

Knowing God's Will for Your Life

The Prophet Jeremiah proclaims in Jeremiah 29:11, "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." We crave that hope that God does have a plan for us, a future for us. As a pastor people continually come to me, desperately wanting to know God's will. The good news is God's will is not a secret. Discovering God's will is not some kind of game of hide and seek where God hides it and is amused by watching us try to find it. God deeply desires for us to know and do his will. God's plan and will for us is not complicated. Quite often people know what God's will is for them; they just don't want to do it. When people struggle with God's will in their lives it is a struggle of change or a struggle of pride. Sometimes this can be the real cause of our inability to find God's will. The unavoidable truth is that there is no growth, Christian or otherwise, there is no wholeness, there is no fulfillment, there is nothing worthwhile that happens in this gift of God called life without change. To refuse to change is to refuse the best God has to offer you and your life. Period. Pride can also be an obstacle for many who are struggling to find God's will. When out of control, pride can strip our spiritual gears and put us in a real mess. Pride is what started it all in the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve thought, "We don't need God; we can be gods ourselves." And we all know the pain and misery that followed. Too much pride can get us into a lot of trouble. We get so filled with it that we are totally oblivious to where it is leading us. This is why it is impossible to live out God's will when we are filled with pride and self-righteousness. Pride makes us stubborn to God's will or it selfishly attaches conditions to God's will. Our pride often causes us to bargain with God: "Yes, Lord I will forgive this person as long as he apologizes." Or "Yes, Lord, I will serve in the church as long as I get recognized for my efforts." Is it any wonder that we have a tough time finding God's will and living it out when we live our faith this way?

Perhaps you have prayerfully searched yourself and you know that your struggle with God's will is not a struggle of change or pride, and you are at a loss. The truth is sometimes when we struggle with knowing God's will we just have to go back to fundamentals. Jeremiah 29:12-13 tells us, "Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart." In order for us to truly know God's plan and hope for us we must seek God with all of our hearts. "All of your heart" does not mean you are trying really hard to find God; it means you are seeking a relationship with God through prayer and reading His word, through faithfulness in attending worship and in serving the needs of others. In that relationship, you will discover the hope and future you need and desire. If you want to know the will of God, you must first seek the heart of God. Jesus said in Matthew 22, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." So, before you speak, make a decision, choose a path, respond in the heat of the moment, make a business transaction or do anything ask yourself, "Will this honor God? What is the loving thing to do?" 95 percent of the time you will be confident about your decisions and actions if you ask these two questions. You can't find and do the will of God if you are not trying to please the heart of God. Instead of deciding what we want to do and asking God to bless it, decide to surrender all that you are to God and ask Him what He wants to do with you. We must put ourselves at the disposal of God. "Lord, I want to honor you and love others. I want to be a person after your heart." Then and only then, will we be clear about our Lord's will for our lives.