

GUIDANCE: KNOWING GOD'S WILL PART 2

July 30, 2017 | Pastor Randy Remington

Last week we began our study on God's guidance and knowing God's will. This is the second part of a three-part series on this important subject.

We don't want to waste our lives; at the end we will ask did we fulfill his purpose for our lives. So today we will see some practical, yet powerful biblical truths that will clarify these things for us.

Last week we established out of Proverbs 16, that we must surrender and submit to God and he will guide us. But we also saw that on this journey we will face trials and tribulations that will build character in us.

"Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and he will establish your plans." (Proverbs 16:3)

Think about this as we begin today, God doesn't tell you every minute of every day what to do or where to go. We don't do this with our own children because they would never mature, never grow up.

Let's first look at Ephesians;

"In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will," (Ephesians 1:11)

Maybe you're like most of us, you have asked; "what is my purpose, what is God's will for my life"? Make no mistake, our life isn't some meaningless existence or an accident, God was shaping your future before you were even born. Before anything in this life, God had a plan and a purpose for your life.

Think about the author of these writings. Paul finished his last days in a dark prison in Rome Italy before he was put to death. Peter would eventually be in the same prison.



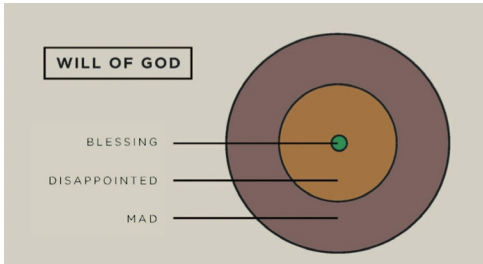
This was a prison that was underground, dark and cold. Paul might have wondered, "is this God's plan for me"? Maybe he thinks, I'm following God, but did I miss his plan, his path for me? But as we know, it would be in this place he would write letters to the scattered churches that would lay crucial foundation for the church throughout the centuries.



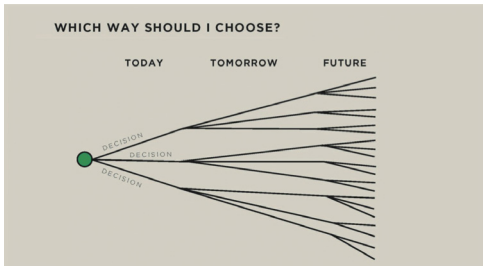
In this photo, we see a hill overlooking this prison. This is a place where the Emperors lived. We begin to understand that these buildings were a "picture" of the power of Rome.

To most, it appears that the prisoner in this narrative (who was walking in God's purposes and will) would be overshadowed by this power. But in reality, that prisoner walking in God's purpose, was far more important than anything going on in this empire.

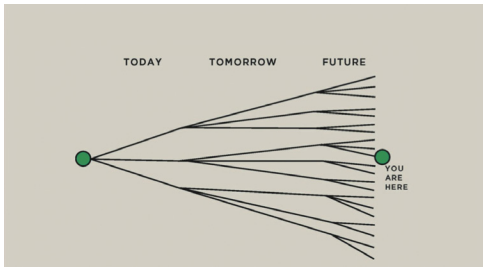
Let's look at the next few graphs' that may help us see how we view the issue of God's will and purpose for us:



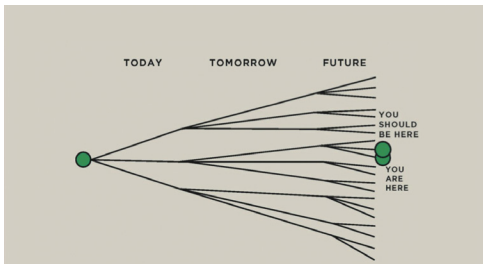
In this graph, we see the green dot as, what some call "the perfect will of God". I'm sure that some, maybe many have viewed God's will in this way. But it's such a small target, what if we miss it, it will be exhausting trying to find it and continually walking in that "perfect place".



So it doesn't end there, look at this next graph:

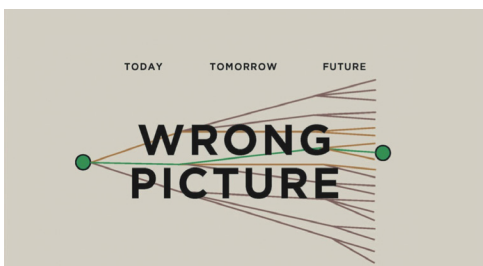


When we make choices in life, with this view we begin to wonder about the effects of our choice/s. It can make our heads spin with the possibilities of different choices and where we might end up. We begin to wonder which path will bring us to the "perfect path" and we end up here:



With all the various possible outcomes of our decisions, is this the right place, the perfect place or did we get off course?

All of this questioning and wondering if we're in the right place, it can be very confusing and certainly exhausting. Here is the truth about viewing God's will this way:



This is the wrong "picture", the wrong perspective because it's focused on the wrong things. Let's look first at two commands regarding your future and three facts regarding your future.

TWO COMMANDS REGARDING YOUR FUTURE:

1. DON'T WORRY (BE ANXIOUS)

"Decisions lead to more decisions, which lead to more decisions and I wonder did I make the "right decision" which leads to worry"

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”
(Matthew 6:25-34)

“Don’t seek your future, seek the kingdom”

You can’t control the future or the outcome, you can only live in the present, you can only live in today.

2. DON’T BE PRESUMPTUOUS

“Now listen, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.” Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, “If it is the Lord’s will, we will live and do this or that.” (James 4:14-15)

“Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring.” (Proverbs 27:1)

He did not promise you a tomorrow.

“But as he left, he promised, “I will come back if it is God’s will.” Then he set sail from Ephesus.” (Acts 18:21)

THREE FACTS REGARDING YOUR FUTURE:

1. GOD’S WILL FOR YOUR LIFE WAS ESTABLISHED IN YOUR MOTHER’S WOMB AND HAS NEVER CHANGED.

“The word of the Lord came to me, saying, 5 “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.” (Jeremiah 1:4-5)

Don’t be robbed of how God made you. Many times we think other people’s giftedness is better than what God gave us. We compare ourselves with others and lose the joy he has for us and others; we feel sometimes that God wasn’t fair to us.

2. GOD LOVES YOU AND THINKS ABOUT YOUR FUTURE.

“For I know the plans (thoughts) I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” (Jeremiah 29:11)

Sometimes we believe God is thinking, “you have failed”, “you’re no good”. God says; “you don’t know my thoughts, that’s not what I’m thinking”. He says in Jeremiah 29, “I know my thoughts for you; they’re for your good”.

“When we’re going in the wrong direction, he’s already thought of how to bring us back”

“How precious to me are your thoughts, God! How vast is the sum of them! Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand— when I awake, I am still with you.” (Psalm 139:13-18)

“What if the reason that God is so silent about His will for tomorrow and so clear on His will for today is because that doing His will today will shape our tomorrow?”

God doesn't give us a formula for tomorrow, just for today. We get so preoccupied with the future we don't embrace today and living in his kingdom today.

The little choices we make every day affect the big picture and the future.

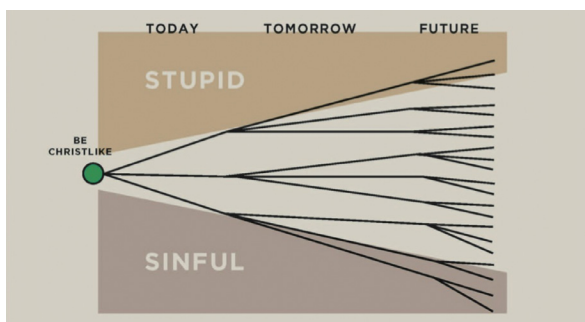
“We think long and hard when we choose a college, a career or a spouse. This makes good sense considering how consequential these choices are. But we give little thought to how much t.v. we watch, or (how much time we spend on social media) or how seldom we praise our children. Yet the little choices we make every day have a cumulative effect far exceeding the consequences of the big choices we occasionally have to make...we don't have to fret when we have to make big decisions about the future, about the terrifying possibility that we might miss God's will for our lives. We need to simply do what we already know to do in the present. God has been clear where clarity is most needed. The choices we make every day - to love our spouses after an argument, to treat an unkind co-worker with respect, to serve food at a soup kitchen - determine whether or not we are doing the will of God. If we have a problem, it is not a lack of knowledge; rather it is an unwillingness to respond to the knowledge that we already have.”

Jerry Sittser, (The will of God as a way of life 23, 24)

***“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”
(Matthew 6:33)***

“God's will is that you would grow in Christ like character, that you would become more like Jesus, that you would seek His Kingdom first and keep God as the absolute center of your life”

3. **“OUR MISTAKES AND THE DEVIL'S ATTACKS DON'T CANCEL OUT GOD'S WILL FOR OUR LIVES”**

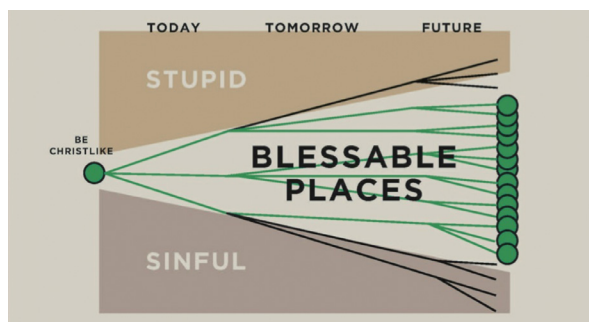


Use this as a starting point, be “Christ-like. There are two things (above) that will take us off-course, but we can still repent and get back on course.

“For God's gifts and his call are irrevocable.” (Romans 11:29)

“I will be found by you,” declares the Lord, “and will bring you back from captivity. I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have banished you,” declares the Lord, “and will bring you back to the place from which I carried you “into exile.” (Jeremiah 29:14)

“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.” (Romans 8:28)



So instead of looking at God's will as a perfect spot that is hard to hit and one wrong decision can send you careening off-course, let's look at it this way:

There will be big, life changing decisions that will require us to earnestly seek the Lord and clearly hear his voice. Then, at times, there may be many options and sometimes God wants us to make a decision. He may ask what is in your heart...what has God put in your heart? Sometimes his will for us is to choose.

We need to understand that even in the "blessable places", that are good decisions, you may still suffer trials and tribulation (Joseph and Potiphar).

So our first decision is to be Christ-like and surrender everything to him; our families, our career's, our finances, our dreams, everything.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Take another look at our Ephesians verse on page 1. Maybe you have asked or wondered; "what is my purpose, what is God's will for my life"? Discuss what you see in this verse about your life and purpose. As you discuss, talk about the fact that you are not an "accident", living a meaningless existence. What does the scripture tell you about how God has shaped your future before you were even born and before anything in this life God had a plan and a purpose for your life?
2. Take another look at the first picture of the prison room that both Paul and Peter stayed in before their deaths. Since both were only human do you wonder if they both thought; "is this God's plan for me"? Maybe they were thinking, I'm following God, but did I miss his plan, his path for me? Have you ever been in a place like this? Wondering if you missed God's will and purpose? Maybe you are there now, after you finish the study ask the group to pray for you.
3. Randy presented how some, maybe many, look at God's will. Please discuss the first graph and how difficult it is to find the small green dot, better known as "God's perfect will". We then look at page 4 and the second graph and how many choices we're faced with. Also on page 5, the third and fourth graph, we wonder where we will end up and then if we're in the right spot? Does any of this sound familiar? The fifth graph on page 6 wraps it up, "it is the wrong picture" (or perspective).
4. There is listed two commands, "Don't Worry" and "Don't be presumptuous". What do these mean to you and how can we avoid doing them?
5. We see three facts regarding your future. Please discuss each:
 - God's will for your life was established in your mother's womb and has never changed.
 - God loves you and thinks about your future
 - Our mistakes and the Devil's attacks don't cancel out God's will for our lives
6. Let's get a correct perspective of God's will in our lives. Discuss together, instead of us looking at God's will as a perfect spot that is hard to hit and one wrong decision can send you careening off-course, let's look at it a different way. What does it mean to you to walk in "Blessable places", our first decision is to be Christ-like and surrender everything to him?