

LOVE THE LORD



Lesson Nine - How can I know God's will for me?

August 2023

Summary of key points

- God has a predetermined purpose for everyone. We are the most satisfied and liberated when we fulfil that purpose.
- Seeking God's will to fulfil our purpose is something we need to do every day and not just leave to critical events or decisions, because we can be sidetracked.
- God personally helps us to fulfil His purpose.
- God's will is that we live holy lives and not be deceived by worldly desires.
- We cannot presume to know God's will without seeking the Holy Spirit, because our sinful nature will choose only what is the most logical, most desirable, or the most comfortable; which may not be God's will for us. For example, we need to suffer for doing good at times.

Watch the lesson online

<https://youtu.be/eiblTBDAiQA>

Transcript

Welcome to lesson nine of Love the Lord where we look more closely at God's will for us.

Let us begin by inviting God to speak to us personally through this study. Please follow along as we pray together. Click pause at any point if you need more time.

First, let's thank God for our lives and His perfect will for us.

Next, please tell Him about all the things that have been stressful and ask for His help and guidance.

Let us put down our burdens of sin. First, let us confess the ways we have sinned against others and against God, and ask for His forgiveness.

Please confess the ways other people have sinned against us and caused us grief, and forgive them in Jesus' name.

Next, let us ask God to purify and open our hearts to receive His teaching.

Finally, please repeat these words, “In Jesus’ name, I silence all distractions and voices that are not from God. Amen.”

Let us begin the lesson for today. So, how can I know God’s will for me?

God has predetermined an individually tailored purpose for us even before we were born. This is why every human being has the question of “what am I here for?” Subconsciously, everyone is looking for the meaning of life.

Jeremiah 1:5 “I knew you before I formed you in your mother’s womb. Before you were born I set you apart and appointed you as my prophet to the nations.” (NLT)

God’s purpose and plans for us are for good, He gives us a future and a hope. Because doing God’s will is tied to fulfilling our spiritual destiny, it is where we will find greatest and deepest satisfaction.

Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the plans I have for you,” says the Lord. “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. (NLT)

It is also where we find the most freedom and joy because we no longer have to conform or be enslaved to all the pressures that people and this world put on us.

1 Corinthians 7:23 God paid a high price for you, so don’t be enslaved by the world. (NLT)

How often do you stop to seek God’s will for your life? Do you treat it like an annual review? Or is it ad hoc, depending on whatever major decision or crisis you are facing? Or is it by day-by-day? Anyone who has ever been hiking will know that taking just a 5° detour from your original plan can lead you to a different destination altogether. A wise hiker will know they should keep checking and re-calibrating their direction until they reach their final destination. So it is with seeking God’s will.

Seeking God’s will does not just encompass significant events or decisions, but our entire lives, day by day. It is how we truly worship Him; when we give Him our entire bodies as living and holy sacrifices, living for Him moment by moment. How much we prioritise God’s will in our day-to-day is a testament to our loyalty to Him.

Romans 12:1 And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. (NLT)

Let us read what Jesus said in Matthew chapter 7 together, “Not everyone who calls out to me, ‘Lord! Lord!’ will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Only those who do the will of my Father in heaven will enter.”

(Matthew 7:20-21 NLT) Our qualification to enter heaven is not just based on belief in Jesus, but on acting on God's will.

Thankfully, such a life is not at all burdensome because the Holy Spirit will give us the desire and power to do the things that God has willed for us.

Philippians 2:13 For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him. (NLT)

God even promises to strengthen the hearts of those who are fully committed to Him, to fulfil His will.

2 Chronicles 16:9 The eyes of the Lord search the whole earth in order to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him... (NLT)

The wonderful thing about following God's will is that God Himself will cause everything in our lives to work together for our good, according to His purpose for us. If we choose to obey God, the Holy Spirit will personally help us succeed.

Romans 8:28 And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them. (NLT)

And the outcome of following God's will leads to the fruit of the Holy Spirit, which are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Galatians 5:22-23 But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things! (NLT)

God's will is always good and pleasing and perfect. But to know God's will for us, we need to change the way we think about ourselves and our purpose on earth. For that, we need to study the Bible for ourselves every day.

Romans 12:2 Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. (NLT)

Let's read what 2 Timothy chapter 3 verses 16 to 17 says, "All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16-17 NLT) The Bible provides a very good overall guide to God's will for us; whether

it is about what we are to say, how we think, the type of parent we should be, how we handle relationships or money, and so on.

1. For instance, when we read the Bible, we will learn that God's will is that we live holy, pure lives that are set apart for God's glory.

1 Thessalonians 4:3-4 God's will is for you to be holy, so stay away from all sexual sin. Then each of you will control his own body and live in holiness and honor. (NLT)

2. We are to stay away from sexual sin, because our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit.

1 Thessalonians 4:3-4 God's will is for you to be holy, so stay away from all sexual sin. Then each of you will control his own body and live in holiness and honor. (NLT)

3. God's will is also that we should live honourable lives, and not have any other gods in our hearts.

1 Peter 2:15 It is God's will that your honorable lives should silence those ignorant people who make foolish accusations against you. (NLT)

Exodus 20:3 "You must not have any other god but me. (NLT)

4. We are to always be joyful, to never stop praying, and to be thankful in all circumstances.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 Always be joyful. Never stop praying. Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus. (NLT)

Looking at this list, some of us may feel a little perplexed. How can God's will be so simple? Doesn't He want us to work harder and attain more? When we listen to a world that tells us to chase after all the things it can offer — security, health, comfort, money, respectability and so on — and we can develop a mindset that God's will includes all those things for us as well.

But the Bible tells us that this "world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever."

1 John 2:16-17 For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever. (NIV)

The Bible also warns us to be careful to live wisely and not to be foolish. We are to understand what God's will is because the times that we live in are evil.

Ephesians 5:15-17 Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is. (NIV)

We can also be deceived by our sinful nature into believing we are walking in God’s will when we are not, especially when we have a tendency to pre-determine what is “good and pleasing and perfect” by how it looks like in our perspective, rather than by God’s perspective.

Romans 12:2 ... learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. (NLT)

We may think that God’s will is the one that makes most sense to us and is most logical, when the Bible warns us “to not depend on our own understanding but to seek His will in all we do.” It warns us not to be too impressed with our own wisdom.

Proverbs 3:5-7 Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take. Don’t be impressed with your own wisdom... (NLT)

Or we may think that God’s will must be the one that looks most desirable to us, when we are told to “not spend the rest of our lives chasing our own desires but be anxious to do God’s will.”

1 Peter 4:2-3 You won’t spend the rest of your lives chasing your own desires, but you will be anxious to do the will of God. You have had enough in the past of the evil things that godless people enjoy ... (NLT)

Alternatively, we may think that God’s will must be the one that looks like the easiest and safest option, when it is that God’s will may be that we have to “suffer for doing good.”

1 Peter 3:17 For it is better, if it is God’s will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. (NIV)

So we see that when we use our own human ways to determine God’s will, we tend to assume it must be the most logical, the ones we find most desirable, and the easiest or most comfortable route — all of which are not generally true.

1 Samuel 15:23 For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and presumption is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has also rejected you from being king.” (ESV)

Presuming we know what is best and what is God’s will without consulting the Holy Spirit is a form of self idolatry. Such a sin caused Israel’s first king to lose his throne, his blessings, and eventually his life. It is a fate we all want to avoid.

Seeking and following God's will is not always the most convenient, it can demand lots of patience and endurance on our part.

Hebrews 10:36 Patient endurance is what you need now, so that you will continue to do God's will. Then you will receive all that he has promised. (NLT)

It may call for us to suffer and still continue to do good. We suffer when we obey God's will because this world will try to use peer pressure to coerce us into following its patterns.

1 Peter 4:19 So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good. (NIV)

We will have to decide to persevere as God's light in a generation of crooked and perverse people, and not return to darkness. What has your understanding of God's will for you been? Are you ready to seek His will in all you do, even if it includes suffering for doing good?

Philippians 2:15 ... Live clean, innocent lives as children of God, shining like bright lights in a world full of crooked and perverse people. (NLT)

Let us remember that no one has suffered more greatly in fulfilling God's will than Jesus Christ Himself — and He did it for our sakes. Surely, none of our suffering can ever compare with how Jesus suffered. Let us respond to Jesus' loving sacrifice for us by obeying His good, pleasing and perfect will for our lives.

Matthew 26:38-39 He told them, "My soul is crushed with grief to the point of death.... He went on a little farther and bowed with his face to the ground, praying, "My Father! If it is possible, let this cup of suffering be taken away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine." (NLT)

Here is a prayer adapted from Psalm 119, that we can pray together to honour Jesus. Ready?

"Father God, Joyful are people of integrity, who follow Your instructions with all their hearts. We will not compromise with evil. We walk only in Your will. You have charged us to keep Your commandments carefully. I commit my heart to seeking Your will for me, day by day. Then I will not be ashamed when I compare my life with Your commands. I will honour Jesus by living as I should! In Jesus' name, amen."

We will now end today's lesson with two questions, followed by a testimony. We pray that you will be blessed as you prepare your answers before your small group discussion. See you next time.

Time for reflection

1. Are you willing to completely trust and follow God's will for your life? Why?
2. How does knowing that it has eternal consequences impact your thinking?

Watch the testimony for this lesson



Personal notes