

THY WILL
BE DONE

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 REGULAR BAPTIST
Press

Dedication

Dedicated to my dear granddaughters. May you always desire to do the will of God.

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Thy Will Be Done: The Books of Jonah and Habakkuk

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Contents

God's Plan of Salvation5

Understanding the Will of God

Lesson 1 Knowing the Will of God9
Lesson 2 Obeying the Will of God19

Resisting the Will of God: Jonah

Lesson 3 “I Don’t Want To!”31
Lesson 4 “I’m Not Hurting Anyone but Myself!”39
Lesson 5 “Lord, Get Me Out of This Mess!”49
Lesson 6 “I’ll Do It, but I Won’t Like It!”57
Lesson 7 “It’s All about Me!”63

Questioning the Will of God: Habakkuk

Lesson 8 “Lord, Why Don’t You Do Something?”71
Lesson 9 “Lord, Why This Way?”79

Embracing the Will of God

Lesson 10 “Lord, Your Will Be Done”91

Closing Thoughts99

Appendix A 101

Appendix B 105

Appendix C 107

Leader’s Guide 109

Answers 112

God's Plan of Salvation

Carefully ponder these Scripture verses, as they explain how you can have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. God loves you and wants you to enjoy the abundant life He offers you.

- John 3:16—“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”
- John 10:10—Jesus said, “I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.”

All people are sinful, and their sin separates them from God.

- Romans 3:23—“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”
- Romans 6:23—“For the wages of sin is death [spiritual separation from God].”

Jesus Christ's death is the only provision God has made to pay for man's sin.

- Romans 5:8—“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”
- John 14:6—“Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’”

You must receive Jesus Christ as your Savior before you can personally experience His love for you and the abundant life He has planned for you.

- John 1:12—“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name.”

You can invite Christ into your life right now by an act of faith.

- Ephesians 2:8–9—“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”

Are you ready to invite Christ into your life to be your Savior? Use the following prayer as a guide to help you express your desire to God: “Lord God, I know I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe Jesus died for my sins. Right now I receive Him as my Savior. Take control of my life, and replace all the restlessness and anxiety with peace and contentment.”

If you have prayed this prayer, tell your Bible study leader or a friend who has been trying to help you.

Learn to trust God’s Word—not your feelings—when doubts come.

- Romans 10:13—“Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”
- 1 John 5:11–13—“And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.”

UNDERSTANDING THE WILL OF GOD



Knowing the Will of God

*“Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is”
(Ephesians 5:17).*

MOST OF US CAN QUOTE THE “LORD’S PRAYER” in full. Jesus taught His disciples to pray something like this to the Heavenly Father: “Your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.” From this simple sentence, we learn three things. First, God has a will. Second, God’s will is always done in Heaven. And third, God’s will is not always done on earth; therefore, we must pray to understand God’s will and endeavor to see that it is done.

This raises questions for each believer: How can I do God’s will unless I know what His will is? And how can I know what His will is when He is in Heaven and I am on earth? Yet if Jesus told believers to pray this way, surely the Father’s will is a thing that Christians can both know and do. Something so important is worthy of our serious study and consideration.

Study the Word

We begin our study of this topic by defining the word “will.” One Greek lexicon states that it indicates “that which pleases and creates joy.” Another states it is “what one wishes or has determined shall be done.” God’s will, then, is what God desires and determines shall be done. His will reveals His purposes and

plans for His universe and all that is in it. When His will is done, He is pleased. Simply put, God’s will is what God wants.

God Communicates

1. “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1). God had a plan and purpose for planet Earth before He even created it. His will—what He determined would be done—was already in place at the beginning of recorded time. In each reference given below, indicate how God made His will known. Then identify what His will was in that situation.

| Reference | How God Made His Will Known | What His Will Was |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| Genesis 2:16–17 | | |
| Genesis 6:11–14 | | |
| Genesis 12:1 | | |
| Genesis 46:1–4 | | |

2. God has a plan for individuals, and He also has plans for nations. In Exodus 20, God expressed His will in ten commandments given to the people of Israel. These ten commands, as well as all the other “laws” of God, were an expression of God’s will for each person as well as for the entire nation. Read Exodus 20:3–17, then summarize what God wanted from the people in order to please Him and carry out His purpose for them.

3. (a) How did the Lord communicate His will to the people (Exodus 20:1)?

(b) How did the Lord ensure that Israel would continue to remember and do His will (Exodus 32:15–16)?

We have seen that God communicates His will by words. Over the centuries of the Old Testament era, God spoke to people, sometimes in an audible voice, sometimes through visions or dreams, but most often by the words of His prophets (specially appointed spokesmen) and others. At the time of Moses, God began to direct certain people to write down His words. For example, Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Habakkuk were directly instructed by God to write down and keep the words that He was giving to them. (See Exodus 17:14; Isaiah 30:8; Jeremiah 30:1–2; and Habakkuk 2:2.) The Spirit of God directed in the recording of God's words, either by direct command or as His hand was on them.

Words Written Down

4. What did each of the following people write down?
Moses (Deuteronomy 31:24)

Joshua (Joshua 24:24–26)

Samuel (1 Samuel 10:25)

David (1 Chronicles 28:11–12, 19)

5. According to 2 Peter 1:21, how were the Old Testament Scriptures written?

Is the New Testament also God's Word? Like the writers of the Old Testament, the writers of the four Gospels, the Epistles (letters), Acts, and Revelation were compelled to do so after their interaction with the Lord Jesus Christ or His apostles. God used these men to complete the canon ("an authoritative list of books accepted as Holy Scripture") of Scripture, His plan for mankind and the declaration of His will from beginning to end.

6. In Luke 1:1–4; John 20:31; 2 Peter 3:1–3; 1 John 1:1–3; Jude 3–4; and Revelation 1:1–3, the writers expressed their reasons for writing their accounts or letters. Select one of these passages and jot down the writer's explanation for penning his work.

7. In 2 Peter 3:15–16, Peter mentioned the apostle Paul's letters.

(a) What was Peter's testimony about Paul?

(b) How did Peter refer to Paul's letters?

His Will Revealed

8. According to Paul in Romans 15:4, for what purposes were the Scriptures written?

How can we know the will of God? At least one aspect of this answer is now clear: we can know God's will through His Word. The God of this universe has made known to all people what He would have them be and do. His Word reveals His will, generally, to all mankind.

9. From each of these verses or passages, indicate what God's will is for you as well as for every other person.

Isaiah 45:22; 2 Peter 3:9

Matthew 22:36–40

Galatians 5:13–14

Ephesians 4:32

1 Peter 1:15–16

His Will for You

But how can you and I know God's will specifically and individually? We cannot open the Bible and read a verse telling us which college to attend, what career to pursue, or whether we ought to marry or remain single. How can we discern God's will in personal matters?

When making decisions and choices, we must begin with God's Word, the Bible. God's will for your life will never contradict the clear commands and instruction of His Book. His desire is that you should obey Him in all things. So, the first step in discerning God's will in a decision is to ask, What does God's Word say about this matter? Do any direct commands and instructive

principles apply to the situation? Consider some examples in the next two questions.

10. (a) If a young woman desires to be in a relationship with a young man who is not a follower of Jesus Christ, what should she do?

(b) What Scripture passage gives her clear instruction about her decision?

11. (a) If you were invited to go out with a group of women, and it was mentioned that they planned to go to a place of morally questionable entertainment, what would you do?

(b) What Bible verses would direct your choice?

Let's be honest. The two scenarios above are rather clear-cut. But what if you need to come to an understanding of God's will regarding something that is clearly not contrary to God Word? What if you and your husband were deciding if you should buy a home? What if you were to receive a better job offer in another state? What if you had to decide how to best care for an ailing husband or parent? How can we know God's will in these challenging choices of life?

12. Long before we decide, there is one thing we need to do.

From Psalm 143:8–10; Colossians 1:9–10; and James 1:3–6, what do we need to do?

13. Along with prayer, we have another resource. What do these verses instruct people to do: Proverbs 11:14; 12:15; 13:10; and 15:22?

14. (a) What command is given to believers in Ephesians 5:17?

(b) What will enable us to carry out this command, as expressed in Ephesians 5:18?

Once we have prayed, studied God's Word, and sought wise counsel, we must look to the Holy Spirit to lead and guide into the Father's will. He is God's truthful counselor, our teacher and guide. "Teach me to do Your will, for You are my God; Your Spirit is good. Lead me in the land of uprightness" (Psalm 143:10).

Believers often speak of God opening and closing doors of opportunity. (See, for example, 1 Corinthians 16:9; 2 Corinthians 2:12; and Revelation 3:8.) The Holy Spirit directs us into God's will through circumstances as they unfold. (But read Appendix A, page 101, for cautions in this area.) As the Lord opens and closes the doors of circumstances, we will usually have a sense of peace about His direction. We have come to the point that we must trust the Holy Spirit to direct us to the right decision.

But once more a word of warning is needed. Believers may claim to have peace about doing something that is clearly contrary to God's Word and will. Our hearts are that deceitful and bent on fulfilling our sinful desires. Only when absolute honesty of heart and clarity of conscience back our claim of having peace can we move ahead with assurance of being in the will of God.

15. Inward peace is a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22); it is the assurance that all is well. Peace results when conscience confirms to us that we are right with God, obeying His will. According to the following verses, how will we obtain this precious peace of God as we seek to do His will?
Philippians 4:6–7

2 Thessalonians 3:16

1 John 3:21–22

16. As you read Proverbs 3:5–6, how are you assured that if you are seeking God’s will, you will be enabled to do His will?

Think It Through

17. God’s will has been revealed to mankind in His written Word. Why do you think the Lord chose to put His will and words down in writing?
18. We believe the Bible to be the verbally inspired (“God-breathed”), inerrant, authoritative Word of God. What does this belief mean in believers’ daily living?

-
19. (a) Why is it sound spiritual practice to seek God's will by prayer (Proverbs 16:9)?
- (b) Why do we need the leading of His Holy Spirit in the decisions we make?
20. Why is it good spiritual practice to seek counsel from godly advisors?
21. Would you agree or disagree with the following statement?
We may have peace about a certain decision being God's will yet still struggle with some anxiety about the results.
Explain.
22. If you agreed with the previous statement, what should be done about this anxiety?
23. Ultimately, stepping out to act on a decision that is God's will is an act of faith. "Faith is . . . the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1).
- (a) How does stepping out in faith result in spiritual growth?
- (b) Can you supply a Scriptural example of someone who stepped out in faith and grew spiritually?

Consider Yourself

How can you apply what you have learned from this lesson to your own situation? Write down any thoughts you have concerning the following questions. How will you take steps to act on what God has shown you? (These answers are not intended to be shared in a group setting.)

1. What is your personal view of the Bible, and how would you express that view? Do you see the Bible as a good and helpful book like many others, or do you see it as the unique, ultimate Word of God given to mankind?
2. What steps are you taking to learn God's will in His Word?
3. By what process have you been making the important choices in your life? Have you learned anything from this lesson that will now alter that process?
4. Is there some choice or decision you need to make currently that is weighing on your mind? How will you proceed in that choice?

Sum It Up

The Lord has made His will known to mankind. Because He is the creator and ruler of this universe, His will should be done, carried out by every creature, including humans (Matthew 6:10). God has made known His will generally to all people and instructed us in His Word, the Bible, as to what to be and do. He also leads us personally into His will through His Holy Spirit, according to His purpose for our individual lives. If we are wise, we will seek to understand His will and obey it to the best of our ability (Ephesians 5:17). He delights in those who want to please Him!