

Finding God's Will

(Even when it seems to hide)

Part 3

Don't forget to be patient

Also, be patient with God and be willing to accept His timing. “He makes all things beautiful in their proper time.” Remember that God is not obligated to show you everything your future holds right now. Truth be told, you couldn't handle it if He did. Learn to patiently accept the fact that His promise to be a “lamp to your feet and light to your path” is enough. You might not see where the path leads, but you will see clearly the next step you are to take when you are to take it. Sometimes He tests your patience and trust in Him by withholding His guidance until the 11th hour when you really need it. If God hasn't given you the answers and guidance you seek yet, continue to wait upon Him, and He will come through. He might not always give you the answer when you want it, but He WILL always give you the answer when He knows you need it. And His goodness is not lacking if He waits until that moment to light your path.

Like the Israelites in the wilderness, sometimes you just have to keep your eyes on the cloud by day and pillar of fire by night, and when it moves, you move. Keep your eyes on God. Stay where He has you for as long as He is in it, and move when He leads you to go. The cloud and pillar of fire of His presence will be with you always. Just patiently keep your eyes on it, and you will not fail to be where God wants you.

Examine your own heart and its fleshly desires. David prayed in Psalm 51 to the Lord, “You desire honesty at the inmost parts” of my being. If you're lying to yourself about what you want, you might do what you want thinking it was what God wanted. Being honest about your hopes, dreams, and fleshly desires makes it much easier to lay those desires at the foot of the cross and follow God. God has promised contentment to those who find their joy in Him. Honestly evaluate your heart, and you will learn not to seek after things that steal the joy God has for you.

Mistake 3)

Disobeying the Bible, because I think I'll miss out --

Trying to sin my way out of my problems

A lot of times when I'm conflicted about what God's will is, it's because I'm hoping that He will direct me to do something I want to do that He has already told me in His word is wrong. If that's the case, I'll be waiting a long time. Because God will never do that. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. The turn of the century hasn't changed His will, and when I decide to overlook what He tells me in His word in the hopes that He will make an exception for me in my circumstances, I will remain conflicted, because God doesn't change His mind about what He has said in His word, no matter how hard I try to persuade Him.

I make this mistake because I think His laws will deny me what I want and need. James Dobson illustrated this point with a story about his pet hamster. This hamster could have been no more sure that what was best for him was to get out of that cage. He tried with all His might to make that happen, all the while not knowing that Dobson's pet cat was sitting below in agreement that he should be let out of the cage.

But both Dobson and the cat knew something the hamster didn't. The cage was not just a restriction that deprived the hamster of satisfaction. It was a safe haven Dobson provided, protecting

the hamster from the cat that wanted to destroy him. That's what God's laws are like. And if I think God's laws are restricting me and holding me back from ultimate satisfaction, Satan "the cat" will send people my way to tell me "Amen to that." Because he wants me outside of the will and protection of God, so he can destroy me. When I debate God's laws in my own mind, I will hear plenty of voices taking the side of rationalizing sin. But if I listen to them, I'll be misguided. Then I close the door to the Lord's wonderful blessing on my life, and open the door to Satan's destruction of it.

Satan has been doing that stuff since the dawn of the human race. He came to Eve and persuaded her to take what she wanted that God said she couldn't have. Satan knew that God's warning was true--if she ate of the fruit, she would suffer a spiritual death and separation from God. Sin separates us from God and from His perfect will for our lives. That's what Satan wants, and he will constantly bombard us with messages designed to get us to take what we want, not seek what God provides.

Romans 12 further shows us that finding the will of God requires full and complete submission to His protective laws. **"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you offer your bodies a living sacrifice... and do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."**

Did you catch the progression in God's formula for finding His "perfect will" in that passage?

First, we present ourselves to God, offering our bodies as a living sacrifice. Many times we're willing to trust Him with our eternal soul, but unwilling to trust Him with the day-to-day things of this life.

We trust God with our soul, because that's no contest. We weigh the horrors of hell against the happiness of heaven and say, "Sure, God. I want heaven. No doubt about it. Take my soul. I'll trust you with my eternity." But we don't trust Him with the here and now. We give our soul, but not our body. We want control of this life. Take my soul, God, we say, but let me decide where my body will be, who it will be with, and when. Let me set my schedule and follow my own dreams in this life, and when it's over, my soul will follow you. But God says to find His will, we must present our bodies as a sacrifice to Him first. He must be given control of the day-to-day. Romans 1-11 talks about the mercy of God that He promises heaven for our souls. Romans 12 begins with a "therefore." In other words, Paul is saying, "Since God has been so abundantly merciful to save your soul, I beg you to also give Him your body. Let Him take the reins of your life now."

Second, after presentation of our bodies to God for service, we become transformed by His word. We give ourselves as a sacrifice, and God changes us from the inside out.

Then we become able to know and do God's will, because we have become obedient to the things His word tells us. God's will evades me if I'm conformed to this world instead of being transformed by His word.

Step one: We present ourselves.

Step two: God transforms us.

Step three: God reveals His perfect will to us and we obey in His strength and power, and God is pleased.