

## INTRODUCTION

Today we want to talk about “How to Find God’s Will.” If any of you have ever taken “Experiencing God,” Henry Blackaby points out that the most important question is not “What is God’s will for my life?” because that puts too much emphasis on me and my life. The question is “What is God’s will?” Then I bring my life in line with His will. So many people talk about God’s will. They say, “It must have been the will of the Lord,” or “That’s just God’s will,” and there is a lot of confusion about it. Some people think God’s will is hidden and you have to work hard to find it, like an Easter egg hunt. I know we used to hide eggs in the backyard and we would have our girls come out and they’d search around with their little Easter baskets and find the eggs hidden behind the trees and in the bushes and we’d say, “You’re getting hotter. You’re getting hotter. You’re getting cold.” and they would find every one of those eggs except the one that I would always find with the lawn mower the first time I cut the grass after Easter. Some people think God’s will is like a cosmic Easter egg hunt that God has hidden it from you behind some obscure bush of truth. No, friend. God has not hidden his will from you. He’s trying to make it abundantly clear to you. He wants you to know his will and to do his will and that’s what we’ll talk about today.

Let’s look at Ephesians 5:17. “Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is.” I’m going to make a profound statement at the beginning and I’m going to tell you it’s profound because if I didn’t tell you, you wouldn’t recognize it as being profound: The will of God for every child of God is to be in the will of God. I said you wouldn’t recognize it as being profound. It is the will of God for every child of God to be in the will of God and there is a line is drawn down this congregation and down everybody listening to me today—either you are on one side of the line or the other. You are either in God’s will right now or you are out of God’s will one or the other.

## I. THE DESCRIPTION OF GOD’S WILL

### 1. God’s Will is personal

Let’s talk about the description of God’s will. How can you understand God’s will? Let me give you three words to describe God’s will. Number one God’s will is personal. God has a will for your life. Jeremiah 29:11 is one of my favorite verses and I know because many of you have told me this that this is your life verse. “‘For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.’” Sometimes people have a hard time understanding that because they picture God as some impersonal force on the back side of the universe who is really not concerned about the details of their life. But, God is a God of details. He has the ability to be concerned about your life while he is running the entire universe. Our sun keeps all the planets in our solar system in orbit, but you can walk outside and that sun will warm your face as if it has nothing else to do and God, who has created at least sixteen octillion stars in this universe, who keeps the universe together, he will lead you and guide you personally as if he had nothing else in the universe to do. God is a God of details and he has the details of your life planned if you’ll just get in on it.

Jesus said, “Every hair on your head is numbered.” This morning when I stood at the sink God

said there goes number 12,916 right down the drain. Every one of your hairs is numbered. He is concerned about the details of your life. God’s will is personal.

## **2. God’s Will is progressive**

Number two. God’s will is progressive. God leads you step by step. Romans 1:17 says, “a righteousness from God is revealed by faith from first to last.” In other words, God gives you one step of faith and if you’ll take that step, he’ll show you another step of faith. Here’s the problem. Here you are at point A and you want to know what point Z is. What is God’s ultimate plan for your life? It’s to conform you to the image of Jesus Christ, but he’s not even going to show you what point Z is until you are willing to take a step for B, C, D...step by step. Most people want to know the three biggies for God’s will, especially teenagers and college students, they want to know vocation, location and unification. What do you want me to do? Where do you want me to live? Whom do you want me to marry? That’s unification. They want to know what God’s will is? Those are down the line and you have to follow him one step at a time. If you don’t meet the basic requirements of the plans he has for your life, he will not reveal the other things to you. It’s like you have to learn your ABCs before you can read, and as tedious as it may be to say, “A B C D” you have to master that before you can read. You have to learn the numerals before you can do math and as tedious as it may be to learn 1, 2, 3, 4, that’s a pre-requisite. If you ever want to learn to play music, you have to learn the scale. There are only 8 notes. Just think about what Beethoven did with those 8 notes. Just think about what Elvis did with only 2 of them. You have to learn the basics of music before you can move on.

God has some basics. For instance 2 Peter 3:9, “God is not wanting anyone to perish.” The very first thing I can assure you of today is that it is God’s will for you to be a Christian. If you are not a Christian, don’t ask God what he wants you to do, where he wants you to live, whom he wants you to marry. He’s not going to reveal that until you get these basics down. His will is progressive step by step. Some of you are saying, “I’m in trouble because at one time in my life I really got off track. I got completely out of God’s will.” You may be thinking, “I’m out of God’s will now. Has God totally disqualified me? Has he just marked me off his list? Is there no hope for my life?” At the beginning yes, God had a perfect will for your life and if you had followed that track, you would have been more blessed you would have been freer from some of the pain you have had to suffer but when you get off that track, God doesn’t just forget you, he just reconfigures that path, and he still wants to get you to the final thing to conform you to the image of Jesus and so wherever you are today, it can become your point A and God can make something of your life. God hasn’t given up on you—don’t you give up on him.

## **3. God’s Will is perfect**

Number three. God’s will is perfect. Romans 12:2 says, “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.” Don’t be afraid of God’s will. I like what Jack Taylor used to say. He said, “God’s will is what you would choose for your life if you had enough sense to choose it.” God doesn’t want to hurt you. He wants to bless you. He’s our Father. Do I want my two daughters to suffer? Absolutely not! Do I want them to have pain? No. Do I want them to be blessed and have all the good things in life? That’s

my desire my will for my daughters. It has to be a very sick parent who doesn't wish or desire the best for his children and that's what God wants for you. He wants the very best for you. His will is perfect. He has a plan for your life and he wants to guide you.

There is a great promise in Psalm 32:8 where God says, "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you." Have you ever been able to guide somebody with your eye? That means you can communicate your thoughts to them without speaking verbally. You have to really be close to somebody to guide them with your eye. When my girls were little, they sat on the front pew of the church. If they ever misbehaved while I was preaching, I could guide them with my eye. I could be preaching along and just look at them and they knew what I was saying that they had better straighten up or they'd get in trouble when they got home. Now they sit so far away they can't see my eyes. Or like when we are having dinner at one of your houses and having a great time and 10:00 rolls around. We'll be sitting there and I can guide my wife with my eye. I can look at her and you know what that means. "Let's leave, I'm tired." Of course, she doesn't pay any attention to it, but I can sort of guide her with my eye. You have to be intimate with somebody to do that. If I walked up to a total absolute stranger and gave them a stern look, they would say, "Is something wrong with your eye?" For some of you God has such a close, intimate relationship with you that his thoughts and his will just guide you, but for others of you, you don't have that closeness with him so your goal ought to be to be as close to him as you can. That's a description of God's will.

## **II. THE DISCOVERY OF GOD'S WILL**

### **A. THE RISKY METHODS**

How can you discover God's will? I want to give five some risky methods, methods you should not use. I say this because just about everybody uses these methods to try to find God's will.

#### **(1) The "fleece/flip" method**

Number one is the "fleece/flip" method. You may not understand fleece, but you understand what flip is. Some people try to find God's will by simply flipping a coin. God, if you want me to do this, heads. If you want me to do that, tails. It's like the guy who was late with his golf foursome on a Sunday morning. They said, "What took you so long?" He said, "I was feeling a little guilty about not being in church so I flipped a coin and said, 'God, if you want me to go to church, heads, if you want me to play golf, tails.'" He said, "I had to flip it twelve times before tails came up." Then there's the "fleece" method. In the book of Judges God called Gideon to go fight against the Midianites. Gideon said, "I'm not sure, God so I'm going to put you to the test. I'm going to take a fleece (which is a sheepskin) and put it on the ground all night and God, if you really want me to do this in the morning let the fleece be dry and the ground be wet from dew." The next morning he got up and sure enough, the fleece was dry and the ground was wet from dew. So Gideon said, "Okay, two out of three, Lord. Tomorrow morning you let the ground be dry and the fleece wet." Sure enough the next morning that's the way it was. Sometimes people say, "I didn't know what to do so I just laid out a fleece before the Lord." The only problem with that is it is a very immature, dangerous, risky way to find God's will. Nowhere else in the Bible ever did God ever tell them to put a fleece out nor did anybody ever do that. I'll

confess to you they say confession is good for the soul, but bad for the reputation. I have used that method myself before.

When I was in college, I was trying to determine whether or not I was going to go and perform in a musical down at Panama City Beach. I had auditioned for the part in a Christian musical called, “Jonah and the Whale,” and I had been offered one a part. That meant I was going to get to go to Florida and play my guitar and sing all summer. Meanwhile, I had been offered a church in Montgomery, Alabama, and I really was praying, “God, what’s your will? I don’t know what to do.” To be honest I wanted to go to Florida. That’s fun in the sun! The Friday came when I had to make a decision I had to let both of them know by that Friday afternoon. I didn’t have any direction. So I did a very foolish, immature thing, looking back on it. One of my favorite professors was Dr. Bryan and he always dressed immaculately to come to Bible class. Every now and then he wore a very distinctive looking, gold colored blazer. So, that morning I prayed a prayer. I said, “God, if you want me to go to Montgomery, let Dr. Bryan have on his gold colored blazer.” What are the odds? Just think about it. He must have had about a dozen coats and so I am thinking I have maybe an 8.5% chance. So I go to class and Dr. Bryan walks in sure enough he has on the gold colored blazer. So really I took it as a word from the Lord, and I said, “Okay Lord. I’m not going to Florida. I’m going to go to work at this church in Montgomery” and brother, I’m glad I did because that’s where I met my wife, Cindy. She was in the choir and chased me all summer long that year. I’m so glad that I went there, but after that God seemed to say to me. “That is not the way to determine my will!” and you may try to lay out a fleece but I am warning you it is a very risky, dangerous way and I’m going to show you a better way in just a moment.

## **(2) The “fall-open” method**

Here’s the second risky way. I call it the “fall open” method. “Oh, God, I need a word from you.” And you let the Bible fall open and you get some words like the guy who did that and got the verse that said, “And Judas went out and hanged himself.” He did it again and it said, “Go, thou, and do likewise.” Vance Havner tells the story of an old country preacher who did that every Sunday. He walked in the pulpit, plopped his Bible open and started preaching. One Sunday he turned to 2 Kings where it talks about Naaman who had leprosy and it said “and Naaman was a leper.” He wasn’t very smart and he mispronounced the word “leper.” He said, “Naaman was a leaper.” He said, “God don’t want you to sit he don’t want you to run he wants you to leap! We need more leapers! Naaman was a leaper you be a leaper too.” You can get in a lot of trouble just opening the Bible arbitrarily and saying, “God, give me a word.” God may honor it once or twice, but I promise you it is a dangerous way to operate. In fact, to demonstrate this point, I was in my study getting ready for this message last night and I said, “God, I’m going to try it. I’m going to let my Bible fall open and I want you to give me a word for this congregation.” My Bible “fell open” to Ezra 10:34 and this is what it says, “From the descendants of Bani: Maadai, Amram, Uel...” Doesn’t that bless your heart? In context that’s a powerful example, because it’s talking about all the guilty descendants of unfaithful priests, but that one verse taken out of context letting your Bible flop open gets you in trouble So, don’t use the “fall open” method.

## **(3) The “feeling” method**

Number three is the “feeling” method. “I just sort of felt like it was the right thing to do.” Don’t go by your feelings. We don’t walk by feelings, we walk by faith. Your feelings are a very, very risky way to try to determine God’s will. A friend of mine was contemplating marriage to a woman who was not a Christian. It wasn’t that she hadn’t heard and she was still considering it, this lady was openly hostile to the gospel. This man was a Christian. He said, “David. What do you think? Do you think I ought to marry her? What do you think God wants me to do?” I told him, “2 Corinthians 6:14 says that an unbeliever should not be yoked with a believer and I believe that is God’s way of saying that a Christian should never be married to a non-Christian. So I think that is God’s will for you not to marry this woman who is not a Christian.” I’ll never forget his reply. He said, “I know what the Bible says but I just *feel* like it is the right thing to do.” and he married her. And he’ll tell you now it was the wrong thing to do. Sometimes the wrong thing feels right. Sometimes the right thing feels wrong. Don’t go by your feelings! Listen the Bible says, “There is pleasure in sin for a season.” You can start out doing the wrong thing and feel great about it, but the feeling gets worse as you go along. On the other hand you can do something that feels wrong up front even though it’s the right thing to do. For instance, it may not feel comfortable or right for you to initiate a conversation with somebody about Jesus Christ, but as you continue that conversation, it feels better and better as you get into it so don’t go by feelings to determine God’s will.

#### **(4) The “flow” method**

The next method is what I call the “flow” method. “I just ‘go with the flow.’” “The door just seemed to be open.” Here again you need to study Henry Blackaby’s “Experiencing God” about open and closed doors. That’s not always the best way to determine God’s will. Someone told me one time a woman came to work for their company (he was already married and so was she) and the two of them ended up getting together and both marriages were destroyed. He said, “If it wasn’t God’s will, I didn’t think he would have brought that woman into my life.” He was just “going with the flow.” It was just “circumstances.” “It just happened.” I said to him, “It wasn’t God that brought that woman into your life.” If you just “go with the flow, you’ll be flowing in the wrong direction. I saw a painting some time ago. It was a picture of a river and there were many people in the river floating down the river, having a great time in rafts and on inner tubes, and in canoes and what they could not see at the edge of the picture was a sheer drop off and waterfall dangerous. There at the bottom of the picture in the river was one individual swimming upstream. The title of the painting was, “Going Against the Flow.” As Christians we often must go against the flow. Do not “go with the flow,” go with God’s word.

#### **(5) The “fear” method**

The final method is what I call the “fear” method. “If it’s God’s will, it must be something I’m afraid of.” In other words “It can’t be something good” or “It can’t be something I’ll enjoy doing.” Some people think, “If I surrender to God’s will, he’s going to make me marry an ugly person and send me to Outer Mongolia as a missionary to be barefoot and destitute the rest of my life.” Just because you “fear” it that doesn’t mean it is necessarily God’s will.

### **B. THE RELIABLE METHODS**

### **(1) The authority of God's Word**

There are three very reliable methods how you can know God's will. First is the authority of God's Word. Psalm 119:105 says, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path." God will guide you with his Word. This book, not this print on these pages, but the living word it contains is *absolutely* trustworthy and reliable. Not only is it true, it is truth and you can establish your life on the teachings and the principles of this book. When this book speaks, it is God speaking to you. It is just up to you whether or not you are going to obey it. Some time ago a friend came to me and said, "Would you pray with me about whether or not it is God's will for me to tithe?" I knew him well enough to say, "No, I won't pray with you about whether or not it is God's will for you to tithe, because the Bible makes it clear it is God's will for you to tithe. I will pray with you, brother, about whether or not you will obey God's will about it." If God's word teaches it, you don't have to wonder whether or not it is his will. His will is found in his word, but not in the "flip open" method, in the method of reading it daily lovingly devotedly every day. God will take these words and apply them to your heart.

Five years ago when Cindy and I were struggling about coming to this church, we needed a word from the Lord and we didn't let the Bible "flop open." We began to pray about it and God made a verse come alive for us. One of the biggest concerns we had about coming to Texas was leaving all of our family and friends. And God made Mark 10:29 come alive, "'I tell you the truth,' Jesus replied, 'no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age (homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields—and with them persecutions).'" I said, "God, you could just leave that last part out there." God took the *logos*, the written word, and it became the living word in our life. That's when the authority of the word of God comes alive in your life, not "fall open" but regular, daily study.

### **(2) The agreement of God's Spirit**

Number two there is the agreement of God's Spirit. Romans 8:14 says, "Those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God." The Holy Spirit does speak today. Never let anyone tell you he doesn't. There are a lot of religious freaks out there who claim to hear some kind of voice of God and messages from God that don't coincide with the word of God. I can assure you when the Holy Spirit speaks today, he never, never, ever contradicts the written word of God. He always *confirms* it. A lot of people out there claim to hear some kind of message or voice from God and when it doesn't coincide with the scripture, you know they are false prophets. You must test the spirits to see if they are of God. The Holy Spirit will speak to you in a still, small voice as you study the scriptures. Some of you want him to write it on a billboard. Some of you want him to interrupt your radio station and let the voice of God come over the speakers of your radio. Some of you want to walk outside and see a message in letters a hundred feet high across the sky. No. God, the Holy Spirit will speak to you in a still, small voice through His Word.

### **(3) The advice of God's people**

The third reliable method is the advice of God's people. Proverbs 12:15 says, "The way of a fool

seems right to him, but a wise man listens to advice." I can guarantee you that if you'll follow those three methods, you can find God's will. Open the Word, ask for the Holy Spirit to teach it to you and many times go to a godly, trusted friend and say, "I need your advice." When I want advice on investments, I go to somebody who understands the market or investments. When I want advice on real estate, I go to somebody who knows real estate. When I want advice on fixing a car, I go to somebody who knows automobile mechanics. But when I need somebody to give me advice about God, I go to somebody who knows God. The Bible says there is great value in going to a trusted, Christian friend, saying, "I need your advice." and finding God's will.

In the days before radio navigation and GPS, if a ship captain was looking at a harbor on a dark night and was unfamiliar with it, the harbor would have three lights, either lights on land, or beacons or buoys out in the water and whenever the captain lined up with those three lights in a row, he could sail safely straight into the harbor, knowing he would not crash onto the rocks.

If you will line up God's word, God's Spirit and the advice of God's people and you keep those three in line you will find God's will. The most important thing is not finding God's will it is doing it. Some of you know God's will; you are just not doing it. God will not reveal his will to you unless you are willing to do it. You cannot take God's will for a "test drive" like you do a car. Drive it. I want it I don't want it. You can't say, "God, show me what your will is then I will tell you whether or not I will do it." You must say, "God, I will do your will. Show me what it is." If you will do that, God will rush to reveal his will to you.

For some of you here today it's God's will for you to be saved. It's God's will for all to be saved that none should perish. For some of you here today it's God's will for you to follow him in baptism. You're a Christian, but you haven't been baptized. How do you know it's God's will? Because the Word teaches it. "Repent and be baptized." Repentance first, then baptism. For some of you it is God's will for you to join Green Acres Baptist Church. The voice of the Holy Spirit has spoken to you. This is where he wants to use you in service for him. The question is this. Are you going to do God's will? It's not your life. It's what God can do with your life when your will is surrendered to his.

## CONCLUSION

Fritz Kreisler was a well-known violinist and it was advertised once that he was going to play a concert in New York City on a priceless Stradivarius violin worth over half a million dollars. The concert hall was packed. Fritz Kreisler came out and wowed the audience with his violin virtuoso. The high notes seemed as if the angels were singing and brought tears to the eyes of strong men. When he finished, the crowd stood to their feet in spontaneous applause. To their horror Fritz Kreisler took that violin, smashed it on the stage, stomped it into splinters and then walked off. They were stunned to silence. Then the concertmaster came out and said to the crowd, "Fritz Kreisler has asked me to convey to you that he just performed this concert on a fifty dollar fiddle he bought at a pawn shop this afternoon. He wanted to show you that it is not the instrument, it is any instrument in the hand of the master."

It's not your life and it not your will for your life it is what God can do with your life when you

place yourself in his hands!

## OUTLINE

### I. THE DESCRIPTION OF GOD'S WILL

God's Will is

1. Personal

"For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'" *Jeremiah 29:11*

2. Progressive

3. Perfect

### II. THE DISCOVERY OF GOD'S WILL

#### A. The risky methods

(1) The "fleece/flip" method

(2) The "fall-open" method

(3) The "feeling" method

#### B. The reliable methods

(1) The authority of God's Word

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path." *Psalms 119:105*

(2) The agreement of God's Spirit

"...because those who are led by the spirit of God are sons of God." *Romans 8:14*

(3) The advice of God's people

The way of a fool seems right to him, but a wise man listens to advice. *Proverbs 12:15*



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To put it in Texas terms, “You’re mighty welcome to use any and all of my ingredients; just make your own chili!”

For the Joy...  
Pastor David Dykes