

Gods Will

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[0:00] All right, 1 Thessalonians chapter 4 verses 1 through 8. It says, Not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God.

That no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you.

For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. Therefore, whoever disregards this, disregards not man, but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we are so grateful, God, that you have not left us alone, that you have given us instruction, that you've given us the very instruction of how you would have us to live life, and how you would have us to walk in your will.

God, you revealed that to us. And today as we discuss this, I pray that you would give us eyes of understanding and speak to our hearts. And Lord, we just want to enjoy this time in your word.

[1:38] It's in your name I pray. Amen. Amen. So this is, I want to talk about the idea of God's will, and specifically in life as we walk in his will.

I know that, I know you all well enough, pretty much most of you, to know that these things come up on a regular basis, right? There's big questions all the time, especially depending on where we are in age.

Those questions sort of change, you know. How many Tylenol do I take when I get up in the morning? As my age, that's something that's important, you know, those kind of things.

Maybe yours are different. Maybe the things you think about. But I know that these issues in life are daily. The questions that we have to answer in terms of how does God want me to live and behave and act are every day.

Even right now, how many of these decisions did you make just coming here to this point this morning? The good thing is the Lord leads in the small and he leads in the great.

[2:53] And to him, there really is no difference. A day is like a thousand years. God is way different than us. His ways are way higher than ours. We can get caught up in things very, very easily that trip us up and may cause us anxiety or to worry or whatever the case might be.

Not to God. The decisions are very clear because he makes his will clear to us. And if we follow that, whether the decision is a small one or a big one, he is leading us in it.

And so that's what I want to talk about this morning. I realized that in this conversation and in my study, one of the things that I want to do is start with a concept of the terms that we're talking about. Because I even, just thinking this through, there are terms that sometimes we can get confused or mistaken in different ways.

So the first thing I want to talk about is just this term of God's will. Essentially, there are two parts to God's will. There is the first part we'll talk about, which is his will of decree or his sovereign will.

[4:14] Daniel chapter 4, 34 and 35. This is Nebuchadnezzar's praise. And in that he says, for his gods, for his dominion is an everlasting dominion.

And his kingdom endures from generation to generation. All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing. And he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth.

And none can stay his hand or say to him, what have you done? Nobody can do that. It's, his will of decree is sovereign.

So what God decides to do, he will do. And nothing will change that. From the very largest things, creation itself, to the very smallest things, Jesus talks about the flowers and the birds of the air and how he cares for them.

So all of that is, is part of God's will of decree as he chooses. This cannot be broken. It will always come to pass.

[5 : 23] What God says that will happen, will happen. Whether we believe that or not, it will happen.

The second part of God's will is his will of command or decision. You might also hear this as his moral will. This is what we read in the first Thessalonians four verses.

Finally, then brothers, we ask you, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus that as you receive from us how you ought to walk and to please God just as you're doing.

Received that word from them how you ought to walk just as you're doing that you do so more and more. For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus.

For this is the will of God, your sanctification, your growth, your Christ-likeness. That's God's will for you as a believer in Jesus.

[6 : 28] God's will of command is what we are instructed to follow and it is in his word. We have it. He revealed it to us. Unfortunately, this part of God's will is broken on a daily basis.

by each one of us. When we sin, we break his will of command. But the command is his will.

But he allows us to walk that out. God's revealed will in a word is the Bible. That's what he gives us. He reveals this to us.

He tells us exactly what it is and then prints it. And we can read that and understand that and dive into that. Hebrews chapter 4 verse 12. For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account. that's his word.

[7 : 44] That's the book or the representation digitally in your hand. It's his word. That's what he's talking about there.

That's the thing that divides and exposes and shows us how we're to live life. His word, one thing there it says is it exposes.

It gets to our motives and our thoughts. Nothing is hidden. When we go to the scripture and let's take this idea of having to make a decision of some kind.

When we go to the scripture and we apply what God says to our motives through his word, we let that double-edged sword divide our wrong thinking from his right thinking.

when we let that happen decisions then are much easier and his will is discerned much more clearly. His word is active.

[8 : 48] This is not just an abstract principle. This book is not just stories and things that are interesting to just go over or whatever.

It is active. It's dynamic and effective and we must believe the inerrant word of God is more than simply a text.

It's active in our life and we apply it as such. And when we don't that's when we result in our own thinking in our own ways and fall into trouble.

Third thing is the word combats self-deception. In other words truth when applied exposes heartless self-deceived obedience.

A lot of times in decision making or as we go about life it is easy for us to become self-deceived to see or in other words we want to do what we want to do and so we'll make provision for that.

[10 : 07] If we open heartedly go to the word that will destroy our self-deception because we'll either have to choose to continue to lie to ourselves or we will accept what God is saying and let that apply to our hearts and repent and change confess that.

That's what the Bible will do. When a person says this to themselves that they are doing the right thing but the Bible actually says something different that's when our self-deception goes by the wayside when we recognize that.

We bend to him we change to his word that's the way that that should go. The second term I want to talk about is God's plan. His plan.

This is when we talk about his will or praying for things or things like that. A lot of times we'll talk about God's plan and praying for God's plan and those kind of things. Well, God's plan is basically the same thing as God's will or decree.

It's his eternal purposes. God's plan will come to pass. His will of decree will come to pass. John Calvin characterizes his plan as whatsoever comes to pass.

[11 : 29] He uses those good words. So his plan though is his. His plan is his. Not ours. It's how he exercises his will of decree or command.

it's not for us to know unless he chooses to share something which is really weird. But he has done them through prophets.

Here's the word on these two wills. If there's a verse that we could use that really describes both of these wills together. It's Deuteronomy 29 29.

That verse says the secret things belong to the Lord our God but the things that are revealed and what was revealed his word the will of command but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever that we may do all the words of this law.

And there's the obedience to that will of command. But the secret things belong to the Lord. So there's a distinction here in God's plan.

[12 : 44] This is something that we don't reach into and try to figure out God's plan. That's his plan. He has told us right here the things that are revealed to us.

That's how we walk in his will by being obedient in the things that he's revealed to us. Third thing is wisdom. This concept of wisdom.

Okay. Well if God reveals things to us, how do we discern? How do we move in that? How do we go about that? Wisdom. Wisdom is the God given ability to apply the truth of his revealed word to the practical situations of life.

Discerning the right course of action in the fear of the Lord. God is a good text. I've got a couple quotes from Kevin DeYoung. In the book it's called Just Do Something.

He really breaks this down if you're interested in studying more. Here's a quote from that book. Wisdom is what we need to live a godly life.

[13 : 54] God does not tell us the future nor does he expect us to figure it out. When we don't know which way to turn and are faced with tough decisions in life God doesn't expect us to grope in the dark for some hidden will of directions.

He expects us to trust him and be wise. To take his word to grow in wisdom to apply his truth revealed and then apply that to life and walk in it.

Wisdom is also described in Proverbs chapter 2 verse 1 through 6. Proverbs chapter 2 and we know this we're familiar with it from wisdom studies and so forth.

Proverbs chapter 2 verse 1 My son if you receive my words and treasure up my commands with you making your ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding yes if you call out for insight and raise your voice for understanding if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God for the Lord gives wisdom from his mouth for the Lord Lord gives wisdom from his mouth come knowledge and understanding in that passage number one we're told to receive his words which description which is his revealed word to us receive his words to listen to wisdom wisdom so what about brothers and sisters who are also going to that revealed word and studying that and looking for God's guidance

I bet you they give good counsel ah they do yes and that's what we share with one another is good counsel so we listen to wisdom and three call out for wisdom we pray for it we ask God for wisdom and as James says if you lack ask for more and he gives liberally this wisdom and wisdom begins with the fear of the Lord looking to him for all things so there's our terms that's the terms I want to use God's will his plan and the wisdom so we'll continue our study but it's good to understand how those interact a little bit so what I want to talk about now is his will in our lives so what practically what is this to walk out what does it look like how do we operate in it well if we continue in 1st Thessalonians 4 3 through 8 verse 3 he says for this is the will of

[16 : 53] God your sanctification that you abstain from sexual immorality that each of you know how to control his own body and holiness and honor not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter because the Lord is an avenger in all these things as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you verse 7 for God has not called us for impurity but in holiness there's that separating out so we hear his will in that calling to holiness 8 therefore whoever disregards this disregards not man but God so just to be clear the will comes from God not from man it doesn't come from man it comes from God who gives you who gives the Holy Spirit to you so God has called us to holiness or sanctification all of our

decisions should point to this holiness all of our decisions should point to his will what do you hold as important in life what do you what do you personally what do you base your comings and goings on what drives you what your motivation we can understand our thinking by looking at what guides our decision me is it somebody is it a spouse is it a friend is it a self-help book on and on and on there's things that can sort of guide us in different ways my first job was in 1987 at the

Burger King in Belton has anybody been to that that was my first job I closed at night and I had German Shepherd and I would take home patties and she loved me for it like the ones that someone didn't eat that we bring her home to burgers at night she loved it but when I first started there they gave me a uniform that little you know the blue and the maroon or what you know back in the day I don't know they gave me a uniform I sat down I watched the videos that told me how to be a burger king employee and all the wonderful things there and then they brought me to the line and they told me how many pickles to put on a whopper versus on the little single and so I had to learn all these things and understand it and then there was this screen so they give me everything I got my tongs I got what I need there and I am standing here and there is this screen and it pops up says make a whopper or whoever it was who just ordered this and drop the fries or whatever it was and so

I would stand there and okay so it comes up on the screen and I go about making the whopper well if it came up on the screen and I was like okay they gave me all these things they equipped me with all that I need to do this job and it comes up on the screen but and then I go back in the back and I go into the little office and I call the owner of that Whopper or that Burger King and I call him up and I say hey you gave me everything that I need to operate this and do this and make this burger and it just came up on the screen do you want me to make that he would say what's the bad with you right get in there and make that I'm paying you to get in there and make that this is a sort of rough analogy but the thing is think about this with me!

the is God gave us everything for holiness and righteousness and his will and there's sometimes that we will go back to him and ask him are you sure you want me to do this yes yes I'm sure now maybe there's times that I go back to him and I share in the joy that he gave me his will and that I can walk in his will that's a good thing it would be like you know at the company party when I go to the owner I say I love making these burgers it's so great and when he comes up on the screen I make it so wonderful he would think I was crazy but he would be okay I'm glad to have an employee like that you know but this do

I need to go back to him to make that decision or do I operate in righteousness that he gave me that's why he gave me his will so I can operate in it and I can move in that and I can choose holiness do you use it for your life do you apply it to your life in all facets!

[21:55] of your life do you listen to his will or do you argue with the things that he says when he says four pickles do you say no no I think it's three we'll save a lot of money it should be three no you do what God says to do that's why he gave us his will are you willing to change when you see that his word says something different from what you're doing when he makes it clear and you don't have to go to pray to him in the respect that do you really mean this yes he really means that that's what he said that's why he put it there we don't have to go back and argue with him about it or try to figure out some way out of it it's clear what he says is what he says that's what he wants!

that we look more like Jesus all the time that's his will for us is that we look more like Christ all the time is for sanctification it's his will that we are sanctified to walk in God's will be holy like Jesus by the power of the spirit for the glory of God that's his will right there this means I look to his revealed will and scripture for my decision making all of it and so how do we discern that through wisdom Piper outlines three stages basically of how we would actually discern so in any given situation whatever my life is whatever is in front of me and there's a lot of things many of you know for Stacey and I there's a lot of things in front of us right now so and as I mentioned I look around the room I know a lot of other folks there's a lot of things in front of you so how do we discern how do we walk through this how do we walk through the tough decisions or even the daily ones number one search the scriptures search the scriptures with a renewed mind in other words the spirit has quickened us and is indwelling and will bring to mind conviction will bring to mind his verses and scriptures and so we search those

God's authoritative will of command is found only in the Bible that's where it's found the inspired scriptures of God the second thing so we search them then two how do we discern the will of God we apply the scriptures with a renewed mind in Christ using the scriptures to apply to life situations

what is it that's going on okay now how do I apply what God says to what is going on right there God speaks through his word God revealed his will to us in the Bible all we need for holiness is there third so search the scriptures apply them and then live the scriptures do not depart from what you have heard so one thing that we're looking at going to the Oregon well actually Washington coast we're sort of honing this down and so we said okay well to get from here to there what do we need to start to prepare for what do we need to do well we're going to live somewhere how are we going to live somewhere well we need to be close to a body of believers and find that community so that's going to be important so one of our first ideas we had was well if we lived in one spot we can visit some churches we can see where the

Lord would have us to serve and what body to get into so that's it that was okay so we're kind of running this out and so we started looking at campers and and it's really cool we've not had a camper that sounds like an exciting thing so we ended up a couple weeks ago and or I guess so we walked all through wow this is great and Stacy figured out the music and actually play a little bit of dark side as we stood out in front of the campers so the sound system worked great which is probably the main thing anyway and so we just this one is perfect so we go inside and we kind of talk to him a little bit more and so and then the finance guy says hey guys so hey what's going on so we go and sit down with him so I'm like okay well let's kind of figure this out you know we can take a couple of steps and see what we so right then both of us are like so we listened to the rest of the spiel and then we walked out and as we're walking out the building we were both like we're not going to lie about what we need to do what we need to live in this full time so

I so clearly we're not going to do this because we can't lie about it you that wouldn't the scriptures okay right there we have all these decisions to make we have all these different things that we need to think through and we come to a point where we're completely going against the word of God then that's not the way you go it's different you do something different and you follow his will his will in our lives it brings him glory to make a decision like that when you were immediately at the same mind understanding this you think that brought God glory in how this little couple was thinking about a camper a very simple thing but it brings him glory why seek his will and obey him

[28:41] Jesus says if you love me you will keep my commandments in John 14:15 we love him we love him it's the overflow of a grateful heart it's not a works based thing it's not a trying to meet the law thing it's not those kind of things we obey because we love him because he saved us and then he gives us this will and he gives us it doesn't leave us alone we're not just out there fending for ourselves he tells us exactly how to go about life it's obedience to his commands it's resting in his provision and in his care we can disobey his revealed will of command we can and we do unfortunately but it pleases him when we're obedient to it when we read what he says and then we submit to it and we follow that with our lives and it goes well for us when we're obedient it brings him glory well now

I want to contrast I want to take one of our other terms this plan this the God's plan and the plan versus his will I want to look at those that concept so God's plan or that will of decree sometimes when we talk about wanting to know God's will this is why the terms are important why I'm geeking out on this with you guys but the terms are important of what we're talking about sometimes when we talk about wanting to know God's will or praying for God's will or something like that it's actually in our mind it's the plan we want we want to know everything's going to be okay we want to know that so I can prepare or I can this or that we want to reach behind what he's given to us the revealed will and try to get something else from him to help me somehow we want to see ahead or maybe we want to eliminate anxiety or worry about something maybe trying to gain control of your life or the situations in your life

God if you just told me what this was going to be or how this was going to work out I'd be fine where's faith where's faith in that there's a problem here of leapfrogging the sanctification in our life if you will so let's say I have a choice on the horizon buying a car and I'm down to two choices I'm down to the 2009 Ford Ranger that's running well and is clean and is good and all those kind of things or the 2026 F-150 trimmer that's my two decisions that's what I need to decide between so if I'm praying for God's perfect will for my life just the perfect target if I'm praying for that I would probably be asking him things like which truck should I get right if I'm looking for exactly what he wants for my life in some kind of weird will of direction way God which one do you only get so what happens then is do you think there's some things that I need to talk about with my own heart regarding the Ford Ranger and the 2026 trimmer do you think there's a big difference there

and maybe some things internally that I'm sort of just jumping over and then hoping for the answer I want from God maybe I should think about greed maybe I should think about our budget maybe I should think about you know normal things like this instead of just jumping right to whatever you know skipping all that have you guys ever done back in the day experiencing

God you know we ever do that experiencing God study back in the day yeah it is we're going back like 30 years there maybe I think anyway so in that study though he talked about circumventing the relationship so I can just try to go straight to God and ask him okay A or B A or B tell me God A or B well I'm totally missing the relationship the relationship is in me getting into the word God speaking to me in his will me confessing repenting understanding what he actually wants for my life and then I get to the A and B and it's simple I pick the tremor you know no just teasing but you understand what I'm saying you're you're bypassing so much in that skipping out on what it is to walk with God in his will in his revealed will

[34:12] God's plans are his own they're not ours and we walk by faith we walk by faith in whatever is beyond he gives us how to walk in faith here and whatever happens post that is his plan Kevin DeYoung this another quote from that text isn't it interesting that we're never told in scripture to ask God to reveal the future or to show us his plan for our lives but we're told in no uncertain terms to call out for insight and to cry aloud for understanding in that Proverbs 2 in other words God says don't ask to see all the plans I've made for you ask me for wisdom so you'll know how to live according to my book that's a great quote that's a great quote 1st Corinthians 16 5 through 9 if you have your Bible this is kind of the second text that I really appreciate it's kind of what started me thinking through a lot of this a few weeks ago 1st

Corinthians 16 5 through 9 this was at the end of the letter to the Corinthians and Paul's kind of wrapping things up and just giving practicals of which is what we're talking about in God's will and life and those kind of we're talking practicals and this is what he's talking about he says starting with verse 5 I'll visit you after passing through Macedonia for I intend to pass through Macedonia perhaps I will stay with you or even spend the winter so that you may help me on my journey wherever I go for I do not want to see you now just in passing I hope to spend some time with you if the Lord permits but I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost for a wide door for effective work has opened to me and there are many adversaries Paul was careful in this passage in this letter in what he was saying look how many perhaps maybe even the winter wherever

I go as the Lord wills you hear his heart there God has a plan Paul planned he's planning matter of fact all this actually happened if you look back in the book of Acts he did go through these places he did do much of this and it's okay and wise to make plans Paul brought God's will of command to bear even like in loving the Corinthians that was does God command us to love one another was that something that would have been in God's will of command absolutely that's what he was operating in that's didn't want to go just be there in passing verse seven I hope to spend some time with you because there's stuff we got to do because God's called me to do this it's in his word as such at that time Paul understood that God was working in Ephesus and that Paul had worked for him there and so that's what he was operating in at that point but

Paul did not know God's plan he was operating in what God had called him to do which was share to the Gentiles which was plant churches which was strengthen the churches those things he had been called to that we have that account on the way to Damascus and so what he does in this language is this I'm going to do if the Lord permits if that and we hear the same thing in James when it says you who are going to do this or that but you don't know what's going to happen so you say if the Lord wills but that's a heart posture there of his plan it's it's giving that understanding to the fact that his plan is not our plan and the faith that we live to walk in that understanding is very important so knowledge of his plan what knowledge do we have of it generally none we don't know when we leave this space by the end of this time together what what's going to happen what will happen to us what will happen in the next week or month or years we don't know that's

God's that's the secret things of God right so we don't live in a way in which the future is spelled out for us he's got that so we walk according to what he has given to us we walk according to the will that he has given to us because he said that's how I want you to operate is in that will that revealed will not scratching or trying or trying to figure out everything else out there God says that's my job not yours I gave you my will faith allows us to have no fear of the future faith in a God that has all this in his hand no fear we have no fear of what's to come we have no need to control it or to worry about it or have anxiety about it because he's got it I just do what he asked me to do walk in his

revealed will Proverbs 16 9 the heart of man plans his way but the

[39:59] Lord establishes his steps man puts together his plans we walk these things out I plan on going home and having brats for lunch could change right kind of hold loosely to this you know but God guides and establishes and brings about everything according to his will of decree or his plan that's his plan now I want to note on this on the idea real quick God's plan is not always without pain sometimes there's great pain with what he chooses to do in our lives and we do know that even so we can be walking according to his will best we can right and in his plan that bad things may befall us it happens all the time it's happened to us all of us at different points in this life we will have suffering even while walking in his will and we also know that it's the suffering that matures us he says yes walk according to my will and understand when these things happen

I am maturing you I am growing perseverance in you I'm turning you more into looking like my son more Christ likeness is what he's doing there just because things are difficult or not coming together doesn't mean that it's not of God seek his kingdom first seek his kingdom first the best place to be in difficult situations is seeking him when things don't go right or they fall apart or just horrible things happen seek him first that's the first thing just go to him difficult times require submission to his plan understanding right the plan we understand the plan rightly that that is his the secret things that plan is his and so I need to come to a place where I submit to what it is that he wants to do and that's what

I seek I have faith that he is good even in the worst circumstances I have faith that he is good and I trust in his ways and obedience to his revealed will in scripture is how I walk in that day to day it's not a time to go our own way when suffering hits when difficult things happen that's not a time to depart and act act as if he doesn't have this will or this sense of good for us we would pray specifically for what he's wanting to work in you it's his will that you be sanctified and sometimes he uses a tough situation and so what is he working in you through difficult things well let me just pull together a couple of these points number one read the word dive in apply live search those scriptures apply them live in them it's our guide for the decisions for holiness of life that's his will apply and walk in

God's precepts to ask for wisdom let's not be slack in that we need the wisdom we need the spirit we need! that renewed mind to in any given situation what is it that he wants here what is he calling me to in this third submit to wise counsel walk with others who walk in the word there's a room full of them here and as we all do this together wise counsel comes from that seek that out share and listen to others in their understanding of scripture and three or four I'm sorry pray for sanctification God's that's his will and he gives it to you completely what needs to be confessed or repented of as you think about okay yeah there's these decisions where am I at on that am I off base is the Lord telling me something different than

I should be pursuing am I in the light with it or am I being self deceived am I wanting to do thus and so so I try to arrange everything to where I can do thus and so or am I actually going to the word and listening and saying this is what God says I'm standing on that's my encouragement for you is to seek holiness in life's and and really as was brought out when Sean did our communion there there is Jesus dying on the cross was God's plan that that's his plan and there there is seeking of him and trusting in that plan that is salvation to us and that is that newness of life is the first step in pursuing

[45:56] God's will is the salvation that Jesus the grace and forgiveness that his work on the cross gave to us and that's where it begins other than that other than being saved his will you would be outside of it without being saved by Jesus so that would be the first step but I want to be clear on that one so let's pray