it.

Even if it makes us feel uncomfortable. Christians aren't called to comfort. We're called to be uncomfortable for our great God.

God's moral will tells us how we are to live, why we are to live that way, but it doesn't always give us the answer of what. And by that I mean that God's moral will doesn't tell us to choose a specific job, but it tells us to be good employees.

It doesn't give us the exact details of our lives, but it tells us how God wants his people to live. Now I'm the kind of person where I like to know the rules.

I like to know the boundaries, the do's and don'ts of life or a given task or whatever. But God's moral will cannot be reduced to things like do not murder, do not steal, do not lie.

[16:32] It is much more than that because it is about a whole heart attitude. Because following rules is easy. Having clear black and white boundaries is simple and requires no effort.

But the moral will of God is about our hearts. It's described in 1 Thessalonians 4, 3 where it says this, it is God's will, God's moral will, that you should be sanctified.

And Paul goes on in the following verses to give examples of what that would look like in a person's life. Sanctification means that a Christian is being constantly changed and transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit into the likeness of Jesus Christ.

So God's moral will means that we take our cues from Scripture, that we seek to live in a way that glorifies God and it boils down to godly decision making.

The Bible enables us to do that. God has given us brains and common sense to make decisions. But we always need to make sure that our motivations are pure and that the end goal is always God's glory.

[17:55] Now God has gifted each and every one of us here this evening with skills, with talents, with passions, and with abilities that we can use for His glory.

The Bible doesn't tell us to try and find out some kind of grand master plan of God's for our individual lives. But it tells us to recognize the gifts that He has given us and to put them to use for His kingdom.

To search His word and make godly decisions. Now I am more than happy to focus on that general plan of God and live obediently than to demand a specific will for my life.

because we are still nowhere near finishing the great commission that Jesus gave us in Matthew 28. So why should we worry about anything else? The call on your life is to go into the world and to share the gospel.

To be ambassadors for Christ. And the way we live out that calling will be very different for different people. For some, it will mean living it out in the workplace.

[19:06] For some, it will mean living it out at home as you look after the kids full time. For some, it will mean in retirement meeting up with people for coffee.

And for some of us, it will mean full time ministry. But the truth is that Matthew 28 is God's will. And the question is, are you living it out?

some people want to have a Damascus road, a burning bush, a Mount Sinai experience where God miraculously intervenes and calls people.

But those things happen to very specific people for very specific tasks at a very specific time in history for God's people. The task that we've been called to is to live holy lives that are built on the foundation of Scripture.

To live intentionally as we put the Bible into practice and live lives which glorify God. Practically, this means asking yourself, am I loving God with all of my heart with this decision?

[20:19] Am I loving or hurting others with this decision? Am I standing up for God's truth if I take this or that action? Friends, if you want to know God's will for your life, turn to the wonderful word of the Lord because that is where you find the radiant light which gives light to our eyes.

Once we understand that, then every single decision we make in our life will be weighed by asking the following two questions. does this decision glorify God?

And is it me being faithful to God's revealed moral will in Scripture? So that is what the Bible says about the will of God.

But the question remains, how do we live it out? We see God's sovereign will, we see God's moral will, but what does it mean for us? How do we live it out?

And this boils down to godly decision making. How do we make decisions that consciously glorify God and live according to his revealed will?

[21:35] Well, the first thing is that we pray. Prayer is an expression of dependence on God and so we need to pray for wisdom. Pray for the Holy Spirit to help us have strength to make the decision that is in line with Scripture.

And that is for the good of God's kingdom. Numerous times in the Bible we're told to bring our prayers before the Lord. And God in his wisdom has given us countless examples of what biblical prayer looks like.

And yet, doesn't it still seem to be the last thing that comes to mind when we have a decision to make? We jump to our own resources before we turn to the eternal God who knows and gives us all things.

But our first response when it comes to making a decision should be to pray. And maybe you're thinking, well, if God is sovereign, what difference do my prayers make?

And that is a great question and I'm not dodging it, but please come back on the 17th of November and we'll be thinking about that question and leave all your hard questions to them. But in prayer, we offer our lives to God and we acknowledge him as King and Lord.

[22 : 54] God. So we need to pray for our decisions and stop ourselves from being sucked into the rampant individualism that society pushes and remember that we are called to gather with the Lord's people, that we are new creations called to glorify God in every area of our lives.

So the first thing we do when we think of making a decision is we pray. Secondly, we seek godly counsel. God has not called us and saved us to live in isolation.

We are called to gather with other believers and thankfully God has given us a spiritual family in the church that has a wealth of real life experience and a place that is full of spiritually mature believers that we can go and learn from.

So younger people, seek the wisdom and experience of older, more mature believers. But if you're older, learn from the experience of the younger generation as well.

We can all learn something from each other. We are not called to struggle alone. God has given us community for a reason. Let's use it. Let's be disciples that help fellow disciples live according to God's moral will.

[24 : 20] So here's a challenge for you. Why don't you speak to someone of a different generation and commit to every few months meeting up for a coffee together, praying and reading the Bible together?

I've hugely benefited from these times in my life with people who are younger, older, and the same age as myself. seeking God's will doesn't mean that the other person, seeking godly counsel doesn't mean that the other person will have the answer that you're looking for.

But it means that you have a fellow Christian who comes alongside you, supports you, and upholds you in prayer as you both seek to live faithfully for our great God.

Thirdly, how do I live out God's will? Well, we obey Scripture. Living according to the will of God is by obeying Scripture, and that should go without saying, but sadly, because of our sinful and selfish desires, it isn't a given.

As Christians, we should be known as people who love the Lord, who love His Word, and who build our lives upon the truths of Scripture, and people who obey it, even though that will mean we deny ourselves certain things.

[25 : 48] In this book, we have God's revealed will. We're not left guessing. We're not left in the dark, stumbling about blind, but we have been given God's moral will that we need to follow.

And if the Bible speaks about our situation, then we need to submit to it. We need to obey it, even if it's difficult.

And the wonderful news is that we have not been left to do this task by ourselves, but as Romans 5 tells us, please go away and read that wonderful chapter. In it, we see that God has given us the Holy Spirit who is within us and who gives us strength to live according to the Bible.

the Holy Spirit is at work in the lives of Christians and he helps us become more and more like Jesus every single day. The process that 1 Thessalonians 4 calls sanctification.

And lastly, how do I live out God's will? Well, we need to act. we can and should do everything that we can do to live according to God's revealed will, but there will come a time where we have prayed, where we have sought godly counsel, where we have scoured through Scripture and we're living obediently.

[27 : 16] And sometimes we just need to make a decision and do it. And the motivation for our action should always be to see God glorified, to see His church built up and to see the gospel spread across the world as we are disciples who go into the world and make disciples.

And all of that should be done for God's glory, not for our own. So God's moral will has been revealed to us in Scripture and we should seek to live according to it.

God's sovereign will has not been revealed to us in all of its detail, but it is unfolding as we speak. And praise the Lord that we don't need to know His sovereign will, but our task is to live obedient lives and to glorify Him in everything.

Let's pray together. Heavenly Father, we thank You that You have not left us alone in this world guessing. that we don't have to worry about what Your will for our lives is, but that we can turn to

Your Word and see that You have revealed it to us.

You've called us to be holy because You are holy. You've called us to be perfect because You are perfect. And Holy Spirit, we pray that You would help us do that.

[28 : 42] Help us make godly decisions which bring God all of the glory which are for our own spiritual benefit and for the spiritual benefit of the church that You have gathered us in.

Father, we thank You that You have not left us alone. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. that You have happened and need to feel love and exciting.

Thank you. After the reading i have sent you to see thatSP ■■■■ that you love