

## Knowing the Will of God for Your Life

James (4:13-15) warns against those who live their life, making their plans without reference to God's will. It calls such planning arrogant (v. 16), and ignorant (v. 14). "Instead you ought to say, 'If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.'" (James 4:15). In James' counsel is an assumption—there is a way to know God's will in your life. I believe, in the stories and teachings of the Bible God has offered us several avenues to discerning His will.

1. **Look in your own heart.** What do you desire? Psalm 37:4. "Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart." Double meaning...He gives you what you want...He gives you your desires. One way to know what God wants is to know what you want. One caution, sometimes our hearts deceive us. What follows protects us from this...read on.
2. **Consult with others.** Proverbs 24:6 - in a multitude of counselors there is safety. Matthew 18:19 where two or three agree on earth concerning anything it will be done by My Father in heaven. Talk to people you trust, godly people, about the evidences you are gathering. Get their input.
3. **Ask for a sign.** Get God involved. In Judges 6:36-40 Gideon asked God for signs. And God gave them.
4. **Ask, seek, knock** until you receive, find, and have your door opened (Matthew 7:7). The verb tense here suggests "keep asking, keep seeking, keep knocking"...in other words we are being commanded to pester heaven. Matthew 7:8 - everyone who asks receives.
5. **Be yielding.** Don't lean on your own understanding. Acknowledge God in everything. He will direct. Proverbs 3:3-5. When we are yielded, God will lead. If the Spirit is leading us, it implies we must follow (John 16:13).
6. **Put God first.** Make God's kingdom and righteousness your priority. Matthew 6:33 - seek first...and **all** these things will be added.
7. **Partner with God**...in everything. Proverbs 16:9 - Man plans his ways, and the Lord guides the steps.
8. **Don't shun the impossible.** Philipians 4:19; Matthew 19:26; John 15:5. When given the option between easy and impossible, choose the impossible. Henry Blackaby claims the Lord never calls us to do anything we can accomplish on

our own without Him. 1 Thessalonians 5:24 says, "He who calls you is faithful, and He will do it."

9. **Jesus will be with you.** The story of Jonah teaches we need to choose to go where God wants us to go. But the Great Commission commands we go to the ends of the earth, and Jesus will go with us. Matthew 28:19-20.
10. **Use your talents.** Gifts determine ministries. 1 Peter 4:10. Through the Holy Spirit's gifts God is preparing us for the tasks He has in store for us. Our gifts are unique to us, and shape our unique contribution to the world.
11. **God's Providence.** His leading in the past helps you gauge His leading in the future. In God's kingdom, nothing is wasted. Everything (the good, the bad, and the ugly) in our past prepares us for our future. This takes time. The more you reflect on your past life the more you can discern His future leading. In *Testimonies to Ministers* p. 31 Ellen White wrote, "We have nothing to fear for the future except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history."
12. **Conviction.** According to John 16:8 the Holy Spirit convicts of righteousness, or right doing. In other words, the Holy Spirit places a burden on our hearts from which there is no peace until we accept His will.
13. **Listen to God's words**—the Bible, the writings of EGW, devotionals, etc. guide us. Psalm 119:105 says, "Your word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path."
14. **Open your life to all God's methods of communication.** By the mouth of two or three witnesses so shall it be established (Matthew 18:16). In the context of knowing God's will, the idea here is don't depend on just one method. God is speaking to us through a variety of means (dreams, bible passages, convictions, providences, advice of godly people...all kinds of ways). Let's open ourselves to all God is trying to say. If we limit ourselves to just one method and only one method, we might either miss what God is trying to say through other means, or be deceived by our own self-interested heart, dictating to God His will for us...which obviously defeats the purpose of this study on discerning the will of God for our life.