

# Knowing The Will of God

In *Knowing God*, J. I. Packer claims that finding the will of God is a problem for many Christians, not because they doubt that God guides His children, but because they are sure that He does. What worries them is whether or not they are receptive to the guidance that God offers. Look at the following issues for knowing God's will:

## I.) Condition :

A True Desire - To Know and Do God's Will Read *Matt 6:33* *But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.*

-This sounds simple, but it is exactly where most people fail.

Take the following tests:

A. Are you really willing to **Go Anywhere / Do Anything?**

-You must say "Yes" before you ever hear the question.

B. Are you being obedient to what you already know? -Obedience to known truth is the prerequisite for further revelation.

1. Daily obedience (prayer, devotional life, witnessing, etc...)

2. Have no known, unrepented sin. -sin blocks fellowship with the Holy Spirit.

### Question-

Does the following Apply to You? "God, I'll do anything, but please don't ask me to \_\_\_\_\_ !

(Now, either read and teach the following yourself, or print it out and have each small group member take turns reading each point)

## II.) God's Methods of Revealing His Will

God speaks and has spoken in many different ways.

-Winkie Pratney gives the following outline: Guidance breaks down into three basic categories:

### A. PERSONAL (Individual Direct Guidance)

#### 1. The Word of God -

*a. Regular Bible Reading* - The Holy Scriptures, the foundation of all guidance.

*b. Mental Suggestion* - In prayer God will sometimes bring to mind a verse, a chapter, or a book of the Bible.

*c. Recalled Memory Verse* - Often, during a time of temptation or difficulty, God will bring to your mind a verse of Scripture that will give clear instruction.

2. **The witness of the Holy Spirit** - An inner voice known by all true children of God. The Holy Spirit is able to give you a "*check*" inside as to whether or not something is of God.

### B. CORPOREAL (Other Christians)

1. **Godly men and women** - The advice of experienced Christians sought as confirmation.

This counsel should be more in the area of *principles*, not *pronouncements*. True godly counsel will of course always line up with the Word of God and Scriptural principles. (*Proverbs 15:22, 12:15, 13:10, 11:14, 24:6; 1 Thess. 2:11-15*)

2. **God's servants in the ministry** - Preaching under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Sometimes God will use a message or sermon anointed by the Holy Spirit to bring needed light when you are facing a difficult decision.

**3. The gifts of the Holy Spirit** - Scripture records incidents where God has confirmed direction through such gifts in His Body as prophesy, words of knowledge, and words of wisdom. *Never act solely on a "word" given to you by another.*

\* **Remember**, the key is *individual responsibility* for our own actions, and it is you that must make the final decision, and not someone else for you.

**C. SUPERNATURAL** - The instances of "supernatural" guidance, or special Divine Intervention in our lives are more rarely recorded. These cases are rare, but *not* because there are only a few who ever reach the "exalted height" of such direct contact. In fact, God may sometimes choose to act in this way because those on the receiving end are so spiritually *insensitive* and dull that they might otherwise never hear or understand!

**1. The audible voice of God.** God can and has spoken to people audibly. As in the case of Saul and the crowd that witnessed the Lord's baptism, it is apparently a real sound and not just a mental impression. Examples: Samuel (*1 Samuel 3:1-10*); Elijah (*1 Kgs. 19:9-13*); Saul (*Acts 9:1-7*);

**2. Visions and dreams.** The early Church gave much more attention to this subject than do most Christians today. Both dreams and visions, when inspired by the Holy Spirit, can be powerful means by which God speaks to His people. Examples: Peter (*Acts 10:9-16*); John (*Rev. 1-20*); Joseph (*Matt. 1:19-21*).

**3. Visitation.** Many believers throughout history have had authentic angelic visions or visitations. Examples: Abraham (*Genesis 18:1-33*); Zacharias (*Luke 1:8-20*); Mary (*Luke 1:26-38*).

**-A word of warning** before we leave this area. Young Christians can easily become fascinated with the "special cases," and exalt these above the more simple and ordinary daily ways God uses to speak to us. To deliberately seek or glorify any form of guidance is an outright invitation to spiritual deception. We are not to seek or specify *how* God should speak, but only seek Him in any way that He wishes to make Himself known.

## III.) Steps to Finding God's Will

Read *Rom 12:1-2* *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. 2 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.*

### Questions -

1. What does it mean to be conformed to the pattern of this world?  
-live for yourself, look out for #1, etc.. self-centered and self-serving
2. Why would this make it impossible to determine God's will?
3. What is it that renews our minds?

**Step 1. Pray** -offer yourself to Him - Totally.  
-Lay down your own hopes, plans, dreams (if they are from Him, He'll give them back to you.)

**Step 2. Read the Word** - probably 90% of the will of God is already revealed in His Word!  
-The greater you know the Word of God, the greater your mind will be "renewed", the greater your ability to choose rightly in any given situation.

**Step 3. Seek Counsel** (From Christians!) Read *Prov 15:22 Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.*

1. From the Wise (see 1 Kings 12:1-20 later)
2. From Those Who Love You Most and Know You Best

**Step 4. Be Open To God's Other Methods**

-Gifts of the Spirit , Supernatural (audible voice, visions/dreams, angelic visitations)

**Questions-**

1. Most people fail to seek advice from others. Why is this difficult for most of us?
  - we live in a very individualistic nation - we want to handle things ourselves.
  - we also tend to want privacy, we don't want other people "in our business."
2. Have you ever experienced one of God's supernatural methods of discovering direction?
3. How do you know if these are really from God?
  - test and confirm everything w/ principles from the word of God.

**Step 5. Do Something! Be Active**

1. If You Can, Stay where you are- keep doing what you are doing. (If it is fruitful for the Kingdom)
  - Faithfulness in small things leads to being trusted with greater things. (*Luke 16:10*)
2. If Change is necessary (Graduation, etc.), **Do Whatever You Want** (on the above conditions)

## IV. Final Thoughts

-Concern over God's will should never be a source of despair. Many Christians get too uptight about trying to fulfill perfectly, every minute detail of God's will for their lives. Keep the following in mind to lighten the load:

- A. God is much more concerned about the details of **Who You Are** than the details of **What You Do**.
- B. **Disobedience** is the pitfall, not **Ignorance**. -He is a Good Father- punishing disobedience, not ignorance.
- C. **God wants** you to do His will **more than You want** to do it! He'll help you.