

The Difference Between God's Good Will and His Perfect Will

God has a wonderful plan for our lives. But because He has given us the freedom to choose whether or not we are going to follow His will, there are four possibilities for discovering and responding to it.

1. We could be content to remain ignorant of God's will. This is not you because if it were, you wouldn't be reading this article right now. You obviously have a deep desire in your heart to discover God's will for your life, and you are going to make that discovery.

2. We could know what God wants us to do but choose to disobey Him and do things our own way instead. This is disobedience, and it is the head-on collision between God's will and the stubborn rebellion of human flesh.

3. We could know God's will and follow it in part but settle for less than what God had in mind. This is the biggest challenge most people face. You wouldn't be reading this article if you weren't interested in finding God's will. But settling for less than God's best for our lives is often the easy road, and good things are often the greatest enemy of the best things.

4. We can choose to contend for nothing less than God's best in our lives. This is the big challenge for many people, because impatience is a powerful force, especially when it comes to getting what we want. But if we really believe God has a perfect will for us and that His will is always better than ours, we will keep waiting for it and will fight for it if necessary.

There is a perpetual conflict in the Christian life between what is good and what is God. For example, I have seen Christians marry the wrong spouse because they were unwilling to wait for God to bring the right one along. God allowed them to do what they wanted—and in some cases even turned bad situations around for His glory.

Yet whenever we choose to disobey and do things our own way, something is lost that can never be restored. God will forgive and heal, but He will not turn back the hands of time. I wonder sometimes if one day the Lord will show us what our lives would have been like and how He would have blessed us if only we had obeyed.

A well-known poem written by an unknown author says:

When I stand at the judgment seat of Christ,
and He shows me His plan for me—
The plan of my life as it might have been
had He had His way—and I see
How I blocked Him here, and checked Him there
and would not yield my will,
Shall I see grief in my Savior's eyes;
grief, though He loves me still?
He would have me rich, but I stand there poor,
stripped of all but His grace—
While my memory runs like a hunted thing,
down the paths I can't retrace.
Then my desolate heart will well nigh break
with tears that I cannot shed.
I'll cover my face with my empty hands
and bow my uncrowned head.
Now, Lord of the life that's left to me,
I yield it to Thy hand.
Take me, make me, mold me,
to the pattern Thou hast planned.

God has a “good” will for your life, but He also has a

“perfect” will. His perfect will and the blessings that accompany it are reserved for those who are willing to be radically obedient and to wait when necessary. Those who are slow to learn this lesson will make many trips through the wilderness and endure much unnecessary hurt and loss.

There are moments when God’s way will seem so difficult, so prolonged and so unrewarding, while our idea will seem much easier, much quicker and so much more enjoyable. But that is only an illusion. Looking back, we will always find that God’s plan was so much better than ours. There will never be an exception to this rule, so you might as well decide from now on to yield to God’s will, to do it God’s way and to wait for God’s best.

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