

5 Helpful Questions When Discerning God's Will

I am often asked how to know if the plans we make are God's will for our life.

I'm not referring to which cereal to have for breakfast. For the most part, I think God would simply say choose your favorite and, like a good parent, try to steer you to a healthier option. I'm talking about those life-altering decisions, such as career choice, relationships or decisions requiring huge steps of faith.

Most of us want to do God's will, and yet, as I view Scripture, God seems to give us a tremendous amount of freedom to choose the paths in our life. If you're like me, you're fully capable of making a mistake. I've made many doing things my own way.

It seems easier for me when I have some sort of structure through which to process a decision. Years ago I began to ask myself questions when facing major options in my life.

Here are five helpful questions I often ask myself to help discern God's will:

1. Does what I'm doing, or planning to do, conflict with Scripture? Always start here, because God's Word will never contradict what He's asking you to do. God is always true to Himself and His Word is always true and relevant. We may differ in interpretation of a passage, but if it's clearly spelled out in Scripture, then we clearly know His will.

2. Does what I am doing conflict with the counsel of others? God uses others to confirm His will. I am thankful for the people in my life, including my wife and sons, who have helped shaped the path of my life. Often they see things I can't see

or believe in me when I can't believe in myself. God sends the body of Christ to encourage, challenge and strengthen the body. Don't be confused, however, with times God calls us to go against the grain of life and walk by faith when everyone is saying we are crazy. See Noah for an example of one of those times.

3. Does what I am doing conflict with the Spirit within me?

God sent the Holy Spirit as a helper. He guides us with an inner peace or a holy unrest. If Christ is in you, He will not leave you to make a decision completely alone. Often God provides a peace or a lack thereof when He is trying to confirm His will.

4. Does what I am doing conflict with my life experience?

God uses our experiences in life to teach and mold us to His will. Often it isn't as unusual of a path when we look back over our life experiences. Again, don't be confused, because He usually stretches us out of our comfort zone also, but consider the life of Joseph. God continually used his past experiences to shape his future.

5. Does what I am doing conflict with my passion for life?

God tends to work with the things that fuel our fire. He loves when we are energized for the tasks He calls us to. When I look at Bible characters like Abraham, David, Peter or Paul it appears their calling matched their wiring. Paul was zealous for whatever he did. God used his passion for good. What's your greatest passion? God may work within it to confirm His will.

Try those questions together and see how they line up to help discern God's will as it relates to the options before you.

I should encourage you in closing with this: I fully believe God works all things for good even when we miss His will in individual decisions. You can make a bad decision, but God retains the right to finish your story His way. Proverbs 16:9

says, "A man's heart devises his way, but the Lord directs his steps."

You may also want to read [7 Ways to Distinguish God's Voice from the Circumstances of Life](#). {eo}

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