



northpoint resources

HOW TO KNOW WHEN YOU ARE
HEADING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

discovering God's will



STUDY GUIDE

ANDY STANLEY

discovering
God's
will

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will



LEADER'S GUIDE

Discovering God's Will Study Guide

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MULTNOMAH BOOKS

12265 ORACLE BOULEVARD, SUITE 200

COLORADO SPRINGS, CO 80921

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The Adventure Begins

by Andy Stanley

If I had to summarize this series in two points, they would be:

1. God has a personal vision for your life.
2. He wants you to know it even more than you do.

That may come as welcome news. It might even be a complete shock. Because if you're like most people, this isn't the first time you've thought about God's will for your life. It could be one of those nagging questions that follows you through life as you face different decisions. Maybe you've even looked in the Bible before, hoping to unlock God's secret plan for your existence. But that can be frustrating, too. Where do you start? Should you climb a mountain like Moses and expect to get the answer written in stone? Or wait for strange dreams, like Peter, in hopes of finding direction there?

Friends, parents, even church leaders often give conflicting advice—not to mention all the books that have been written on the subject. So how do you know?

As sure as God made you, He also has a vision for how your life will go. He doesn't force it on you, or play tricks on you to see if you'll stray. He stands by, patiently waiting for hearts that will turn to Him with

a sincere desire to know His will at any given moment. And since He also invented communication, you can rest assured that when God is ready to give you direction, you can't miss it.

That being said, there are some things *you* can do to get in on the amazing plan God has in mind for your life. I'm looking forward to spending the next several weeks together...*Discovering God's Will!*

Decisions, Decisions...

Introduction

Take a moment to think about where you are today. How would you describe your progress? Is your work (or school) going well? Is it challenging...satisfying...overwhelming? Do you consider yourself successful at this point? Now think about your relationships. Are you where you want to be in your family life? Or with friendships? How are you doing financially? Have you met some key financial goals you set for yourself? Have you experienced any setbacks?

For each of your responses to these questions, you could probably include an explanation of *why* things are the way they are. You may point to certain circumstances that came together to shape the outcome. There may be a person who holds the key to your success or failure in a particular area. Maybe it's a series of breaks, good or bad, that has impacted your situation at the moment. Or perhaps it was just your upbringing in general that set you on an inevitable path in life.

Circumstances and other people have an unmistakable impact on your life, but the focus of

this series is on the part *you* control: your decisions. Every person is the product of his or her decisions in life. In fact, your decisions say more about you than any set of circumstances ever will...no matter how good or bad they may be! Helen Keller, Thurgood Marshall, Bill Clinton, Tiger Woods, Howard Hughes some faced overwhelming odds, some received the greatest of opportunities. But in the end, for better or worse, their decisions determined their course in life.

Your life today is the sum total of the decisions you have made. You can try to blame your parents. You can try to blame the government or the economy or your friends. But in the end, you will be measured by *your* part in the decisions you have made. For some people, the focus in life is trying to gain control of their environment. But successful people are those who recognize that we never have complete control over our circumstances. Instead, they focus on making good decisions in spite of limitations.

So how did you end up where you are today? Was it your upbringing? Hard work? Your good looks? In this session, we'll give you a chance to delve a little deeper into the decisions you've made in life so far and gain a deeper understanding of just how *your* choices have impacted your past and will shape your future.

Exercise - How did they do that?

- A. In column A below, write down the names of the first three famous people that come to mind. They can be people from the history books, or someone alive today.

A	B	C
Famous Person	Noteworthy Characteristic	Landmark Decision

*A man makes decisions.
But in the end, those decisions make the man.*

- B. In column B, beside each of the names above, write a few words to convey something that is noteworthy about him or her. It may be a positive statement or a negative one.
- C. In column C, write down at least one decision, for better or for worse, that played a part in making that person noteworthy.

Share your responses with the group.

Notes:

Video Notes

From the video message, fill in the blanks.

1. Life is the sum total of the _____ we make.
2. Most people have some _____ about the decisions they've made.
3. _____ wants to direct our lives.
4. Christians often give contrary _____.
5. What you do with your life is of utmost importance to _____.
6. The Bible talks about the _____, _____, and _____ will of God.
7. The _____ will of God refers to those things God is going to do, regardless.
8. God uses _____ and _____ to accomplish his providential will.
9. The _____ will of God refers to the dos and don'ts God has commanded.
10. The _____ will of God refers to personal decisions and plans for our lives.
11. The more _____ you are with the providential will of God, and the more _____ you are to the moral will of God, the easier it will be to discover the personal will of God for your life.
12. God's _____ will and God's _____ will determine the plumb line for everything else God is going to call and ask you to do.

Discussion Questions

Take a few moments to discuss your answers to these questions with the group.

1. How would you categorize your desire to know the will of God at this point in your life?
 - a. I have a specific issue and I need help making a decision now.
 - b. I have made poor decisions in the past, and I'm interested in repairing the damage.
 - c. I simply want a good long-term plan for the future.
 - d. Not sure.

2. On a scale of 1–10 (10 being always), how much have you taken God's will into consideration when making decisions in life?

3. Aside from God, what other sources do people consider before making decisions?

4. Read Mark 12:29–30. What does this passage suggest about God’s will for your life?

5. Name at least one way your life might reflect the fulfillment of God’s will for your life as suggested in Mark 12:29–30? Give examples.

Mileposts Key Points

✓ Your life is the sum total of your decisions.

✓ The more familiar you become with the providential will of God, and the more surrendered you become to the moral will of God, the easier it will be to determine the personal will of God for your life.

What Will You Do? Assignment for the Week

1. This week, think about the many decisions you make each day from the biggest to the smallest. How do those decisions shape the course of each day? What factors shape your choices? As you observe your daily routine this week, write down at least one area where you would like to become more intentional and strategic in your decision making. _____
2. For the area of concern you listed in question 1 above, find at least one Bible verse that addresses it and write the reference here. _____

Think About It

Does your Bible verse in question 2 deal more with God's providential will or His moral will?

Changing Your Mind Scripture Memory

The more familiar you are with God's ways, the easier it will be to discover His personal will for your life. Begin today to train your mind with the things God says. Then when decision time comes again, you'll be ready.

*With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not
wander from Your commandments!*

Psalm 119:10

Last week...

We examined how our lives are the sum total of the decisions we make. We also learned what is meant by the providential, moral, and personal will of God. God's will for your life can always be found somewhere in the intersection of His moral statutes for man and His providential plan for mankind.

Are You Ready for This?

Session

- 2 -

Introduction

Look before you leap. Test the waters. Do your homework. Read the fine print. You've heard it all your life. A person should never make a decision without knowing all the facts, right? It's what your parents taught you. You heard it in grade school. And you've seen the results firsthand. By now it's instinctive: Never commit to something before you know the details.

The same is true about getting advice. You listen to all the suggestions first, *then* use your best judgment and make a decision. Right? Not necessarily. As we'll see in this session, it all depends on whom you're asking for advice.

You see, discovering the will of your parents or a friend or a coworker is one thing. But discovering God's will is completely different. First of all, God is not in the advice business. He's in the Lordship business. So if you really want to get personal and get

God's take on your situation, you'll discover that He requires something up front first: control. More than He wants people who make good decisions, God wants hearts that are surrendered to Him.

God has an uncanny way of knowing where we stand on this issue. And often, He will withhold information about His will until He detects a willingness on our part to follow through on what He says regardless.

So do you really want to know God's will? Are you truly ready for what He'll say? Or are you just looking for another angle on your situation another opinion to consider before you make up your mind? *Your* answer may determine how well you hear *His*.