

# LESSON 11: THE WILL OF GOD

## “DETERMINING THE PLAN THAT GOD HAS FOR EACH ONE OF US”

*How do I know God's will for my life?*

As we mature in our faith, we will inevitably come to the point in our lives when we will only want to only make decisions that will please God. But, how can we determine what are the practical decisions that will please or displease God? Who should I marry? Should I accept the new job offer? Is it right to always obey my boss? Is it acceptable to associate myself with anybody in the business world? These and other questions come up during critical moments of our life. When we come to those crossroads, sometimes we feel disoriented and run to consult with others. In the best case scenario we honestly resort to prayer seeking urgently to find “*God's will*”.

The purpose of this lesson is to learn what the perfect will of God is and to determine how we can find its application to our life with a specific plan. We will learn how the Bible, circumstances, and our free will all play an important part when we want to discern His plan for us. We will see how God *never* reveals to us the *specific answer* to our questions but that He *always* gives us *general principles* that will guide us to answer all of our uncertainties.

### I. What is God's will for my life and how can I find it?

- A. God has a perfect and ideal plan for every person on the earth. We usually call this ideal desire His “perfect will”. This is the same for everyone and can be summarized in being conformed to the image of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. **Romans 8:28-29**
  - 1. His perfect will is already clearly revealed in the Bible. We should go to it to make decisions in our life regardless of the circumstances.
  - 2. When you come to the moment of decision when you can use one of these principles, don't hesitate or don't say that you need to “pray about it” or “consult your pastor”, just simply consult the Bible and apply the principle.
- B. The whole Bible teaches us the perfect will of God (**John 7:14-17**). But, some passages specifically tell us what God wants no matter what the personal circumstances are.
  - 1. Regardless of the individual circumstances, God wants everyone to be saved.

- a. **Everyone** that doesn't know Christ is in total disobedience to God's will. **1 Timothy 2:4** says: *"Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."*
  - b. Often, so that the will of God is fulfilled and the person is saved, God brings suffering and the necessary crises to the person's life so that he or she will seek God. **Psalms 90:3**
2. No matter what the individual circumstances are, God wants all of us to live holy lives. **1 Thessalonians 4:3** says: *"For this is the will of God, [even] your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication:"*
    - a. It is never God's will to violate the Bible. There never is any reason, even if it appears logical, that justifies sinning.
    - b. For God, there are no "unimportant sins", "white lies", or "necessary evils". For Him, the end never justifies the means.
    - c. **Romans 12:1-2** teaches us that to live holy lives, we should seek His glory and deny ourselves. As we allow the Word of God to fill our minds, we will prove how the will of God is good, pleasant, and perfect.
    - d. God desires that we live holy lives, even when it causes us suffering. Don't sacrifice your personal holiness with the excuse of avoiding suffering. **1 Peter 4:12-16**
  3. Regardless of the individual circumstances, God wants us to submit to all human authority. **1 Peter 2:13-16**
    - a. Honor those that are in authority, even the wicked, but without participating in their sins. Place any adverse situation in God's hands and allow Him to take charge.
      - i. **1 Peter 2:17-23** was written by Peter when Nero, probably the most perverse and wicked king in Rome's history, was in power.
      - ii. Sometimes we will have to suffer because we are submitting to the authorities, but God's desire is that every believer respects the principle of authority. Remember that *he that resists the power resists the ordinance of God.*
    - b. Rebellion, disrespect of authority, or the simple act of having a bad attitude towards those that have a higher position than ours (bosses, teachers, parents, husbands, etc.) never is approved by God. **Romans 13:1-2**

- c. Respect authority, not on the basis of the personal merits, but because of what God asks of you.
  - i. All of us should respect and obey the government. Respect the law and pay your taxes. **Romans 13:3-7; Titus 3:1**
  - ii. Every employee should respect and obey his or her boss. **Titus 2:9-10**
  - iii. All children should respect and obey their parents. **Colossians 3:20** commands it: *“Children, obey [your] parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.”*
  - iv. All wives should respect and obey their husbands. **Ephesians 5:22**
  - v. All believers should respect and obey their spiritual authorities. That’s what **Hebrews 13:17** commands: *“Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that [is] unprofitable for you.”*
- d. God’s desire is that we respect authority honestly and not only in outward appearance. God hates hypocrisy. **Ephesians 6:5-7**
- 4. No matter what the personal circumstances are, God desires us to be grateful people.
  - a. Even if we are suffering, we should give thanks to God. **1 Thessalonians 5:18** teaches us: *“In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”*
  - b. As we are controlled by the Holy Spirit, we can give thanks to God for everything that happens to us. **Ephesians 5:18-20**
  - c. Don’t be ungrateful. Ingratitude is a characteristic of lost people. Take into account what **Romans 1:21** says about this: *“Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.”*
  - d. Gratefulness comes from a heart that understands the grace of God for every one of us. Whenever we understand that we don’t deserve anything that we receive, we will yearn to serve God with gratefulness. **Hebrews 12:28**
  - e. As we are grateful, we will have a joyful and positive heart that will constantly sing to God. **Colossians 3:16-17**

## II. Why do things happen outside of God's perfect will?

- A. God's perfect will is not always fulfilled. When God allows this to happen, He always pursues a greater purpose.
  - 1. That's why the Word of God can declare without fear that for those who love God all things work together for good. **Romans 8:28** reminds us: *"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to [his] purpose."*
  - 2. When you are passing through moments of tribulation, remember that even though the trial may be difficult, God is intending something better at the end of the trial. **Deuteronomy 8:15-16**
- B. Two elements ruin God's perfect ideal for our lives, creating a whole new set of circumstances, which we call God's "permissive will".
  - 1. The first of these elements is man's disobedience.
    - a. This happens when we act against the perfect will of God.
      - i. God warned Paul three times to not go to Jerusalem but, after Paul disobeyed, God permitted it to teach him to be obedient and so that he would later get to Rome. **Acts 21:4-14**
      - ii. We should not overlook the fact that our free will allows us to disobey God's perfect will, making us reap the consequences of our decisions.
    - b. It also happens when the disobedience of others affects our lives.
      - i. Once again, when God allows the disobedience of others to harm us, it's because He desires to achieve a greater purpose in our lives.
      - ii. Joseph, Jacob's son, sold by his brothers as a slave because of their envy towards him, is an example of this. Nevertheless, Joseph saw God work in his circumstances, and when he faced his brothers, he declared what **Genesis 45:5-8** says.
  - 2. The second element that contributes to what we call the permissive will of God is Satan, through his systematic opposition to God's plan.
    - a. Job is probably the best known biblical example. God allowed Satan's action against this just man, to mature and bless him.
      - i. **Job 42:10** lets us see that God blessed Job materially at the end of the trial: *"And the LORD turned the captivity of Job, when*

*he prayed for his friends: also the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before.” Verse 17 of the same passage also says: “So Job died, [being] old and full of days.”*

- ii. The spiritual purpose of Job’s trial is summarized in **James 5:10-11**
  - b. Just like in Paul’s case, we will also face Satan’s opposition whenever we try to do God’s will. **1 Thessalonians 2:17-18** reads: *“But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face with great desire. Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us.”*

### III. How can we find God’s plan for our life?

- A. God’s plan is nothing more than the specific application of God’s perfect will for everyone’s life.
  - 1. As we already studied, we can find God’s will in the Bible. His will is general, expressed in precepts and principles that apply themselves to all human beings at all time and in all circumstances.
  - 2. But specific decisions such as who will I marry? Where will I live? Or where will I work? involve God’s plan for each person. The answers to these questions give us individual applications, which are answered in a different way for each one of us.
- B. To try to find God’s plan for you in a specific circumstance, answer the following questions:
  - 1. What does the Bible say? **Psalms 119:105**
    - a. Often, God will speak to you through specific passages of the Scriptures. That’s why it is so important to saturate your mind with the Word.
    - b. Be careful to not take verses out of context. Remember that God is a God of order. Get to know the Bible!
  - 2. What does the guidance of the Holy Spirit indicate to you?
    - a. As we pray, the Holy Spirit will internally confirm our decisions, bringing the peace of God to our spirit. The instructions of **Philippians 4:6-7** should be vital for every believer: *“Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the*

*peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”*

- b. Once again, it's necessary to be cautious in this area, as believers we can confuse our hunches or our own desires with the genuine peace of God.
3. What do the circumstances indicate?
    - a. Nothing happens to believers by coincidence. It's God who opens or closes doors of opportunity. **1 Corinthians 16:7-9**
    - b. Be careful! Remember that, as in the case of Job, God allows Satan to control the circumstances in some situations.
  4. What is the counsel of other mature believers?
    - a. God has placed men and women around you that are more mature than you and that can help you to apply the three previous points. **Proverbs 20:18** reminds us that: *“[Every] purpose is established by counsel: and with good advice make war.”*
    - b. Be careful! Not everyone that wants to counsel you will be the right person. Job didn't have any problems finding counselors, but he did have serious problems finding good advice.
- C. Be patient, God will reveal His plan as you spiritually mature.
1. To know every detail of what He wants for you might overwhelm you before you begin.
  2. Maybe you're still not equipped to carry out God's plan for your life or maybe you still haven't reached the maturity that God wants you to develop.
    - a. Don't worry; God will reveal to you what you can do when you are ready.
    - b. This can be illustrated by the old question asked of all children. *“What do you want to be when you grow up?”*
      - i. If all 5 year old children were forced to carry out their answer to this question, in 20 years there would only be firemen, policemen, and nurses.
      - ii. As time passes and you grow spiritually, your interests, talents and desires will grow and change. Be patient. Faithfully carry

out what God asks of you in His Word, and little by little He will reveal His plan to you.

### SOME POPULAR BELIEFS

1. God is responsible for everything that happens to us since He decides every detail of everything that happens to us, and doesn't allow opportunity for the human will.
2. God has already determined who will go to heaven and who will go to Hell and there is nothing you can do about it.

From what we have studied in this lesson, we should understand why these teachings are completely false.

*Write in your own words the spiritual principle from this lesson that has made the biggest impact on you.*

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### PUTTING IN PRACTICE WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED

1. In this lesson 4 tools are mentioned that you can use when you want to know what God's plan is for your life in a specific situation. Mention them in your own words.

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2. In one sentence and also in your own words tell how you can find God's perfect will.

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## HOW MUCH HAVE WE LEARNED?

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| 1 | To know God's perfect will for my life I need to "pray a lot" and "consult with my best friends."   | <b>T</b> | <b>F</b> |
| 2 | Searching the scriptures, following the guidance of the Holy Spirit, analyzing carefully the circumstances, and seeking the counsel of spiritually mature men and women, will help us to make specific decisions in our life. | <b>T</b> | <b>F</b> |
| 3 | The perfect will of God and His specific plan for each one of us is the same thing.   | <b>T</b> | <b>F</b> |
| 4 | As we know the Bible better we can get to a point where we know the perfect will of God.  | <b>T</b> | <b>F</b> |
| 5 | God will never allow something bad to happen to His children.   | <b>T</b> | <b>F</b> |

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**Before beginning lesson 12, memorize  
Philippians 4:6-7**

*"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."*

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