

If you could ask God a question – what would you ask? Would you ask about creation? How He flung the stars in place? The Cross? His return? What would you ask?

A few yrs. ago a *USA Today* survey asked the question – If you could ask God one question what would you ask? 4/10 Americans surveyed said *they'd want to know what God's will and purpose was for their life.*

As a pastor this is easily the single most asked question I receive. How can I know God's will? What is God's call on my life? Sadly, for most people, God's will is like a spiritual game of **Pin-the-tail-on-the-Donkey**. They feel like they've been blindfolded, spun in circles, and left to find their own way in pinning their life precisely to His perfect plan.

For yrs, this is how I felt trying to decipher God's will for my life – I felt like I was stammering in the dark trying to find a needle in a haystack – **only to realize what I was really doing was projecting my ambitions on God expecting Him to join me in my life pursuits.**

Last Sunday we embarked on a 3-week journey entitled, *Kaleo* to bring clarity to God's will and calling on our lives. Kaleo is the Greek word meaning – *to this you were called.*

I believe God has called us to be a people in relationship, on mission w/ Him. His wants us to know Him, honor Him, serve Him and share Him – and **it is His will to reveal His will to anyone who is willing to do His will.**

A person's Divine call is their customized life direction and purpose as ordained by God. It's the way they're to bring God the greatest glory and achieve the maximum expansion of His kingdom. A person's Divine calling is intended always to bring about God's glory and fulfill His kingdom agenda. Therefore, to follow one's calling is to live in a way that God's kingdom is put on display for all to see. *T. Evans*

Point – God's will for my life is **ALWAYS** about God more than it is about me. And if I'll surrender my will for His will, I will discover His Calling; but when I place my will above His will, He's obligated to allow me to miss His will.

Sadly, too many of us are living w/out a sense of God's purpose b/c we've learned to live independent of His will by defining our existence by our *occupational advances*, *personal achievements*, and *life acquirements*. So we've settled for a life of human ability and have **missed out on our kingdom calling.** **But it is never too late to start.**

So here's a thought – if God's will is the best way – then every minute of every day we operate outside his will is a wasted day.

Last week we talked about the scope of God's will. Few things in the Christian life are misunderstood like **finding God's will**. The big thing to remember is that **God's will isn't lost!** It's just the opposite. God wants us to know, experience, and live His will.

God's will occurs on (3) levels simultaneously – the **providential, prescriptive, and personal** will of God.

The **Providential Will** of God includes those things God has created and set into motion that are beyond man's insight, understanding, and prevue. His Providential Will is everything under His sovereign rule and influence.

The **Prescriptive Will** of God is His general will as outlined in Scripture. It is truth that applies to everyone where God reveals right/wrong – good/evil – of God/not of God.

The big thing to remember is no person has any influence over God's providential or prescriptive will – but only a choice of whether to respond to it and abide by it – or not. ***You can ignore it, but you can't change it.***

99% of God's will for our lives has been revealed in His Prescriptive Word. If He never spoke another word, we'd have enough to go on to live a God-honoring life.

The **Personal Will** of God is His specific plan/call to you. It is the 1% not revealed in His Word and the burning question w/in our souls. It is the purpose for our earthly existence.

Until a person is willing to follow God's prescriptive will they will never discover His personal will.

After last Sunday I've had several people say to me – “Okay pastor, I get God has a will/plan for my life that's about God – but how do I know when I've found it?”

Let me begin by saying that God's Will has nothing to do w/ some mystical voodoo, incantation, or circumstantial manipulation. **And b/c God's will is about God – God will make His will known when we respond to what He has already made known.**

Yet I think all too often we hear what we want to hear and see what we want to see – and then we make it God's will. We have to be careful to not place circumstances and personal want ahead of the obvious.

Example – I heard guy driving in Washington, DC who was struggling w/ what to do w/ his life. As he prayed and drove, his car broke down in front of the Philippine embassy. From there, He became convinced God was telling him to go to the Philippines as a missionary. Can you say NOKE!

I read about a woman who wanted to take a trip to Europe but wasn't sure if it was God's will. She wanted to fly on a 747 to London and enjoy a week-long vacation. But she wasn't sure if she should do it, so she struggled to sleep that night. But when she woke up the next AM, she knew God's answer b/c the time on her alarm clock was 7:47.

Now you might think this is ridiculous – but I see and hear about people taking this approach all the time.

Where do we begin? We begin w/ Scripture – what we know. We begin w/ **Proverbs 3/16**. We begin w/ **Romans 12**.

I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. Rm. 12:1-2

From these passages we see that God authors a number of legitimate questions – that if we'd just ask them and be honest w/ the answers – we will see His will for us.

I Will It GLORIFY Me or God?

...offer your bodies as a living sacrifice holy and pleasing to God; this is your true and proper worship...

offer – to give or lay down. *It's a volitional act.* To discover God's will requires the formal surrender of your life. You have to raise the white flag – and say, “I'm no longer going to do life my way on my terms, but according to God's way – on His terms.

The will of God is not something you add to your life. It is a course you choose. You either line yourself w/ the Son of God... or you capitulate to the principles which govern the rest of the world. *Elisabeth Elliot*

And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Colossians 3:17

If God's Will is about God and not about me, then the answer should be fairly obvious – if we will be honest.

II Will It HELP Me be Like the Word or the World?

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...

There are (2) things to note if we're going to live in submission to God – we can't be *conformed* to the world b/c we're being *transformed* by His Word.

Both words are *passive verbs* in the Greek meaning the action happens to the subject from an outside source instead of the subject doing the action.

conformed – don't let the world stuff you into its mold.

Like a child cramming Play-doh into the mold forcing it to respond to the mold.

This is what the world does to us. From Madison Ave. to Wall St. to Rodeo Dr. – the world seeks to tell us what to think, what to believe, and how to live and act.

transformed (*metamorphosis*) refers to the transformation of a caterpillar into a butterfly – the idea is to sculpt. Thus instead of the world seeking to stuff us into its mold, God wants to shape and mold us into His image.

How does God do this? He does it through His Word. God transforms our lives through Scripture.

2 Tim. 3:16-17 – *All Scripture is God breathed...*

Ps. 119:105 - *Your word is a lamp to my feet...*

Hb. 4:12 – *The Word of God is quick and powerful...*

If you're trying to find God's will w/out consulting His Word – you're like a blind man trying to find a hidden door in a dark room.

III What Advice does GODLY Counsel Offer?

Plans fail for lack of counsel, but w/ many advisers they succeed. Pr. 15:22

The way of a fool seems right to him, but a wise man listens to Godly advice. Pr. 12:15

We seek advice from parents, friends, kids, colleagues, pastors, etc. God's encourages us to seek the advice of Godly people. **Seek the counsel of people who'll tell you what you need to hear and not what you want to hear.**

1 Are they GODLY

Do you know this person walks w/ God? Not – are they perfect but are they Godly? Do you see the tangible evidence of the fruit of the Spirit?

2 Are they TRUSTWORTHY

Do they possess confidentiality? Are you certain they can keep a secret and not use your concern against you?

3 Are they OBJECTIVE

When you lay out all the fact – can they refrain from being subjective and give you what you need to hear?

4 Are they MISSIONAL

Are they concerned about your intimacy w/ God? Will they take into account how their counsel is going to impact God's Kingdom in your life and thru your life?

5 Are they ENCOURAGING

Are they willing to do more than just point you in the right direction? Are they willing to walk w/ you and hold you accountable?

Never turn to someone who doesn't have the ability to help you b/c they only have the ability to hurt you.

IV What do My GIFTS and ABILITIES Affirm?

God has wired and gifted you to do His will. He has given you unique talents, abilities, and experiences to shape you into the person you've become to accomplish His will.

We'll talk about this more next week.

V Do You Sense the APPROVAL of the H.S.

In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps. Pr. 16:9

One of the jobs of the H.S. is to guide us. As we walk in stride w/ God, the H.S. nudges and leads us to the heart and will of the Father. **This leads us to a decision:**

- 1 – **REJECT** it – God, No thanks.
- 2 – **REVISE** it – Thanks God, but I got this.
- 3 – **RECEIVE** it – Thanks God, I will follow.

But also – thru the H.S., God gives us His peace.

Now may the Lord of Peace Himself give you His peace at all times in every way. 2 Thes. 3:16

The will of God will never lead you where the peace of God will not keep you.

Trust the Lord w/ all your heart...

God's concern is the process He is taking us through to mature and ready us to make us more like His Son. *Swindoll*