

How to Know You Are in God's Will

Psalm 37:1-5 ¹ "A Psalm of David. Do not fret because of evildoers, Nor be envious of the workers of iniquity. ² For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, And wither as the green herb. ³ **Trust in the LORD**, and do good; Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness. ⁴ **Delight** yourself also in the LORD, And He shall give you the desires of your heart. ⁵ **Commit** your way to the LORD, **Trust** also in Him, And He shall bring *it* to pass." {Commit is once; trust is ongoing; delight is the launchpad}

Psalm 37:23 "The steps of a *good* man are ordered by the LORD, And He delights in his Way."

Nothing is more important in life than finding and doing the will of God. Success is: finding His will, following it, and finishing it with "well done, good and faithful servant". God's will for your life is you, walking in the steps that God has ordered for your life:

Ephesians 2:10 "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them."

Doing God's will brings joy, contentment, and fulfillment. Jesus said, "My meat is to do the will of God" and "Man does not live by bread alone...". We live in dark days, but God wants us to walk in the light; it stands to reason that He wants to reveal His will.

Proverbs 3:5-6 ⁵ Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; ⁶ In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths."

We get ourselves out of His way in submission.

Isaiah 58:11 "The LORD will guide you continually. {Trust is ongoing; This is the way; walk ye therein}"

Psalm 32:8 "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye. {He can see further ahead; a Father's look exchanged with his child...}"

Philippians 2:13 "For it is God who works in you both to will and to do for *His* good pleasure."

There are pre-requisites to being in God's will; you don't wander into it. You have to want it and seek it diligently (Heb. 11:6; "When you seek Me with all your heart, you will find Me.")

It's not the world's way of "Follow your heart" or "Let your conscience be your guide". The Bible says the heart is deceitful and desperately wicked and your conscience may be seared with a hot iron.

Pre-requisites to finding God's will include key things by which you can know you are walking in God's will.

A Godly, pure lifestyle: the steps of a "good" man (Psalm 37:23) are ordered by the Lord is a principle throughout this psalm (vv. 3, 8-9, 16-18, 27, 29-31, 34, 37-40). "A Good Man" does not mean perfect, but nowhere does the Bible promise guidance to a believer with known sin in their life. (If I regard iniquity in my heart...)

Who we are is more important than what we do...and where we are (physical location). We divide God's personal will for me (my direction) from His moral will (His general directions). It's impossible to find His personal will for you if you're rebelling to His moral will for you.

Standing with God is based on Who we are not what we do: "I never knew you...depart."

His moral will is spelled out in: 1 Thessalonians 4:3 "For this is the will of God, your sanctification" which means being set apart by God for God."

His personal will for you will elude you until you get holiness nailed down. Some will go to the grave, never having let God do spiritual surgery on their life after salvation.

You can't find God's personal will for you if you harbor sin or live in rebellion. We must acknowledge His Lordship over every area of life. This is not sinless perfection or that we never stumble and fall...but that we have no sin we've grown comfortable with – nurturing it or harboring it - no habitual sin we are not struggling against.

Are we doing the basics: tithing – morality – purity – faithfulness – forgiveness? Are my priorities mine or His: pride – dedication – service – attitude – bitterness – gossip – prejudice - study - daily devotions – lust - bad friends and wrong associations? Is the direction of my life more loving of God and neighbor?

God does not reveal His will to us for us to just consider but when He knows we are willing to obey. Why would He if you are already violating His moral will? Why if you've purposefully avoided doing what He's told you to do already? Cross the first bridge and He'll show you the next. Go back to the point of departure to rediscover His path for your life.

The "steps of a good man" being ordered by the Lord assumes you are obeying in the moral will of God. Then He will show you His personal will. To be in God's will 15 years from now, be sure to be in His will 15 minutes from now.

Romans 12 teaches that if we are to prove (experientially show forth) the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God, we must: 1) Be not conformed to this world; and 2) Be transformed by the renewing of our minds.

1st pre-requisite is a godly, pure life. The 2nd is a yielded heart. Ps 37:5 To yield means to surrender; submit to the control of another; hand over possession. The Bible clearly teaches we are not our own; God is the owner. We can't insist on our way without bringing sorrow upon ourselves – the rich young ruler went away sad.

Are you willing to hand over control of your life to God and do whatever He wants? Have you handed God a blank check of your life for Him to fill in? Do you trust Him enough to do that? Ps. 37:3, 5 = trust is the issue. Any trouble giving Him control is because you don't trust Him enough which is because you don't know Him enough.

Trust takes time and experience. If a stranger asks you to give them \$20 saying, "Just trust me" do you have good reason to trust him...but if your best friend asks for \$20...?

As we know Him, we come to love Him; as we love Him, we come to trust Him; as we trust Him, we come to obey Him; and as we obey Him, we are blessed by Him.

Ps. 37:4 When we delight ourselves in the Lord, our will is conformed to His...He merges His will and our desires...transforms our desires... and then gives us our desires. Paul went places "because he had a mind to go" just as Jesus knew He "must needs go by way of Samaria" because God had a woman there waiting to save a town!

There are three spiritual habits that Christians have built into their lives if they are delighting in the Lord. These are essential to knowing the will of God:

1. God leads through His Word.

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

Hebrews 4:12 "For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

A big part of knowing God's will is discerning whether the "peace" you feel is from what you want or what God wants. Only His Word can divide soul from spirit, so, delight yourself in the Lord and the Word. The Word is spirit and is life.

Appreciate the Word - recognize it as the love letter it is / inspired / infallible / powerful.
Appropriate the Word - truths do you no good if not received. Some appreciate the Bible as literature but not with willingness to be changed/touched/operated on.
Apply the Word - it does the Work of God only in those who apply it. Faith without corresponding works is dead.

- Jesus told Peter to walk on the water but Peter had to get out of boat.
- The lame man was told to take up his bed and walk – had he not obeyed...
- Joshua could have gone around the walls of Jericho one time...
- Israel could have skipped the blood on the doorposts but then the death angel...

You'll never know God's will until you appreciate, appropriate, and apply His Word.

2. God leads through prayer: If we will be still, we will hear His still small voice in our hearts. It is not just talking at God but talking with God.

Acts 8:29 "Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go near and overtake this chariot."

Nehemiah 7:5 ⁵ "Then my God put it into my heart..."

3. God leads through preaching: Never underestimate the eternal value of any particular church service. Many times, folks allow themselves to be diverted from a life-change God had planned for them. Take advantage of recordings or the web ministry.

Preaching is supernatural. God speaks through a man despite the man. God always makes His Word relevant and never has it return void; He works it in every listening heart as it gets delivered by the Spirit.

Psalms 37:4-5 ⁴ "Delight yourself also in the LORD, And He shall give you the desires of your heart. ⁵ Commit your way to the LORD, Trust also in Him, And He shall bring *it* to pass." {Commit is once; trust is ongoing}

Don't be found saying, "I'm guilty of making major decisions without really taking God's will into serious consideration...seeking the face of God." Rather, let it be, "There's a major decision looming and I want to find and do God's will, whatever it is".

Colossians 1:9-11 ⁹ "For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; ¹⁰ that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing *Him*, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; ¹¹ strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy."

That is success!