

How to Know God's Will for Your Life

Why should we want to know God's will?

"Thou will show me the path of life: in thy presence is **fullness** of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures **for evermore**." - Psalm 16:11

"The happiest place on earth for him was the place where God would have him to be." - Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets 126

"...those who in **everything** make God first and last and best, are the happiest people in the world." - Ellen G. White, Messages to Young People 38

A Powerful Promise

"Those who decide to do nothing in any line that will displease God, **will know**, after presenting their case before Him, **just what course to pursue**. And they will receive not only wisdom, but strength. Power for obedience, for service, will be imparted to them, as Christ has promised." - Ellen G. White, Desire of Ages 668

But How Can We Know His Will?

Let me first ask you this; how can you know my will?

Spend time with me, talk with me, listen to me, talk with people that know me, notice things I have said, written or done, look at how I live, how I use my time and my resources, which people I am together with, find out my visions, dreams and my purpose in life. In short: get to know me! That's the core.

The same is true when it comes to God.

The Key to Knowing God's Will is a Living Dynamic Relationship with Jesus Christ. "And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent." - John 17:3. This is the core of the Christian life. Not knowledge, but *knowing*. Not religious rites, but a real relationship. That is also the core of how to know God's will.

The African Guide

There was a white man that had an African Guide that was going to help him to his destination. But as they were working themselves through the jungle, the white man could not help but ask: "Where is the way?", His guide answered: "There is no way. I am the way".

Friends, Jesus Christ is the Way of Life. He who finds him finds the way – the best way to live and the only way to heaven! And the better we get to know him the better we will understand how God wants us to live – Gods great plan for all parts our lives.

"But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shines more and more to the perfect day." - Proverbs 4:18



5 main ways to know God's will

1. Wholehearted Surrender and Prayer

It is crucial to understand that God's promise of guidance is based on conditions. One of them is simply that we need to ask:

"Those who decide to do nothing in any line that will displease God, will know, after presenting their case before Him, just what course to pursue. And they will receive not only wisdom, but strength. Power for obedience, for service, will be imparted to them, as Christ has promised." - Ellen G. White, Desire of Ages 668

"But if any of you lacks wisdom, **let him ask of God**, who gives to all liberally and with no reproach, **and it shall be given to him**." - James 1:5

But asking for wisdom does not guarantee that we will get it. *How* we ask is also important.

"And you shall seek Me and find Me, when you **search for Me with all your heart**." - Jeremiah 29:13

Only as we seek God with *all* our heart he has promised to answer. Hand in hand with this comes another condition:

"Those who decide to do nothing in any line that will displease God, will know, after presenting their case before Him, just what course to pursue. And they will receive not only wisdom, but strength. Power for obedience, for service, will be imparted to them, as Christ has promised." - Ellen G. White, Desire of Ages 668

"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the LORD will not hear" - Psalms 66:18

Why is that? One thought on that; if we are not willing to follow the light we have, why should He give us more light? What is the point with telling someone something if they do not listen?

So, we need to decide to do nothing against the will of God, but not only that. On the other side we need a desire to do what He wants us to do – a willingness to follow Him wherever He leads and to live in accordance with His word.

"Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,
And that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out;
When you see the naked, that you cover him,
And not hide yourself from your own flesh?
Then your light shall break forth like the morning,
Your healing shall spring forth speedily,
And your righteousness shall go before you;
The glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.
Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer;
You shall cry, and He will say, 'Here I am.'



"If you take away the yoke from your midst,
The pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness,
If you extend your soul to the hungry
And satisfy the afflicted soul,
Then your light shall dawn in the darkness,
And your darkness shall be as the noonday.
The Lord will guide you continually,
And satisfy your soul in drought,
And strengthen your bones;
You shall be like a watered garden,
And like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail." - Isaiah 58:7-11

Paul wrote it like this in the book of Romans:

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you **present your bodies a living sacrifice**, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but **be transformed by the renewing of your mind**, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." - Romans 12:1-2

With other words: we need to give ourselves wholly to Him, be willing to do what He wants us to, let Him renew our minds (sanctify/mold us) as we commune with Him, then, when we are willing to follow Him wherever He leads, He has promised to show us "just what course to pursue" as we seek Him with all our hearts.

This does *not* mean that if you do not really know Him, if you have not trusted Him enough to surrender completely to Him, it is impossible for you to know His will in the decision you are facing, so you should just as well give up. God longs to reveal His will to you. If you earnestly seek Him, He will show you the way. But the problem is that our sins separate us from God (Isaiah 59:2). So the further away we are from God the harder it is to discern His will. And on the other side; the better we get to know Him the clearer will His plan and will be understood by us (Proverbs 4:18). Therefore, it might be harder for you to understand His will, but it is truly possible and worth the effort.

2. The Inspired Words of God

God's main way of communication!

God has spoken audibly. He has communicated with some face to face. To the high priest he communicated through the Urim and Thummim to others He has sent angels. And many times He has spoken through visions and dreams. **However, by far the most common way has been communication via the prophet.**

The inspired word of God, is His main way of communication. It is the most important way to get to know Him and thus also to get to know His will.

"Thy word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path." - Psalms 119:105

In order to walk on the right path in our walk of life we need a lamp. The Word of God is that light. And you don't need to be a theologian. Everyone can understand it:



"The entrance of Thy words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple." -Psalms 119:130

So, the main way to find out God's perfect will for your life is His inspired word! That is not only the Bible, but also the writings of Ellen G. White.

Friends, I really hope that you believe in and benefit from the great gift God has given us through the writings of Ellen White. There is a reason why God has given this gift to us. Yes, she writes that if we studied the Bible as we should we would not have needed her writings. But the problem is that we do not study it as we should. The problem is that we do not understand how we should apply its important truths and principles into our daily life. The problem is that we are blind and "many are dealing falsely with their own souls and are in a great deception in regard to their true condition before God." - Ellen G. White, 2T 113. Therefore God gave us the Spirit of Prophecy as a great help. She has been a tremendous blessing in my life, and I hope she will be in yours!

If you want to find out:

- Gods calling for your life
- How God wants you to use your time, talents and resources
- How to have the optimal physical, mental and spiritual health.
- How to have a living, dynamic and saving relationship to Christ!
- How to have a living and meaningful prayer life
- How to receive the blessing of the Sabbath
- How to best approach, maintain and cultivate relationships

With other words, if you want to find out how to live the best life you could ever live; study the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy!

- If you are a teacher, read the book Education
- If you are a pastor or a bible worker, read Gospel Workers, Evangelism, Pastoral Ministry and Acts of the Apostles.
- If you are into health read books like Ministry of Healing, A Call to Medical Evangelism and Health Education (CME)
- If you are a leader, read Christian Leadership
- If you are starting a family, read Adventist Home.
- If you are in or on your way into a relationship, read in Messages to Young People, Adventist Home and Letters to Young Lovers.

Oh, if we would only read the Spirit of Prophecy! There is so much great counsel we do not benefit from as we should! I am tempted to switch topic. But this time, I will resist.

Now, I have some bad news. It does not say in the Bible, and not even in the writings of Ellen White:

- Who you should marry
- What you should study
- How and where you can serve Gods cause
- How God wants you to use this summer



But actually, this is not bad news. Firstly, you probably knew it already so it is not news. Secondly, if God in his wisdom chose to do it like this, it is not bad. Therefore, the next things we are going to look at are very important to understand.

The three main ways God leads us

"There are **three ways** in which the Lord reveals His will to us, to guide us, and to fit us to guide others. How may we know His voice from that of a stranger? How shall we distinguish it from the voice of a false shepherd? God reveals His will to us in **His word, the Holy Scriptures**. His voice is also revealed in **His providential workings**; and it will be recognized if we do not separate our souls from Him by walking in our own ways following the promptings of an unsanctified heart, until the senses have become so confused that eternal things are not discerned, and the voice of Satan is so disguised that it is accepted as the voice of God. Another way in which God's voice is heard is through **the appeals of His Holy Spirit, making impressions upon the heart**, which will be wrought out in the character. **If you are in doubt upon any subject you must first consult the Scriptures.**" - Ellen G. White, 5T 512

3. Providence

What is Providence?

- God's intervention in the world (general providence)
- God's special intervention in our lives: some called it the Christian word for luck. It is often unlikely things that believers think must be from God.
- God's working in the circumstances and surroundings of our lives (doors): to lead us, use us and teach us things.

Through His providence God may lead us to hear or read something, to meet someone or experience something. It can be through opening and closing doors of opportunities. Another way to say it is that providence is that which is outside of our control that God is working out for our best.

Providence is one of the ways God wants to lead us. Actually, through providence He wants to lead and speak to us much more often than we often realize. Listen to this:

"God speaks to us through His providential workings and through the influence of His Spirit upon the heart. In our circumstances and surroundings, in the changes daily taking place around us, we may find precious lessons if our hearts are but open to discern them." - Ellen G. White, Steps to Christ 87

After memorizing this quote a number of years ago I started to experience how this is true. I realized that God in many ways was trying to teach me something through different things that I experienced. When you take time to meditate and listen to God you will experience the same!

Practical Examples of Providence

Applications: you apply for several schools/jobs and only get one. Or maybe all opportunities close because God has other plans. "Often our plans fail that God's plans for us may succeed." - Ellen G. White, Ministry of Healing 473



 Money: you get or do not get the money you need in order to go somewhere or do something

Now, it is important to realize that just that you get a job does not mean that God wants you to take the job. Even though it is very unlikely that you would get the job. Just that you do not get the visa to go to a mission school does not mean God do not want you to do that. Maybe He wants you to go there later, or maybe to another mission school.

Test It With the Word!

A person I know was pressured by her boyfriend to have sex even though they were not married. She prayed that she would wake up without an alarm at a specific time next morning, if God wanted her to give in to the pressure. And guess what? She woke up at that exact time. But even though she did, I can tell you with certainty, this was not God's will.

It is essential that we always test it with inspiration. God will never lead us contrary to His revealed will. His providential workings and impressions of the Holy Spirit will always be within the frame of inspiration. As we read in the quote:

"If you are in doubt upon any subject you must first consult the Scriptures." - Ellen G. White, 5T 512

The stick and the crossroads

"Walter Knight told of an old Scottish woman who went from home to home across the countryside selling thread, buttons, and shoestrings. When she came to an unmarked crossroad, she would toss a stick into the air and go in the direction the stick pointed when it landed.

One day, however, she was seen tossing the stick up several times. "Why do you toss the stick more than once?" someone asked. "Because," replied the woman, "it keeps pointing to the left, and I want to take the road on the right." She then dutifully kept throwing the stick into the air until it pointed the way she wanted to go!"- Today in the Word, May, 1989.

Friends, we need to be careful that we do not interpret the circumstances in our lives to mean what we want it to mean! "The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?" - Jeremiah 17:9. Therefore it is crucial that we humbly and prayerfully move forward at every step as we seek to know and do God's will.

4. Impressions of the Holy Spirit

"And Bezaleel and Aholiab shall work with everyone wise of heart to whom the LORD has given wisdom and intelligence, to know how to do every **work of the service of the sanctuary**, concerning all which the LORD had commanded. And Moses called Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wise-hearted man in whose heart the LORD had put wisdom, even **everyone whose heart stirred him up to come**, to do the work." - Exodus 36:1-2



Those who were stirred in their hearts came and worked on the sanctuary. Another way God leads us is to stir our hearts, to move and impress our hearts with His Spirit.

Jonathan and the armor-bearer

Do you remember the story of Jonathan and his armor-bearer? When they risked their lives as they alone went up to the Philistines and conquered them? It was the impression of the Holy Spirit that led them to do this dangerous thing. The Spirit of Prophecy says it like this:

"Moved by a divine impulse, he proposed to his armor-bearer that they should make a secret attack upon the enemy's camp." - Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets 623

How to know if an impression is from God?

I believe Ellen White sets the finger on it in our quote:

"There are **three ways** in which the Lord reveals His will to us, to guide us, and to fit us to guide others. How may we know His voice from that of a stranger? How shall we distinguish it from the voice of a false shepherd? God reveals His will to us in His word, the Holy Scriptures. His voice is also revealed in His providential workings; and it will be recognized if we do not separate our souls from Him by walking in our own ways following the promptings of an unsanctified heart, until the senses have become so confused that eternal things are not discerned, and the voice of Satan is so disguised that it is accepted as the voice of God. Another way in which God's voice is heard is through the appeals of His Holy Spirit, making impressions upon the heart, which will be wrought out in the character. If you are in doubt upon any subject you must first consult the Scriptures." - Ellen G. White, 5T 512

So here we see two key things:

- 1. A living connection with God. "...it will be recognized if we do not separate our souls from Him..."
- 2. Test it with the Word! "If you are in doubt upon any subject you must first consult the Scriptures."

But how do we know if it is an impression from ourselves or from God? Human impulses are often soon forgotten. But impressions from God are not. On the contrary they will often grow stronger over time.

Now, there is one more main way to know God's will. Even though it was not mentioned in the quote this is something we see in inspiration and something that often is very helpful and important. That is:

5. Godly Counseling

"Plans are established by counsel; By wise counsel wage war." - Proverbs 20:18

"Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with **many advisers** they succeed." - Proverbs 15:22



"Impressions alone are not a safe guide to duty. The enemy often persuades men to believe that it is God who is guiding them, when in reality they are following only human impulse. But if we watch carefully, and take counsel with our brethren, we shall be given an understanding of the Lord's will; for the promise is, "The meek will He guide in judgment: and the meek will He teach His way." Psalm 25:9." - Ellen G. White, Acts of the Apostles 279

Important to have in mind...

- An advice is not a command even though the person you counsel with
 has more knowledge and experience than you do, they should not take the
 decision for you. Listen to their thoughts and arguments and humbly consider
 them as you take your decision. The role of a counselor is not to take the
 decision for you but to help you understand where God is trying to lead you
 through inspiration, providence and impressions of the Holy Spirit. It is to
 help you to take a good decision that is not based on your feelings or desires.
- Sometimes it is clear enough without Counseling Counseling is not a step you must go through to know God's will. Sometimes it is clear enough without it. But many times God uses human beings to help us take the right decision.
- **Godly Counselors** Who you counsel with is very important. Do not only ask your friends or people that tell you to do what you want them to tell you. Ask people that dare to tell you the right thing even though you do not like it. If you have godly parents, a godly teacher, pastor or godly friends ask them.
- Many Counselors This is also very important: "Where there is no counsel, the people fall; But in the multitude of counselors there is safety." Proverbs 11:14. Because what might happen is that different people will give you different advices even though they all are godly people. But if you have many counselors, many godly counselors, and a majority of them give the same advice, then it is very probable that it is the right thing to do.

5 main ways to know God's will

- 1. Wholehearted Surrender and Prayer
- 2. The Inspired Words of God
- 3. Providence
- 4. Impressions of the Holy Spirit
- 5. Godly Counseling

7 practical tips to know God's will

1. Use your brain and do all you can

"We are to be guided by true theology and common sense." - Ellen G. White, CT 257

God Will Save Me

"A terrible storm came into a town and local officials sent out an emergency warning that the riverbanks would soon overflow and flood the nearby homes. They ordered everyone in the town to evacuate immediately."



A faithful Christian man heard the warning and decided to stay, saying to himself, "I will trust God and if I am in danger, then God will send a divine miracle to save me."

The neighbors came by his house and said to him, "We're leaving and there is room for you in our car, please come with us!" But the man declined. "I have faith that God will save me."

As the man stood on his porch watching the water rise up the steps, a man in a canoe paddled by and called to him, "Hurry and come into my canoe, the waters are rising quickly!" But the man again said, "No thanks, God will save me."

The floodwaters rose higher pouring water into his living room and the man had to retreat to the second floor. A police motorboat came by and saw him at the window. "We will come up and rescue you!" they shouted. But the man refused, waving them off saying, "Use your time to save someone else! I have faith that God will save me!"

The flood waters rose higher and higher and the man had to climb up to his rooftop.

A helicopter spotted him and dropped a rope ladder. A rescue officer came down the ladder and pleaded with the man, "Grab my hand and I will pull you up!" But the man STILL refused, folding his arms tightly to his body. "No thank you! God will save me!"

Shortly after, the house broke up and the floodwaters swept the man away and he drowned.

When in Heaven, the man stood before God and asked, "I put all of my faith in You. Why didn't You come and save me?"

And God said, "Son, I sent you a warning. I sent you a car. I sent you a canoe. I sent you a motorboat. I sent you a helicopter. What more were you looking for?" - http://epistle.us/inspiration/godwillsaveme.html

Friends, do not be like that man! Use your brain and do all you can!

"Prayer and effort, effort and prayer, will be the business of your life. You must pray as though the efficiency and praise were all due to God, and labor as though duty were all your own." - Ellen G. White, 4T 538 (1881) {LDE 63.3}

This is a very important principle that I believe also applies to knowing God's will!

2. Write down

Praverfully write down:

- Pros and cons with the suggestion(/s) you are considering
- What inspiration has to say that is relevant for the decision
- What God might be telling you through providence and impressions of the Holy Spirit

When you write a list like this, many times it will become clear what God wants you to do – but not always. It is important to remember that God sees things from a



much bigger perspective than we do. Sometimes he calls us to do something that from a human viewpoint does not make sense. Like when he led the Israelites to a place of no escape, by the Red Sea, surrounded by mountains and on top of that the Egyptian army was coming up behind them. But I think He will make it even clearer when He calls us to do something that in our eyes does not make so much sense.

3. Ask the right questions

Key Questions to Ask

- What is Gods plan for His Church? / What are the needs?
- · Where can I be most useful?
- Where can I learn and grow most / gain the greatest preparation for His work?
- Will I/it glorify God? (1 Cor 10:31)
- Is this something I want to do? (if it is you need to be careful that your deceitful heart do not lead you to take a decision contrary to the will of God. But if it isn't something you want the chances increases that it is something God impresses you to do.)

4. Understand why you are here

"Success in any line demands a definite aim... The heaven-appointed purpose of giving the gospel to the world in this generation is the noblest that can appeal to any human being." - Ellen G. White, Education 262

"With such an army of workers as our youth, **rightly trained**, might furnish, how **soon** the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Saviour might be carried to the whole world! How **soon** might the end come--the end of suffering and sorrow and sin!" - Ellen G. White, Education 271

"God calls upon us to make use of **every opportunity** for securing a preparation for His work." - Ellen G. White, Testimonies for the Church, vol. 7, p. 189

"The Lord calls upon our young people to enter our schools and quickly fit themselves for service." - Ellen G. White, Testimonies for the Church, vol. 9, p. 170

"**True education** is missionary training. Every son and daughter of God is called to be a missionary; we are called to the service of God and our fellow men; and to fit us for this service should be the object of our education." - Ellen G. White, Ministry of Healing p. 395

"It is in unselfish ministry that true happiness is found." - Ellen G. White, Testimonies for the Church, vol. 7, p. 49

"How can I entreat of you, careless, reckless youth of today, be converted, and become laborers together with God. Let it be the study of your life to bless and save others. If you seek help from God, His power working in you will bring to naught all opposing powers, and you will become sanctified through the truth." - Ellen G. White, Messages to Young People 22

5. Pray much



Prayer is essential in order to find out God's will for your life. And the bigger decision, the more time you should spend in prayer. Ellen White said it like this on the topic of marriage:

"If men and women are in the habit of praying twice a day before they contemplate marriage, they should pray four times a day when such a step is anticipated. Marriage is something that will influence and affect your life, both in this world and in the world to come." - Ellen G. White, Adventist Home 71

6. Fast

We should not only pray but also fast. That is a too much neglected aspect of the Christian life. For instance inspiration tells us the following:

"It is the order of God that those who bear responsibilities should often meet together to counsel with one another and pray earnestly for that wisdom which He alone can impart." Unitedly make known your troubles to God. Talk less: much precious time is lost in talk... Let brethren unite in fasting and prayer for the wisdom that God has promised to supply liberally." - Ellen G. White, Testimonies 1, 642

7. Be still before God

And last but not least, a very important aspect of prayer; take time to listen to God!

"We must individually hear Him speaking to the heart. When every other voice is hushed, and in quietness we wait before Him, the silence of the soul makes more distinct the voice of God. He bids us, "Be still, and know that I am God." Psalm 46:10. Here alone can true rest be found. And this is the effectual preparation for all who labor for God." - Ellen G. White, Desire of Ages 363

"Through sincere prayer we are brought into connection with the mind of the Infinite." - Ellen G. White, Steps to Christ 96

Trust in God

"Many are unable to make definite plans for the future. Their life is unsettled. They cannot discern the outcome of affairs, and this often fills them with anxiety and unrest. Let us remember that the life of God's children in this world is a pilgrim life. We have not wisdom to plan our own lives. It is not for us to shape our future. "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went." Hebrews 11:8.

Christ in His life on earth made no plans for Himself. He accepted God's plans for Him, and day by day the Father unfolded His plans. So should we depend upon God, that our lives may be the simple outworking of His will. As we commit our ways to Him, He will direct our steps.



Too many, in planning for a brilliant future, make an utter failure. Let God plan for you. As a little child, trust to the guidance of Him who will "keep the feet of His saints." 1 Samuel 2:9. God never leads His children otherwise than they would choose to be led, if they could see the end from the beginning and discern the glory of the purpose which they are fulfilling as co-workers with Him." - Ellen G. White, Ministry of Healing 479

Appeal

After the hymns, the church's pastor walked up to the pulpit. Before he gave his sermon that day he said that they had a guest minister in the congregation. The pastor shared how this man was one of his dearest childhood friends and he wanted him to get a little time to share whatever he thought would be appropriate.

So the elderly man stepped up to the pulpit and began to speak.

"A father, his son, and a friend of his son were sailing off the pacific coast," he began, "when a fast approaching storm blocked any attempt to get back to the shore. The waves were so high, that even though the father was an experienced sailor, he could not keep the boat upright and the three were swept into the ocean as the boat turned upside down."

The old man hesitated for a moment, making eye contact with two teenagers who were, for the first time since the service began, looking somewhat interested in his story. The aged minister continued with his story, "grabbing a rescue line, the father had to make the most painful decision of his life: which boy would he try to rescue first? He only had seconds to make the decision. The father knew that his son was a Christian and he also knew that his son's friend was not. The agony of his decision could not be matched by the torrent of waves. As the father yelled out, "I love you, son!" he threw the lifeline to his son's friend. By the time the father had pulled the friend back to the overturned boat, his son had disappeared beneath the raging swells into the black of night. His body never recovered.

By this time, the two teenagers were sitting up straight in the pew, anxiously waiting for the next words to come out of the old minister's mouth.

"The father," he continued, "was pretty sure that his son had a saving relationship with Christ and that the friend of his son didn't. But he thought, maybe he could accept Christ as his savior one day. Therefore he sacrifice his son to save his friend. How great is the love of God that He should do the same for us. Our heavenly Father sacrificed His only begotten son that we could be saved. I urge you to accept His offer to rescue you and take hold of the life line He is throwing out to you in this service."

With that, the old man turned and sat back down in his chair as silence filled the room.

Shortly after the service ended, the two teenagers were at the old man's side. "That was a nice story," politely stated one of the boys, "but which man would have done



something like that? No one would have done it.". The old pastor looked at them and said: "I am that man. The boy that was saved is the pastor of this church."

"Truly He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" - Romans 8:32

"...those who in everything make God first and last and best, are the happiest people in the world." - Ellen G. White, Messages to Young People 38

Dear reader, why not commit your life and all into the hands of your loving creator and redeemer? Why not let Him that knows and wants your best, lead you into His great plan for every step and in every area of your life? I want to take that decision again. Will you make that commitment with me today?