

## WEEK FIVE: Why You Don't Have to 'Find God's Will for Your Life'; Or, How Faith Seeks Wisdom (Ch. 4)

*Recap from last week:* "His working does not take away from our working but gives it being. It's not like: the more he does, the less we do. On the contrary, in the great saints he works mightily precisely in the greatness of *their* work. . . . In his redemption we don't disappear but **become our true selves**, the new selves he has called us to be in Christ." (53, 56)

**Do I need to find God's will for my life? How do I know it?** Remember past discussions of these "how do I know?" questions: what are they a sign of? why are they almost always a sign of something gone wrong?

### Take a Step Back - Which "Will" are We Talking About?

1. **All Things:** God's will of decree – whatever comes to pass – this *cannot* be thwarted - Eph. 1.11, Ac. 4.27-8, the cross!
2. **Holy Things:** God's will of desire – what God has commanded – how things ought to be – this *can* be thwarted – 1Jn. 2.15-7, Heb 13. 20-21, Matt. 7.21
3. **Deciding Things:** God's will of direction – what we normally mean when we're "looking for God's will" – he has a specific plan for us, but doesn't expect us to know it beforehand! "It's an extra kind of 'will of God' that is not found in the Bible That is to say, it doesn't really exist. And that's good news. It means that we are allowed to make our own decisions like responsible moral agents" (59).
  1. "Because we have confidence in God's will of decree (1), we can **radically commit** ourselves to His will of desire (2), without fretting over a hidden will of direction (3)." - Kevin DeYoung, *Just Do Something*
  2. Rethink Jeremiah 29.11 - "*For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.*" "God knows these plans, and Israel doesn't. He doesn't in fact reveal much about them. . . . The point is to assure these suffering people, whom God has sent into exile in Babylon, that his ultimate intention for them is not harm and trouble but peace and prosperity. . . . they do not say exactly what God's plans are, *nor do they tell us that we are supposed to find out.* God knows his plans, and that is enough." (60)
    1. "**God is not a Magic 8-Ball** we shake up and peer into whenever we have a decision to make. He is a good God who gives us brains, shows us the way of obedience, and invites us to **take risks for Him.**" – DeYoung

### Obeying God's Will

1. "If you obey these [love] commandments, which are the heart of the law of God, then you are doing all that is required of you. Anyone who tells you that you need to do more in order to be 'in the will of God' is teaching you falsehood. Be free of such falsehood! Obey the law of God instead and you have enough to do for a lifetime" (63).

2. **Adulthood** - "It means we may grow up and think like adults, making responsible decisions rather than pretending to let God decide for us. We find God's will for our lives by obeying His commandments, including his commandment to seek wisdom."
  1. "I once heard a student put it this way: 'It's not about understanding; it's about trusting God.' But that's an attempt to spare what God has joined together. For if you trust and obey the Lord you will see that it *is* about understanding (Prov. 4.5-7)." (71-2)
3. **Prioritize** what Scripture prioritizes in the same proportion - "The most important issues for God are moral purity, theological fidelity, compassion, joy, our witness, faithfulness, hospitality, love, worship, and faith. These are His big concerns. The problem is that we tend to focus most of our attention on everything else. We obsess over the things God has not mentioned and may never mention, while, by contrast, we spend little time on all the things God has already revealed to us in the Bible." - DeYoung
  1. "So the end of the matter is this: Live for God. Obey the Scriptures. Think of others before yourself. Be holy. Love Jesus. And as you do these things, do whatever else you like (job), with whomever you like (marriage), wherever you like (place), and you'll be walking in the will of God." - DeYoung
4. **Vocation** means that we can glorify God in any job (that is not *necessarily* sinful); it does *not* mean that only one job could be for us - we turn upside down what the idea of vocation was meant to teach when we focus it on us, rather than God

### How God Guides Our Decisions:

1. **Providence** at all times - whoa!! - Even before we believe
  1. Intentional thought and discernment - consider the gifts God has given, the passions you have, the nature/place of your family, ways God has made and prepared you to serve uniquely, etc.
2. **In Christ and thru the Scriptures** - He does not promise to use any other means
3. **In Community** - thru solid relationships of mentoring and pastoring
4. **Prayer:**
  1. For **illumination** - to open Scripture to our minds and hearts; and how to apply it
  2. For **wisdom**
  3. For things you **already know** are God's will - purity, humility, evangelizing, etc.
  4. *Not* for God to specially reveal the future or write our papers for us
5. **For example: Deciding on a Job (Similar principles hold for marriage, etc.)**
  1. Search the Scriptures for *principles*
  2. Consider the churches in the place where you are going
  3. Get wise counsel from others about what you do well and don't do well
  4. Prayer - see above
  5. Decide!