

Discovering God's Will For Your Life

February 26, 2017

To KNOW Christ and one another more deeply,
To CARE for one another in truth and in love,
To GROW as followers of Jesus.
- CG Mission Statement

Worship: Mighty to Save by Hillsong United

(Here is a passage to help your group as you worship. You can go through it together or in groups in meditation and/or in prayer)

Everyone needs compassion
A love that's never failing
Let mercy fall on me

So take me as You find me
All my fears and failures
Fill my life again

Everyone needs forgiveness
A kindness of a Savior
The hope of nations

I give my life to follow
Everything I believe in
Now I surrender

Chorus:

Savior he can move the mountains
My God is Mighty to save
He is Mighty to save
Forever author of salvation
He rose and conquered the grave
Jesus Conquered the grave

[Chorus 2x]

Sine your light and let the whole world see
We're singing for the glory of the risen King [2x]

[Chorus 2x]

Icebreaker

Can you remember a time when you were stressed out about a choice you had to make? How did you finally decide?

Or

What is your favorite salad dressing, and why?

Text for Discussion: Romans 12:1-2

Turn in your Bibles and read this passage aloud together.

Aid for Discussion: Sermon Summary

Our modern world offers a dizzying amount of choices. Big decisions need to be made, but we're left paralyzed. How do we make a good decision, let alone the *right* one? Our choices (or our passivity) end up dragging us into anxiety and depression. So we turn to God, asking to know His will. For if we can learn His plan for our lives, we will no longer have to be responsible for these crippling choices. But if this is true, why is God's will so difficult to discern? Maybe we have trouble discovering it because we have a distorted sense of what it is. The Bible refers to God's will in three ways:

The Will of Decree is God's secret, sovereign control over all that comes to pass (Eph 1:11).

The Will of Desire is God's moral law, what He commands.

The Will of Direction is God's instruction, teachings and counsel (Psalm 32:8).

It is the last of these, God's will of direction, we've come to believe is a mystery we're meant to figure out. But the Bible warns about presumption concerning the future, commanding us to do the will of God we already know here in the present. The real question is not "What is God's will?" but whether we truly want it for our lives. Or do we simply want God to bless *our plans* for ourselves? This is the choice we must make before we ever confront the choices that worry us. We must consider that God may be more interested in our level of faith and our character than our reputation or our level of comfort. If we have confidence in God's will of decree and we commit ourselves to His will of desire, we can make choices without anxiety over His will of direction. We can live in confidence that God holds the future. All He asks of us is to trust and obey Him today (Matt 6:33).

What can we be certain of regarding God's will for us? We are to have a sober view of life, living in the power of the Holy Spirit, offering praise and gratitude to God for His goodness (1 Thes 4:3, Eph 4:24, 1 Thes 5:16, Prov 16:3). We

can live with the assurance that as long as we want to want what God wants, everything else will work out. For if we love, seek and obey God today, loving our neighbors and desiring their good above our own, then whatever choices we make and whatever we do, we will be walking in the will of God.

How does God guide us in making the big decisions we still face? We are commanded to ask for wisdom (James 1:5). **Our circumstances** point to God's invisible providence, guiding us by working all things according to the counsel of His will. **The Bible** is living, actively speaking to us today. And where God has spoken clearly, we have no need to doubt His guidance. Where God's word is not clear, it is wise to ask for direction through His Word but also through the counsel of friends and mentors. Lastly, God may speak through **inner promptings**, but these are rare occurrences (even in the Bible), which were never sought out. So we shouldn't expect or ask for them before making a decision. The heart of inner promptings is cultivating a life of prayer, asking for help to know what to do when the moral laws don't apply.

But more important that what we ask for is to Whom we are praying. God yearns for us to see our constant need of Him; He desires to lead us because He loves us. So when God is not clear, it is probably because there is no need for clarity. We are called to trust that what God intends for us is good. And we can know this is true because when Jesus faced the biggest choice in His life, He trusted in God's eternal plan to rescue us. And if Jesus chose to die rather than to lose us, then we can know that no matter what choices we make, God plans for us are good (Rom 8:32).

Guiding Question of the Week

(This question is intended as a target for the whole conversation. Do not ask for responses now. It will be repeated later in the study.)

Do you really want God's will for your life?

Questions for Discussion

(Remember it is better to wrestle deeply with two good questions than gloss over many. Sub-bullets are intended for potential follow-up.)

- 1) Read Rom 12:1-2. What initially stands out to you?
 - o How have you gone about making an important decision in your life?
- 2) Pastor Rankin mentioned three different types of Will in the Bible: Will of decree, Will of desire, Will of direction. Do you have trouble believing any of these concepts? Why or why not?
 - o Will of decree—Eph 1:11 (read 1:1-11)
 - o Will of desire—Heb 13:21 (read 13:11-21)
 - o Will of direction—Psalm 32:8 (read 32:1-8)
- 3) **Guiding Question: Do you really want God's will for your life?**
 - o Do you believe that God wants what is best for you?
 - o What is the difference between wanting to find God's will and wanting Him to bless our decisions?
- 4) What does it look like to follow God's will for your life today (Matt 6:25, 33)?
- 5) How can we help one another walk in God's will daily?

Praying for One Another

(Here are some ideas from the study to help focus your time in prayer as a group. Use by themselves or along with other prayer requests.)

- Share a decision you are currently facing and pray for one another.
- Pray that we would seek God's will in our lives.