

Knowing God's Will for Your Life

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Date: 02 June 2024

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- [0 : 0 0] Turn to Romans chapter 12. Romans chapter 12. Most of you, when you hear Romans chapter 12, you think, oh, he's going to preach on verses 1 and 2.
- Close. Verse 2. Romans chapter 12. Look with me at verse 2.
- And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.
- Notice the title behind me. Knowing God's will for your life. What does God have for us to do? Let's have a word of prayer. Father, I pray this morning that you would help us all.
- Probably everybody here wants to know what your will is for them. Lord, where are they to go? What are they to do? Where are they supposed to be involved in? What job should they have?
- [1 : 0 3] Some, maybe even, who shall I marry? Lord, I pray that you would just guide us this morning as we talk about knowing your will. Lord, help us to understand what you want for us.
- We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. The general purpose that God has for all of us, for his people, according to the Bible, is to bring glory to him.
- That's number one, top of the list. We are to bring glory to him. But that's never quite enough for us, is it? To bring glory to him. We instead want to know more.
- We want, first of all, to know, does God have a plan for my life? That's number one. Does God have a plan for my life? I apologize.
- I did not get all the verses that I'm going to use today, so be listening when I mention references if you're taking notes. I did not get them all in. But does God have a plan for my life? Well, according to the atheist view, no.
- [2 : 0 6] Because what? We're an accident. We're a bunch of molecules that, through evolutionary process, all of a sudden came together, boom, and we had people, and we just kind of are here.
- We live our lives. We die. We go in the grave, and we're done. That's it. Nothing else. You're just an accident. And so you think about it. Having an attitude like that, there's no God.
- There's no external influences on your life or anything like that. We wonder why we have such a problem with suicide. Why we have such a problem with mass shootings.
- Life doesn't mean anything. There's no real special thing behind our lives. It's just, you're here, you live, you die. Que sera, sera.
- Then there's a second attitude. The will of God is a mystery. There is a will. God has a will for you, but it's a mystery. We can have a hard time figuring out what it is he might have for us to do.
- [3 : 1 7] Their view, someone has said, is like God's will is an enigma wrapped in a mystery shrouded in a puzzle. So, God has a plan, but I just have no idea how to figure it out.

God has a plan, but he hasn't shown it to me yet. I'm pretty sure he has a plan, but, you know, and that's the way a lot of us live.

It's the way a lot of Christians live. Yeah, I know God wants me to do something, but I just don't know what it is. And then there are those of us who believe that God has a specific will.

God has something he wants you to do, and he's willing to share. He has a specific will for our life. In Psalm 139, verses 7 through 10, it says, Whither shall I go from thy spirit, and whither shall I flee from thy presence?

If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there. If I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.

[4 : 39] He says, it doesn't matter where I go. God has a plan. God is leading. God is holding my hand, guiding me where he wants me to go.

Further on in that same chapter, Psalm 139, verses 23 and 24, Search me, O God, and know my heart. Try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

The psalmist is praying, God, lead me exactly where you want me to go. So with that in mind, let's look, first of all, God has a general will for us. He has a general will.

Isaiah 43, 6 and 7. I will say unto the north, give up, and to the south, keep not back. Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth, even everyone that is called by my name.

For I have created him for my glory. I have formed him. Yea, I have made him. God says, I've got a general will for you.

[5 : 50] And that general will is for you to bring glory to my name. I want you to let me take you. I have formed you for a will. And then there's a specific will.

A specific will that God has for us. Psalm 32, 8. Psalm 32, 8 says, I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way that thou shalt go.

I will guide thee with mine eye. He says, I am going to guide you. I am going to take you. I will guide you with my eye.

And every time I read that verse, I always think of Larry Bird. Some of you might be a little young to remember Larry Bird and his playing days. I have been seeing some films of him lately and stuff on things.

That guy, passes came out of nowhere. Behind the back, over the head, over the shoulder. You could name it. It could come from anywhere.

[6 : 53] And the only clue that the guy had that the pass was coming was Larry Bird's eyes. All of a sudden he would give a quick glance and the ball was gone. You had to keep your focus on his eyes, what he was doing.

And God says, I will guide you with mine eye. You don't know where it's coming from. You don't know what's going to happen. But he will guide you with everything that he has. Jeremiah 1, 5.

Jeremiah, he tells him, Before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee. And before thou camest forth out of the womb, I sanctified thee. And I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.

Jeremiah, before you were even born, I had a plan for your life. Jeremiah, before you were ever born, I knew what you were going to do. All it took was you following me.

All it took was you obeying my voice and what I had for you. Remember Joseph? Excuse me. Remember Joseph in the book of Genesis? He's talking to his brothers.

- [7 : 54] And in Genesis 45, 5, he says this. Genesis 45, 5. Now, therefore, be not grieved nor angry with yourselves that you sold me hither.
- For God did send me before you to preserve life. Joseph got sold into slavery. He got put in a home where he was falsely accused.
- He wound up in prison. He wound up in all kinds of situations. But then he wound up being second in command in all of Egypt. And he says, God sent me before you to preserve life.
- God had a plan in what he was doing. Sometimes it even gets more specific. 1 Thessalonians 4, 3. 1 Thessalonians 4, 3. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication.
- So what's God's will? God's will, you abstain from fornication. You abstain from sexual sins. He says that's part of God's will. 1 Thessalonians 5, 18. 5, 18.
- [9 : 05] It says, In everything, give thanks. For this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. He says, here's a specific one for you.
- Give thanks. In everything you do. Wherever you go, whatever's going on. Even if it's not to your liking. Romans 8, 28.
- All things work together for good. To them that love God. Doesn't say everything is good. But all things work together for good. He says, give thanks. For this is the will of God concerning you.
- So, brings us to the second thing. Knowing the will of God. Knowing the will of God. How do you do that? Well, first of all, you start off with what Stan was talking about here earlier.
- Being a child of God. Asking Jesus Christ to come into your life. Realizing that he went to that cross. Gave his life for you.
- [10 : 06] So that you might have salvation. He paid the penalty for your sin. He paid the penalty. So that you don't have to face it. He went to that cross. Took those nails in his hands and his feet.
- Took that crown upon his head. Took the beatings that he had. For you. So that you don't have to face that. He gave his life for you.
- So become a child of God. Ask him to come into your life. Ask him to save you from your sin. Be a child of God.
- Second thing, obey God. Obeying God. A lot of people like to say, yes, I've asked Jesus Christ into my life. Yes, I've asked him to come and save me.
- But obeying him and everything that he asks. Obeying everything he says in his word. He says, if you love me, you're going to keep my commandments.
- [11 : 08] If you love me, you're going to do the things that I ask you to do. Do you love Jesus Christ? Oh, I've asked him to come into my life and be my savior. That's great.
- Do you love him? Do you want him to be in control? Do you want him to be in charge of everything that you do? And then the third thing we need to do is learn to wait on God.
- God's timing is not our timing. God's timing, sometimes we have to wait.
- Sometimes we have to see what he's doing. Sometimes we have to wait and say, okay, God, I think this is what you want, but I'm not quite sure yet. Wait and see what his timing is.
- The scripture is filled with people who did not wait for God's timing. Esau, remember Esau?
- [12 : 05] Sold his birthright, sold his blessing for some food. And his brother wound up getting the blessing and getting the birthright just because he couldn't wait.

He had to have food. He was starving to death. We say that quite often, don't we? Oh, I'm just starving to death. No, we're not. We're Americans. Most of us have more of the weight than we need, including me.

So sometimes we just, you know, get a little learning not to wait. Remember Saul? Saul lost his kingdom.

Samuel was supposed to be coming and doing sacrifices and stuff. Saul decided he couldn't wait for Samuel any longer, so he went ahead and did it himself and lost his kingdom because of it, because he would not wait.

Even one of the good guys, Abraham. God says, Abraham, you're going to have a family, and you're going to be numbered like the sands of the seashore and the stars in the sky.

[13 : 11] You wait, you wait, you wait, you wait, you wait. Okay, that's long enough. He and Sarah cook up a plan where he can have a child with one of her handmaids, and we have been paying for it ever since.

That child that he had was a guy by the name of Ishmael. Do you know where all the Arab nations come from? Ishmael. Abraham didn't wait on God's timing.

Someone has said, God may call us to take a step of faith, but we should not think that his promise to us will be fulfilled immediately upon taking the first step of faith.

Sometimes it takes time. Waiting on God's time is as much a part of faith as doing something for God. Waiting on his timing. Third thing I want to tell you today, I'm going to give you two more things.

Third thing, the pitfalls of determining God's will. Seven pitfalls of determining God's will. First one, second guessing God and ourselves.

[14 : 19] Psalm 37.5, it says, Commit thy way unto the Lord. Trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass. He says, commit your way to God and trust him.

How many times have I said that over the last few months? Trust God. Our covenant is with God. His way should be our way.

Whatever he decides, that's what we should do. We don't decide and then ask God to bless it. We take whatever he gives us and go with it.

Again, with Abraham. God called Abraham to leave his country. And in that chapter on faith, in Hebrews chapter 11, it says, Abraham went out, not knowing whither he went.

God said, Abraham, I want you to go. And I want you to head this direction. And Abraham's response was, okay, Lord, whatever you say.

[15 : 25] And off he went. He didn't know where he was going to wind up. He didn't know where he was going to, where his final home was going to be. But he trusted God enough that he truly committed his way to the Lord.

I will follow you wherever you want me to go. How about the children of Israel? Grumbling is not a part of learning God's favor and God's will.

Children of Israel crumbled and grumbled and grumbled in the wilderness. And what happened to them? They wound up wandering for 40 years. Knowing the will of God requires doing what God has told you to do.

His part of doing things is always perfect. His will is living out what he tells you to do. His will is following him.

Whatever he tells you, he wants. Second thing, copying another's calling. Another pitfall, copying another's calling. 2 Corinthians 10, 12.

[16 : 38] For we dare not make ourselves of the number or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves. But they measuring themselves by themselves and comparing themselves among themselves are not wise.

He says you compare yourself to other people. You're looking at other people. I want to be more like them. I want to do more things like them. I want to be... He says that's not wise. Don't compare yourself.

No other human is God's standard for a Christian. Jesus Christ is the standard. You follow him.

You listen to him. You watch him. What's our motto verse? Looking unto Jesus. Keep your eyes there. Third thing, misunderstanding God's character.

Misunderstanding God's character is a pitfall. We kind of make the assumption that whatever God's going to call us to do is probably something we're not going to like.

[17 : 40] You've heard me say before, I think God's plan is for me to go out and pass out tracks in the desert to pass old camel...

passing camel caravans. No, that's not what God's going to call you to do. Might be for somebody, but probably not. First of all, there's not a lot of camel caravans in the desert anymore.

There's a lot of other ways they transport things around. See, we get this idea that God's plan is illogical, bizarre, or somehow going to be unpleasant for us. No. And sometimes we get the idea that, well, God can never use me because I did this in the past or I did that in the past.

Can I just mention a few names to you? David and Bathsheba. Yeah, David's man after God's own heart. Abraham, the one I've been talking about, the things that he did and the way he went wrong, and yet God made him a great nation.

More than the sands of the sea, more than the stars in the sky. Peter denied him before his crucifixion. Not long later, Peter preached the message and 3,000 people were saved.

[18 : 56] Just because we've done things in the past doesn't mean God can't forgive. Doesn't mean God can't use. God says, I want to use you. He says, delight yourself in the Lord and give, he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.

Psalms 37, 4. He says he'll give you desires of your heart. Romans 8, 32. He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

He gave us his son. Why would he hold anything else back from us? He gave us his son. Fourth thing, taking verses out of context.

Do not take verses out of context. Have you ever done this yourself or known of other people who have done it? I want to know God's will for my life. Judas went out and hanged himself.

I don't think that's right. Okay, let's try this. Go and do thou likewise. One more. What thou doest, do quickly.

[20 : 10] That's not how you find God's will for your life. Be in the word of God. Reading it daily. Following what God has for you daily.

Don't go just trying to pick out things out of context. The next one, I call it Moonlight and Roses. Why do I call it that? Anybody ever told you, become a Christian and everything is going to be okay in your life.

It's going to be the greatest thing ever. And it is. But they give you the idea that you will never have another problem in the rest of your life. Well, Hebrews 12.6.

For whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. God's a father. He is going to correct at times.

He's going to lead at times. Matthew 5.10. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 1 Peter 5.10.

[21 : 19] But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after he hath suffered a little while, make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you.

There are not going to be moonlight and roses all the time. There are going to be issues at times. But trust him. Next one, the calling. The calling.

Never think that a minister or a missionary's calling is more than important than any other calling. God calls people to be ministers.

God calls people to be missionaries. God also calls people to work at the jail. God also calls people to work in fishing boats. God also calls people. He needs witnesses. If we were all missionaries or all ministers, who are we going to preach to?

If we're all ministers and missionaries, who's going to talk to one another and witness to one another? He wants people in every occupation, people sold out to him, people who will do what he calls them to do, whatever occupation you are in.

[22 : 33] God needs people there to be a light and to be a testimony. And then, emotions. Emotions. Sometimes we allow emotions to take over.

Don't think God's revelation of his will is some emotional reaction where you get goosebumps breaking out all over. Ooh. Some people call it liver shiver.

Ooh. You know. Remember, Satan can counterfeit. I was reading through Exodus recently. And remember when the, when Moses went to Pharaoh, God said, throw your rod down and it became a snake.

Pharaoh's guys duplicated that. So, turn the water into blood. Pharaoh's guys duplicated that. That's about as far as they got though. After that, they couldn't duplicate what Moses was doing.

But they could duplicate. Satan has power as well. Matter of fact, 2 Corinthians 11, 14. And no marvel for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.

[23 : 46] We can see Satan doing things and trying to trick us. Don't get caught up in the emotions of things. The Bible is what you need to follow. 1 John 5, 13 says, These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God that ye may know that ye have eternal life and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

Get back to the word of God. Follow what it says. Now let me give you seven positive principles real quickly. Seven positive ones. Go with me to Acts chapter 11.

Acts chapter 11. In Acts chapter 10, Peter sees the vision of the sheet coming down with the different animals on it and God talking to him about slay and eat and all that.

And finally, he's taken back up and renews his men over there. In chapter 11, Peter's recounting what happened to the church at Jerusalem.

Why did he go to the Gentiles? How did he know he was supposed to take the church? And Peter's telling them. Look at verse 4. It says, Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning and expounded it in order unto them saying.

[25 : 05] So Peter's telling what happened to the church at Jerusalem. Listen to what he says. I'm going to start from the back and come back forward. Look at verse 16.

Then I remembered, then remembered I the word of the Lord. Stop right there. Then remembered I the word of the Lord.

Start with the Bible, end with the Bible. Whatever you're doing, whatever you're thinking, whatever you think God is trying to talk to you, start with the Bible and end with the Bible.

So the commandments of God, if he doesn't have it up there already, the commandments of God. Get in the word and find out what he has for you, what he wants you to do.

How is God speaking to you through his word? Second, look at verse 5. Acts 11, verse 5. I was in the city of Joppa praying.

[26 : 06] I was in the city of Joppa praying, communion with God. Start with the word of God and be praying. What does God want you to do? Where does God want you to go?

What is it he's impressing upon you as you pray with him? Which brings me to verse 6. Upon the witch when I had fastened mine eyes, the sheet has come down, I considered.

I considered. Careful thought. Using the word of God. Spending time in communion with God. Think about what God is telling you.

Think about what he has for you. Think about the things that he is showing you. God, I know you're speaking. I know you want me to do something. I know you have something for me.

Sit there and think about what he has for you. Go to verse 12. Verse 12 says, And the Spirit made me go with them.

[27 : 10] Conviction. Conviction. The Spirit told me to go with them. The Holy Spirit was working in his life. He's in the word. He's praying. He's thinking about it. Spirit says, go with them.

Follow them. How did he get to that point? Well, notice back in verse 11.

I'll get to this one again but just so you see. Behold, immediately there were three men already come to the house where I was sent. So the conviction of the Holy Spirit, part of that is the fact that three men were already there but I'll get to that again in a minute.

Verse 12 again. And the Spirit made me go with them. Nothing doubting. Nothing doubting. Contentment. The Holy Spirit was putting it upon his heart and he had no question about it.

He had no qualms about it. He said, this is what God wants me to do. He was content. And along with that contentment from the Holy Spirit, look at verse 12 again.

[28 : 17] The Spirit made me go with them. Nothing doubting. Moreover, these six brethren accompanied me and we entered into the man's house.

He had the counsel of other Christians. Six men said, we believe that's what God wants you to do. We believe that that's what you should be doing. We'll even go with you to do this.

We will back you up. Back you up to the point that we'll go with you to do this. And then, verse 11, immediately there were already three men there.

And verse 15, and I began to speak and the Holy Ghost fell upon them. Circumstances. Circumstances. He says, I believe this is what God wants me to do.

I believe this is what he's telling me. I believe this is what the Holy Spirit is convicting me of. I believe, you know what? He says, the circumstances are lining up as well.

[29 : 19] Notice that wasn't the first one. That's the last one. But the circumstances lined up as well. This is what I believe God wants me to do. And look, these guys are already here.

And look, when I take the message to them, the Holy Spirit fell on them. Yeah, this is what God wanted me to do. He wanted me to take the gospel to the Gentiles. Seven positive principles of knowing God's will for your life.

Know God's will and follow him no matter what. Now, one of the things I know that is God's will is for us to remember him.

We are to remember him and what he has done for us. Remember where I started with this? You're going to start knowing God's will by obeying him and knowing who he is, knowing that you're a child of his.

So this morning we're going to remember who God is. So Stan, if you would come up. The Bible says in 1 Corinthians that when they had the Lord's table, they took time to examine themselves.

[30 : 29] So I want you to take a few moments to examine yourselves and get ready for this time of communion. and get ready for this long to cut into the stage of the Antich **■■■■** to Sellers in East and May the East not going to the fact them could that could o human to Info to