

## Knowing God's Will



### 367) What is man's will?

- A. When God made man "in His image," God gave man volition (a will), the ability to make choices.
- B. We were given a will so that we could fulfill one of God's purposes in creating man, to rule over creation. You cannot rule without the ability to choose.
- C. With the ability to choose came the risk that we might choose to disobey our creator.

"Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

GEN 1:26 NIV

"This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live"

DEU 30:19 NIV

"But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD."

JOSH 24:15 NIV

### 368) What is God's will?

- A. God created the world and man for a purpose. That purpose or desire we call the will of God. The will of God is what God wants to do.
- B. When we think of God's will we think of two areas: God's ultimate purpose for the world and God's will for each individual man and woman.

"And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will."

ROM 8:27 NIV

"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."

ROM 12:2 NIV

"The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever."

1JOHN 2:17 NIV

### 369) What is meant by God's ultimate purpose?

- A. God had a will (a plan, a purpose) for creating the world and placing man in it. Even now, that plan is being worked out.
- B. God's will is not completely known to man. God reveals it to us in bits and pieces, as He wishes.
  - 1. We know that it is God's will that men be redeemed.
  - 2. We know that Satan will not always run free, but will ultimately be destroyed in the lake of fire.
- C. The completion of God's ultimate purpose is not dependent on man, but God allows man to be part of it.
  - 1. For example, God has chosen to allow us to be co-laborers with Christ in the spreading of the Gospel.

"Remember this, fix it in mind, take it to heart, you rebels. [9] Remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me. [10] I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please. [11] From the east I summon a bird of prey; from a far-off land, a man to fulfill my purpose. What I have said, that will I bring about; what I have planned, that will I do."

ISA 46:8-11 NIV

"and said: "Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever; wisdom and power are his. [21] He changes times and seasons; he sets up kings and deposes them. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning."

DAN 2:20-21 NIV

"Surely the Sovereign LORD does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets."

AMOS 3:7 NIV

"The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law."

DEU 29:29 NIV

"Our God is in heaven; he does whatever pleases him."

PSA 115:3 NIV

### 370) What is meant by God's will for an individual?

- A. God has a plan and purpose for your life. He has gifted you, called you, and placed you in the Body of Christ for a purpose in God's kingdom.

"Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes,"

1COR 1:1 NIV

"Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. [16] From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work."

EPH 4:15-16 NIV

"who has saved us and called us to a holy life - not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time,"

2TIM 1:9 NIV

B. When we seek to fulfill God's will for our life, we find joy and great satisfaction.

"And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, [10] to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment - to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ. [11] 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, [12] in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory."

EPH 1:9-12 NIV

### **371) What happened to my will at salvation?**

- A. When we received salvation, we surrendered our will to God. We surrendered our rebellious nature and submitted ourselves to the Lordship of Christ.
- B. When we accept Jesus as Lord, we acknowledge Him as master and become His servant.

"Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; [20] you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body."

1COR 6:19-20 NIV

"For he who was a slave when he was called by the Lord is the Lord's freedman; similarly, he who was a free man when he was called is Christ's slave. [23] You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men."

1COR 7:22-23 NIV

- C. Our example is Christ Jesus. His sole purpose for being on earth was to do the Father's will.

"My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work."

JOHN 4:34 NIV

"By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek

not to please myself but him who sent me."

JOHN 5:30 NIV

"For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me."

JOHN 6:38 NIV

"Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."

MATT 26:39 NIV

### **372) Can I resist the ultimate purpose of God?**

- A. No. No man, spirit, ideology or event can frustrate the ultimate purpose of God. God is almighty and sovereign. What He wills, will take place.
- B. If a man resists God's will, God will simply choose another who will obey.

"At the end of that time, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, and my sanity was restored. Then I praised the Most High; I honored and glorified him who lives forever. His dominion is an eternal dominion; his kingdom endures from generation to generation. [35] All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back his hand or say to him: "What have you done?"

DAN 4:34-35 NIV

"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,"

EPH 1:11 NIV

### **373) Can I resist the will of God for my life?**

- A. Yes. Because we have a free will, we can say "no" to God's will for our life.
- B. If we say "no" to God, we open ourselves up to hardships of our own making.

"Timothy, my son, I give you this instruction in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by following them you may fight the good fight, [19] holding on to faith and a good conscience. Some have rejected these and so have shipwrecked their faith. [20] Among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme."

1TIM 1:18-20 NIV

"People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. [10] For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. [11] But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness."

1TIM 6:9-11 NIV

### 374) Is saying "yes" to God's will, a one time event?

- A. No. As we grow as Christians, God challenges us to move on with Him. If at any time we resist His will, we will fall behind.

"Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. [27] No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize."

1COR 9:26-27 NIV

### 375) What is God's perfect will?

- A. When you seek God's will for your life and obey it, you are walking in God's perfect will.

"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."

ROM 12:1-2 NIV

"Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured."

COL 4:12 NIV

"May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, [21] equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

HEB 13:20-21 NIV

### 376) What is God's permissive will?

- A. There are things that God "permits" or allows to take place that aren't His best for us.

1. The example of marriage:

- a. God's perfect will for a couple is to remain faithful until the death of one partner.
- b. Even though God hates divorce, He permits it to take place because of man's hard heart.

"Jesus replied, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning."

MATT 19:8 NIV

- B. Never settle for what you can get away with.

"Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, [14] I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. [15]"

All of us who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you. [16] Only let us live up to what we have already attained. [17] Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you."

PHI 3:13-17 NIV

### 377) Can I hear the voice of God?

A. Yes. God speaks to His own. Any Christian can hear the voice of God.

"The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. [4] When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. [5] But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice."

JOHN 10:3-5 NIV

"My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me."

JOHN 10:27 NIV

### 378) What are the different ways God makes His will known to me?

A. Through reading & meditating on God's Word.

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path."

PSA 119:105 NIV

"For these commands are a lamp, this teaching is a light, and the corrections of discipline are the way to life,"

PRO 6:23 NIV

B. Through prayer and fasting.

"Cornelius answered: 'Four days ago I was in my house praying at this hour, at three in the afternoon. Suddenly a man in shining clothes stood before me [31] and said, 'Cornelius, God has heard your prayer and remembered your gifts to the poor. [32] Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. He is a guest in the home of Simon the tanner, who lives by the sea.' [33] So I sent for you immediately, and it was good of you to come. Now we are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us.'"

ACT 10:30-33 NIV

C. Through the quiet, inner witness of the Holy Spirit.

1. The "still small voice" of God.

"It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements:"

ACT 15:28 NIV

"But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to

come."

JOHN 16:13 NIV

D. Through the counsel of our leaders.

"Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed."

PRO 15:22 NIV

E. Through the prophetic word spoken over our life.

"In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. [2] While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." [3] So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off."

ACT 13:1-3 NIV

### **379) How can I tell the difference between Satan's voice and God's voice?**

A. Whenever God speaks to you, it will line up with the scriptures. Satan never hesitates to twist the truth of the Bible to deceive you and get you to disobey God.

"Jesus replied, "Are you not in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God?"

MARK 12:24 NIV

"Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. [21] For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."

2PETER 1:20-21 NIV

B. God is the author of peace while Satan is the author of confusion. When you hear the voice of God, it will produce peace in your spirit. Satan's voice will leave you unsettled and confused. If your mind is in turmoil, it is an indication that Satan is actively trying to influence you.

"For God is not a God of disorder but of peace. As in all the congregations of the saints,"

1COR 14:33 NIV

"And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

PHI 4:7 NIV

"Let the peace of Christ rule (umpire, govern) in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful."

COL 3:15 NIV

C. God is a shepherd. He leads us where He wants us to go. Satan pushes and shoves.

"He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters,"  
PSA 23:2 NIV

"He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young."  
ISA 40:11 NIV

D. God is never in a hurry. Satan pushes for hasty decisions.

1. God is willing to wait. He trained Moses for forty years. He waited 30 years before introducing Jesus.
  - a. If God is speaking, He will be saying the same thing tomorrow. He will prompt you again and again.
2. Satan is like a high pressure salesman. He will tell you that if you don't move NOW you will miss the opportunity of a life time.

"Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD."  
PSA 27:14 NIV

"I waited patiently for the LORD; he turned to me and heard my cry."  
PSA 40:1 NIV

"It is not good to have zeal without knowledge, nor to be hasty and miss the way."  
PRO 19:2 NIV

"The plans of the diligent lead to profit as surely as haste leads to poverty."  
PRO 21:5 NIV

"Do you see a man who speaks in haste? There is more hope for a fool than for him."  
PRO 29:20 NIV

E. God edifies, that is, "builds you up". Satan tears down, condemns and destroys. God is looking out for your best. Satan cares for no one, not even those who serve him.

"Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification."  
ROM 14:19 NIV

"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."

JOHN 10:10 NIV

"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,"  
ROM 8:1 NIV

F. God gives life. Satan works death.

"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life,



and have it to the full."

JOHN 10:10 NIV

### 380) What should I do if I can't hear the voice of God?

A. Wait. If we wait patiently God will speak to us.

"Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD."

PSA 27:14 NIV

"We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised."

HEB 6:12 NIV

B. Fast and pray. When fasting is mixed with prayer, our spirit man becomes more sensitive to the voice of God, making it easier to hear Him speak.

"So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes."

DAN 9:3 NIV

"But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, [18] so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you."

MATT 6:17-18 NIV

C. Don't presume. Wait for true guidance from God.

"Do not go up, because the LORD is not with you. You will be defeated by your enemies, [43] for the Amalekites and Canaanites will face you there. Because you have turned away from the LORD, he will not be with you and you will fall by the sword." [44] Nevertheless, in their presumption they went up toward the high hill country, though neither Moses nor the ark of the LORD'S covenant moved from the camp. [45] Then the Amalekites and Canaanites who lived in that hill country came down and attacked them and beat them down all the way to Hormah."

NUM 14:42-45 NIV

"He waited seven days, the time set by Samuel; but Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and Saul's men began to scatter. [9] So he said, 'Bring me the burnt offering and the fellowship offerings.' And Saul offered up the burnt offering. [10] Just as he finished making the offering, Samuel arrived, and Saul went out to greet him. [11] 'What have you done?' asked Samuel. Saul replied, 'When I saw that the men were scattering, and that you did not come at the set time, and that the Philistines were assembling at Micmash, [12] I thought, 'Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal, and I have not sought the LORD'S favor.' So I felt compelled to offer the burnt offering." [13] "You acted foolishly," Samuel said. "You have not kept the command the LORD your God gave you; if you had, he would have established your kingdom over Israel for all time. [14] But now your kingdom will not endure; the LORD has sought out a man after his own heart and appointed him leader of his people, because you have not kept the LORD'S command."

1SAM 13:8-14 NIV