

# Lesson 6

Teacher's Manual

## KNOWING GOD'S WILL

READ & MEDITATE ON: I Thessalonians 4:1-12      MEMORIZE: Romans 12:1-2

### INTRODUCTION

Upon surrendering our lives to Jesus Christ, we begin to view every area of our lives from a fresh, new perspective. Now that Jesus has become Lord, we have a desire to order our lives according to His will and discover His plans for us. The rate at which you are able to comprehend truth, and your ability to bring your life-style into harmony with the Spirit, will depend a great deal on your understanding of how to know the will of God.

First of all, let it be said that the entire purpose of Jesus coming as a man was that men might get acquainted with God, and thus appropriate God's gifts personally! There is not anything mysterious about knowing God's will. It is God's happiest moment when He finds someone interested! What a spiritual thrill to understand, even in part, that I am God's and He is mine...and upon this fact rests a comfortable, liveable knowledge that we will be led, and that not astray!

#### I. UNDERSTANDING THE WILL OF GOD

It will help a great deal to know that trouble begins when we think God thinks like we think! Our humanness shows through when we just automatically measure God by our own temperaments and capabilities. But His ways are beyond us (Romans 11:33). Those who are carnal (thinking with the human spirit) cannot comprehend that which is spiritual (thinking God's thoughts). So; if we are to understand God's will, we must take a look at His nature and His purpose as found in His book.

##### A. By Knowing Him

One simple lesson will certainly fail to give a complete profile of God's character and personality. However, the following

3. God Is Totally Aware:

There are no blind spots in His vision. When He views our life, and all of its components, there is no aspect lost to His grasp. The Master's look of understanding is always full of perception and compassion. Never judgmental, always loving. This is the will of God.

4. God Is Well Adjusted:

He is not insecure or inferior, or struggling for identity, or in search of an ego-building situation. Not once did He grab for a scapegoat. No hint of placing the blame. Not a flash of justification or false rationalization. This is the will of God.

5. God Is Within Reach:

He is not some stone-hearted, bronzed body in the heavens...but can be touched by our needs (Hebrews 4:15). He is very much alive and always in touch with man's spirit. He always has time. This is the will of God.

6. God Is Competent:

He is able to do something about every situation which comes to His attention. There is not anything he cannot handle. He just speaks the Word to meet the need. This is the will of God.

7. God Is Realistic:

He will not prescribe a course of action which is impossible. Some things appear to us to be impossible, but with God nothing is impossible. He always enables us to do what He requires.

B. By Knowing His Plan

God has a plan of action. He wants to anoint His people. He wants to pour Himself out in a miraculous, supernatural way upon the peoples of the world. God is not willing that any should be lost, but that every man, everywhere, would be found (II Peter 3:9).

The plan of God is again revealed in Christ's prayer for His disciples:

"I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them."

*John 17:9-26*

When it comes to the "will of God" there usually develops a vision of relocation to a different or distant place. Indeed, geographical location is part of the picture. However, this is not always the most important consideration. A person has to live somewhere. But "where" can become far too important to us. We can be a Christian anywhere and work for Christ. There are many home and foreign mission works who need caring, loving, sacrificing saints...and we do not want to forget our own local churches! Yes, we will consider location, but in its proper priority.

### C. Difficult To Find

The will of God is within decent reach of every Spirit-filled believer. New converts must understand enough about God so they do not tend to think God is hiding from them. God does not always respond with direction as quickly as some might think He should. An ill-advised counsellor might suggest they "hunt" for God's will, as if God was testing them to see if they really wanted to know. God is an open book to us. He is our Father and cares for us dearly. Let us not confuse the issue--God is not hiding. He longs to direct us, as reflected in Matthew 7:7-11:

"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"

### III. DISCOVERING GOD'S WILL FOR YOU

The key to knowing the will of God is in the word, "available." Paul entreated early Christians to present their bodies, "...a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1).

Paul stated that the will of God was our sanctification. God's total purpose in His redemptive work was to salvage us. He is most anxious that we be further salvaged so we will be ready to meet Him. See Colossians 1:27-28. God's intent for us, His people, is very clear. There are many additional passages which reflect God's basic desire (His general will) for His people.

## 2. Specific

Discovering the will of God individually is the privilege of every believer. Personal appropriation of all God's gifts is essential. Understanding God and all of His glorious attributes lays a perfect foundation for recall when you need His direction. God pouring out Himself to you: in anointing, understanding, compassion, direction and answers. That is "discovery" of God's will! A personalized, indwelling sense of direction. Not something we struggle to get...but a Presence we live with!

An excellent guide in knowing a proper sense of direction for your life is the following "Sense Test." When all four areas are affirmatively aligned, we can be assured of God's guidance.

1. Does it make common sense?
2. Does it make Bible sense?
3. Does it make Spirit sense?
4. Does it make circumstantial sense?

God will go out of His way to make it perfectly clear to you what direction He is pointing. How can we be sure? He loves us, that's why! He knows we need His help. He is anxious to give it if we will but meet His conditions.

God listens to our petitions, like a father! Just be mindful that an answer from the Lord is still an answer...whether the response is yes, no, or wait! Sometimes we forget this. We have difficulty accepting answers as "from the Lord" if they are contrary to our desires.

The will of God is a relationship to Jesus Christ. To truly understand God's will, Jesus must be both Savior and Lord of our lives. The sanctification of our spirit, an understanding of holiness, and a proper relationship to God and my fellow-man...that is the will of God!

People in today's world are groping for a sense of destiny. Apostolic people have a grip on the only solid Rock there is! Let your passion and total confidence in the Lordship of Jesus Christ come through loud and clear. Do not wobble on the "unknowns" of God's will...there is enough we do know. Our faith need not be shaken in the time of crises, and there is no need for a wrong turn at a major intersection of life. To know God's will is our greatest treasure; to do that will is life's greatest privilege!

We make ourselves available to God by our own choice. No one can do this for us. Do we have reservations about our commitment? Is Jesus Christ our Lord? Are there places we are unwilling to go? Are there assignments we will not take? Do we insist on our own choices? There must be a free-flow of His choices through us! It is a very simple matter. No man can serve two masters. God is a gentleman. He will not force Himself. He is there, but will only occupy the throne of your life by invitation. Surrender the full measure of your life to Him!

## A. The Two Dimensions

### 1. General

We must be thoroughly infused with the knowledge that God does indeed have our best interests at His heart! This truth is foundational. Please make a good study at this point of I Thessalonians 4:1-12:

"Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more. For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor; Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God: That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified. For God hath not called us unto uncleanness but unto holiness. He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit. But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: But we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more; And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing."

## II. WHAT THE WILL OF GOD IS NOT

### A. Tri-Levelled

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."

*Romans 12:1-2*

When reading these verses, some folks create a tri-level option here. It is called the "Settle for less because it's less painful" syndrome. They say something like this: "I mean, after all...we're not the Apostle Paul! The perfect will of God? Why not try phase one first...the good dimension. I can be saved at that level, can't I?" Or, "Man,--I tried giving everything to God but I failed so miserably! Do you think the acceptable level would be okay until I can get myself back together again? After all, the ministers are the ones that should reach the top level, if anyone does."

Wait a minute. Hold everything! Read the passage again. What is the meaning of the scriptures here? You are right! The will of God in your life and mine is good, acceptable and perfect. That feels much better, does it not? It does because you are now understanding the spiritual sense of the passage. Everything God does or plans is perfect. Can you picture Him doing anything in a good, better and best sequence? When God created the world, He backed off and called it "good." He did it perfectly. Creation, men, redemption, heaven, your life--all are touched by the same hand! With a dedicated life and a renewed mind, we can discover the beautiful plan God has for us.

### B. Always Geographical

There is an old song that says, "I'll go where you want me to go, dear Lord, over mountain, or plain, or sea...." We can really sing it with enthusiasm--until we are faced with the possibility of an "open door" 1500 miles from Mother. Or, until the young man who loves you happens to be an evangelist. Or, worse yet, feels a call to the mission field--God forbid!



And who does He seek to perform His will?...Men, women, young people and children who will dare believe Him, and delight to do His will! Yes, the very reason God has come into our lives is that He might include us in His plan! God does have a plan: It is, "...to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). Compare Isaiah 61:1-3 and the following:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

*Luke 4:18-19*

1. To Preach:

From the moment He made His exit from the wilderness temptation...He began to preach His kingdom message. What a fresh voice to a dusty generation! And the apostles and the early church got in on the action too! Read Romans 10:13-15. This is the will of God.

2. To Heal:

God has provided physical healing for us. By His stripes we were healed (I Peter 2:24). It is good to know our health can be restored, and Jesus loves to do it. But let us not forget the real purpose for His coming: to save His people from their sins (Matthew 1:21). This is the will of God.

3. To Deliver:

What a ministry Jesus had! A careful look at Matthew 9 and 10 makes God's will perfectly clear. Without a doubt God wants to deliver people from sin. Today, He uses the church (Christ's body). For He declared that He has given to us, "...the ministry of reconciliation" (II Corinthians 5:17 - 6:1). This is the will of God.

People often lose sight of these spiritual directions because they do not associate them with daily practicalities such as working on the job or at home, or deciding on their vocation in life. A thousand and one "trivial" decisions must constantly be made. One must always remember to keep God's plan in perspective! We must have a singleness of purpose...His purpose...reaching the lost!

practical insights will highlight His basic nature. Of course, the only insight we have on God in most of these areas is His reflection in the face of Jesus Christ.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...and the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."

*John 1:1 & 14*

"...Christ...is the image of God,...For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

*II Corinthians 4:4 & 6*

Follow Jesus closely through the Gospels. See Him bend low for the children, speak softly to the poor, respond judiciously to the critics, weep with friends in tragedy, reach for a city with a soft heart...oh, to be like Him! That is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Read the book of Matthew or Luke. Your memory of Jesus will be refreshed. Let the hot tears roll down your cheeks as your heart goes out to those He toughed. Allow the Spirit of His compassion for the hurting, grip you again. Pay close attention to the life of our Lord, and you will find that...

1. God Is Rational:

God does not lose His head in a tight situation. He is not capable of making poor judgments. His nerves do not go to pieces under pressure. Never did He show a spirit of retaliation: This is the will of God.

2. God Is Constant:

He is always dependable; always the same. His mood range was within reason. Happy? Yes. Sorrowful? Occasionally. Depressed? Never. Confused? No. Committed? Absolutely! This is the will of God.