

The Key to Finding God's Purpose For Your Life

Many people ask themselves, "What is God's will for my life?" I've asked this many times. We want to know why we are on earth. We desire to know our unique purpose.

William Barclay says, "There are two great days in a person's life—the day we are born and the day we discover why." It's the "why" that gives us a mission. It's understanding the "why" that sets our feet in motion as we work to live up to our God-given potential.

The why of our existence starts with the heart. "Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life," we read in Proverbs 4:23.

Want to know why a man does what he does? Look at his heart. As I learned as a child, "What goes in is what comes out." And what come out explains a lot about what we believe about what our purpose is in life.

Many times when we are seeking God's will, we want to know what He want us to do as individuals. Yet even more helpful is understanding what God has done and what He desires to do in our generation.

Henry Blackaby says, "You need to see the heart of God. What has God always been looking for? Then, what does God look for when He comes to your life? What is He looking for in our generation? Does any of this match your life—not because you say it does, but because God has confirmed it Himself?"

As I thought about this, I realized that for all generations, God's heart has desired a few things:

- Faithfulness in His followers
- Men and women to raise their children in righteousness (right living)

- His Word—truth—to go out to the nations

God's will for my life will line up with His will for the world. The "why" behind "why I was born" will line up with God's "why" for every believer.

This makes me think of my own life. As a servant of God, I am called to understand His heart for all generations. And I am called to listen and obey to my part in seeing His will come to pass.

God spoke of this type of calling for His prophet and priest Samuel: "Then I'll establish for myself a true priest. He'll do what I want him to do, be what I want him to be. I'll make his position secure and he'll do his work freely in the service of my anointed one" (1 Sam. 2:35, MSG).

Many times we want to know God's will so we can set to work at tasks for God. We think of it like getting a homework assignment: "Do this, this and this, and you're good to go."

Instead, God's will is following God's heart. It's allowing God to fill us and work through us, moment by moment. This might look differently throughout our lives. Sometimes we call this "seasons of service." But even though the outward expression of how we are to love and serve others changes, the focus really is loving and serving as an outpouring of God in us.

In my life, I've had seasons of service. I've written various books and articles. I've helped launch a crisis pregnancy center. I've mentored young mothers around the country. I've raised kids in four different decades. (Wow, that makes me sound old!)

God's will wasn't following those specific tasks. God's will was knowing His heart and stepping out to serve as I felt Him leading me at the moment. It's not getting homework or marching orders; it's staying so connected with the heart of God that I understand His still, small voice directing me day by day.

As an author of 40 books, I understand this. I don't know every word that will fill the book when I start page 1. Instead, I trust that the story will unfold one word at a time.

When it comes to God's will, knowing His will isn't about a calling for our whole lives, but rather tuning in to the Author of life and allowing the story of our lives to unfold as we connect with Jesus, the Word.

I am not called to write; I am called to be a servant of God.

I am not called to be a Christian, home-schooling mom; I am called to be a servant of God.

I am not called to be a godly wife; I am called to be a servant of God.

I am not called to start a crisis pregnancy center, mentor teen moms, lead Bible studies, go on mission trips, care for my aging grandmother or adopt children; I am called to be a servant of God.

Because I married, my service to God means serving my husband. Because I have children, my service to God means loving them and raising them to know Him.

During moments in my life, my service to God has meant helping to start a crisis pregnancy center, mentoring teenage moms, leading Bible studies, going on mission trips, caring for my elderly grandmother and adopting children. But those are just an outpouring of God in me, of my heart understanding His.

God didn't give me a list of marching orders to check off. Instead, I've dug into His Word and have grown in my relationship with Him. As I've understood His heart, I've served Him in the ways He's brought before me, for His glory. It's saying yes to what's on His heart as He reveals it to me.

What I do comes out of who I am as a child of God.

Who I am comes out of where my heart is.

Where my heart is depends on how lined up I am with where God's heart is.

I discover God's heart when I read His Word, surround myself with His fellow servants and love and serve those around me who need His love and grace.

Where does this leave me? I cannot be proud of the things I do—of being a mom or an author or a mentor. Instead, it leaves me humble that God has chosen to love and serve through me. Instead, it continually takes me to my knees as I pray and ask Jesus to line up my heart with His.

What is God's will for your life? You'll discover the answer by first asking, "What is God's will?" and then by connecting with Him—in His Word, through prayer and through fellowship with other believers. It's only then that you'll follow His will in what He wants you to do and who He wants you to be today.

Tricia Goyer *has written more than 35 books, including novels that delight and entertain readers and nonfiction titles that offer encouragement and hope. She has also published more than 500 articles in national publications such as Guideposts, Thriving Family, Proverbs 31, and HomeLife Magazine.*