

Spirit-Filled Pastor: How to Hear God's Voice to Know His Will for Your Life

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. That's the first key—are you truly willing to obey, even if it's not what you want to hear?

Some Things Are Crystal Clear

When it comes to knowing God's will, His Word makes many things clear. For example, we are to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and we are to love others as we love ourselves. We are to repent of our sins and believe in Jesus Christ as our Savior.

We are to worship God and be holy and set apart for His glory. We are to be continually filled with the Holy Spirit. We are to do good deeds, witness to others and make disciples.

However, there are many circumstances in life in which the Bible does not give specific instruction. For instance, the Bible doesn't say who to marry or where to work. When there is no instruction regarding God's will on a specific topic, the Bible provides principles that will always lead you in the right direction.

If You're Not in the Word, the Word Won't be in You

Although I can't outline God's specific will for your life, God provides 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, they 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.

Before making an important decision, ask, "Is God truly guiding me?" If you're not sure, then wait. And always remember: If you're not in the Word, the Word won't be in you, and your spiritual vision will be very cloudy.

Three Keys: *Pray, Stay, Obey*

To reiterate: One of the best ways to know if God is truly guiding you is to pray, stay and obey—pray for direction, stay in His Word and obey His principles. J.I. Packer has said, "God is more likely to direct me through wise teaching than through inner voices." Packer isn't discounting the work of the Holy Spirit, but he is cautioning against "inner voice" impulses fueled by our own 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, but the world frightens. God enlightens: Satan confuses. God convicts: Satan condemns.

The need to pray, stay and obey is absolutely vital when it comes to knowing God's will—partial obedience is the same as disobedience. Obeying the Word leads us in the right direction. Truth conquers deception and exposes sin; it prevents danger instead of leading us into danger.

Hearing but Not Doing

Often, we follow the wrong voice because we live in deception. We hear but do not do (cf. James 1:22).

Worshiping God and applying the Word saturates our spiritual lives just like a slowly dripping water source renews a dying bush. A plant that was once dead, barren and unfruitful can once again be alive, active and fruitful as the result of being watered. You too can hear God's voice and regain lost ground by allowing the Word of God to saturate your heart and mind.

Satan's ultimate plan is to distance us from God and "to kill, steal, and destroy" (John 10:10). The NKJV Study Bible offers these five points in regard to how the enemy plants thoughts in our minds:

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.

The Slippery Slope of Sin

As noted earlier, sin is deceptive—it blinds our spiritual eyes and leads us away from God. It deceives us into a false sense of security while justifying poor choices. Sin excuses wrong behavior and prevents us from fulfilling the will of God, but obedience redirects us and brings clarity and joy to our lives.

Imagine how encouraging it will be when you saturate your mind with God's Word on a daily basis and remove many of the

distractions and discouragements of life. Begin today.

Hearing a Familiar Voice

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 get on the right track: "If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved" (Rom. 10:9, NKJV).

Once you know the Good Shepherd, then you will hear His voice and know His will. Jesus said, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me" (John 10:27).

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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