

How You Can Know if God Is Truly Guiding You

Let me begin by applauding your desire to know God's will; this is often a sign of spiritual health. God guides those who are willing to follow.

When it comes to knowing God's will, more often than not, unless it's written in His Word, there are no specific answers. For instance, the Bible doesn't say whom to marry or where to work, but it does offer important principles that lead you in the right direction.

However, there are other areas that are clearly God's will for our lives: to be saved and to worship Him, to be holy and set apart for His glory, to be filled continually with the Holy Spirit, to witness to others, to make disciples, and so on. (Refer to I Tim. 2:4; I Thess. 4:3-7; Eph. 5:17-18; and Matt. 28:19.)

Although this article will not outline God's specific will for your life, it will provide guidance for the journey. The best way to know God's will is to be filled with His Spirit, pray for direction and obey His Word.

For example, I'm alarmed at the number of couples who are convinced that God is leading them toward marriage, yet they engage in premarital sex and are considering living together before marriage. I'm equally amazed at the number of people who don't have a servant's heart, who don't apply the Word, who don't spend time in prayer, who don't display humility and yet think the Spirit is leading them.

Let me be clear: God directs us to make wise decisions that correspond with His Word. Disobedience leads to disappointment. Ask, "Is God truly guiding me?" before making an important decision. Furthermore, if you're not in the Word,

the Word won't be in you.

One of the best ways to know if God is truly guiding you is to pray, stay and obey—stay in His Word; obey His principles and ask for direction. “God is more likely to direct me through wise teaching than through inner voices” (J.I. Packer). Packer isn't discounting the work of the Holy Spirit, but he is cautioning against “inner voice” impulses fueled by man's sinful nature and desires.

Unfortunately, Satan, the world and our flesh all work against us: God's leading calms your heart, but the flesh wants to rush. God leads, but Satan pushes. God calms, but the flesh obsesses. God encourages, the world discourages. God reassures, the world frightens. God enlightens, Satan confuses. God convicts, Satan condemns.

The need to stay, pray and obey is absolutely vital when it comes to knowing God and His will. The Word opens spiritually blind eyes; it leads us in the right direction; it conquers deception; it crucifies sin instead of justifying it; it exposes instead of excuses; it prevents danger instead of leading us in to it.

Often, we follow the wrong voice—the wrong “god” because we live in deception—hearing but not doing (see James 1:22). Worshiping God and applying the Word saturate our spiritual lives, much like allowing a slow dripping water source to renew a dying bush. A plant that was once dead, barren and unfruitful can once again be alive, active and fruitful. And so can you: “The world has yet to see what God can do with a man [or woman] who is fully committed to Him” (encouraging words said to D.L. Moody).

Satan's ultimate plan is to distance us from God—to kill, steal, and destroy” (John 10:10). A study Bible offers these five points: 1. Doubt: Makes you question God and His goodness. 2. Discouragement: Makes you look at your problems

rather than God. 3. Diversion: Makes the wrong things seem attractive so that we want them more than the right things. 4. Defeat: Makes you feel like a failure so that you don't even try. 5. Delay: Makes you put off doing something God wants you to do so that it never gets done.

Sin is deceptive. It blinds, leads us away from God, deceives us into a false sense of security, justifies poor choices, excuses wrong behavior and prevents us from fulfilling the will of God. The application of God's Word redirects and brings clarity and joy to our lives.

Imagine how much more encouraging it will be when you begin to saturate yourself with God's Word every day and remove many of the distractions and discouragements of life. Begin today.

If you're searching for God, I encourage you to look to the one who has the answers and surrender your life to Him. No matter what you have done or have experienced, you can turn to Christ and start anew: "If you confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved" (Rom. 10:9).

One famous quote captures it well: "A true measure of a person is not who they were, but who they will become." It's all about Who you know! {eoa}

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