

# Discovering the Will of God for Your Life

## HAVE YOU EVER WISHED FOR A FOOLPROOF FORMULA FOR KNOWING GOD'S WILL?

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### Where are the formulas?

We've all heard the sermons, "Three steps to knowing God's will," or "Five steps...." But sooner or later we discover formulas are inadequate. Too often they leave us puzzled as we try to follow God's leading.

### Why are there no adequate formulas?

Could it be that God doesn't want us attached to formulas but to Himself? It's been said, the secret of guidance is the Guide himself. That's it!

*Intimacy with Christ is the most important prerequisite for knowing God's will.*

### So how do you maintain intimacy with Christ?

By refusing to allow sin to remain in your life un-confessed, by actively seeking the Lord through prayer and by meditation on His Word.

### Yes, but...

What if you are intimate with Christ and you still aren't sure of the direction God wants you to go?

### KEY PRINCIPLES

#### Pre-commit yourself to doing whatever He asks

God generally doesn't show His will to people who are just curious. He loves to guide those who are committed to

doing His will. Christ said, "If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will

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know..." (John 7:17). First comes the choosing. Then comes the knowing.

#### Evaluate Relevant Facts

God expects us to use our minds to gather and weigh significant information. He says, "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go. I will guide you with my eye on you. Do not be like the horse or the mule which have no understanding but must be controlled by bit and bridle..." (Psalm 32:8-9).

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#### Pray for Wisdom

Prayer shows our dependence on God. Prayerlessness shows we think we are smart enough to figure things out on our own. Proverbs 3:5 is an important caution: "Do not lean on your own understanding." God expects us to use our minds, but He knows human brain-power can lead us astray. If we gather and evaluate facts prayerfully and in the light of the principles of His Word, God will help us to interpret those facts correctly to make good decisions.

#### Welcome evaluation from others

God always makes a good fit between person and task. He doesn't put square pegs in round holes. Did you ever try to squeeze into a role for which you weren't designed—simply because you didn't know the true shape in which God has made you? Frustration!

To avoid this, welcome honest evaluations of yourself by friends and qualified leaders. And don't be afraid of aptitude and personality tests. These can help you identify the special shape God has made you.



**But watch out for potential glitches!**

Don't confuse shape with size. The task God has for you will always be the right shape but may often be the wrong size—TOO BIG! God may intentionally design it to be larger than you can comfortably handle. Why? To save you from cocky self-confidence and to teach you to say, "[My] competence comes from God." (II Corinthians 3:5).

Don't confuse shape with preference. God gives us jobs that fit, but He does not assure ease or self-gratification. Much of what needs to be done in the world is just plain tough: uncomfortable climates, unreceptive people, unfamiliar food, geographical isolation.... God is looking for people whose passion is to do His will, cost whatever it may. The founder of The Navigators said, "Why do what others can and will do, when there is so much that needs to be done that others cannot or will not do?"

Personal enjoyment and self-fulfillment are by-products of doing God's will. They must not in themselves be the objects of our pursuit. Jesus said, "Whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it." (Mark 8:35)

**Make a decision and move ahead**

We tend to freeze when faced with major, life-impacting decisions. We fear committing ourselves to a course of action. Underlying this fear is lack of confidence in God's love and faithfulness. "If I move in the wrong direction, will God just let me go? Will I ruin His plan for my life?"

No! God isn't like that. He is utterly faithful about closing wrong doors and opening right doors. "What He opens no one can shut and what He shuts no one can open!" ( Revelation 3:7)

*As we live in fellowship with God, desiring to do His will,*

*There will come a time in the decision making process when it is completely safe to step out in virtually any direction that even seems to be God's will. He can be counted on to intervene and get us turned around if we go the wrong way.*

**Our ultimate confidence is in God and His faithfulness**

Therefore, it is safe to pray like this: Lord Jesus, I'm only a child. I'm not sure which of these options is right for me. Several seem good. But I know You don't want me to freeze in fear, so I'm going to begin prayerfully moving in the direction I think You may want me to go. I am going to trust You to confirm my path as I go, or else graciously to intervene and set me on a correct course. I thank You for how You will guide me skillfully in paths You have chosen for me where my life can bear maximum fruit for You.

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