

LESSON EIGHT: How to Know THE WILL OF GOD

SESSION ONE

TO THE LEADER/FACILITATOR

To help you be more effective in leading your small-group discipleship study, we have prepared the **General Leadership Guide** to help steer you through the basics of facilitating a small-group study. If you have not already done so, please read the Guide.

ABOUT THIS SESSION

During this series of sessions, Pastor Adrian Rogers will provide biblical insight in how to know the will of God in our daily lives. Nothing can be more important to our Christian walk than to know that we remain in step with our Lord as we determine how best to serve Him. In this first session, Pastor Rogers explains the three different types of will that we see exercised by God. Our biblical understanding of how God's will functions will help us better understand how to apply His will to our daily lives.

PREPARING TO LEAD/FACILITATE THIS SESSION

Read through the **Session Guide**, and watch the video in advance of the session. Review the **Additional Scripture to Study** at the end of the **Guide**, along with the suggested **Personal Application**. Make sure you print out enough copies of the **Student Handout** which mirrors this **Leader's Guide**.

CONDUCTING THE SESSION

At the beginning of the session, read the **Introduction** to your group, then open discussion by asking the **Reflection Questions** before viewing the video segment. After viewing the video together, you may want to ask for comments before next leading your group through the **Amplification and Discussion** section. Feel free to add your own commentary if needed, but be cognizant of time and do not personally dominate the session. As you read through the **Amplification** section, engage your group by using the provided **Discussion Questions** to stimulate additional dialogue.

As you prepare to conclude the session, review the **Personal Application** for the week and encourage participants to engage in the suggested activity, as well as to read and study the **Additional Scriptures to Study** section. The **Additional Scriptures to Study** section contains questions or reflections intended to guide participants in their respective personal studies. This is best presented as a positive activity designed to help everyone in the group to grow spiritually through the week (as opposed to being presented as homework).

Allow participants to share prayer requests and lead your group in prayer using any of the suggested formats in the **General Leadership Guide**. Remember to provide an atmosphere of confidentiality within the group as participants share.

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INTRODUCTION

One of the most important aspects of the Christian life is knowing and obeying the will of God. This pertains to our daily moment-by-moment decisions and to the long-term purpose of our lives. How does one discern the will of God from one's own personal will? In this first session, Pastor Rogers will explain the three different types of will that we see exercised by God. Our biblical understanding of how God's will functions will help us better understand how to apply His will to our daily lives.

OUR KEY PASSAGE

Acts 9:6 "So he, trembling and astonished, said, 'Lord, what do You want me to do?' Then the Lord said to him, 'Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.'"

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Why is it important to discern God's will for your life? How does that impact your daily activities, your choice of career, your family, or even your church?
- How would you measure or determine whether or not you are living out God's will in your life? What would you say are the markers or indicators that serve to confirm you are on course, or not?

PRESENTATION OF VIDEO CLIP OF: "How to Discern the Will of God"**AMPLIFICATION AND DISCUSSION**

Your great desire ought to be to know His will. Your great delight will be to do His will. Your great danger is to refuse His will. Nothing is right for you if it is not God's will. —**Adrian Rogers**

Amplification: We learned in this session that God does promise guidance for our lives. Jesus told His disciples, "When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come" (John 16:13). This promise, the sending forth of the Holy Spirit to guide into all truth, was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost and remains true for us today. God is never trying to hide His will from us, but He sovereignly reveals His will in three specific ways.

The first type of will we need to understand is what is called God's "sovereign will," or His "prevailing will." This refers to His overarching purpose which can never be thwarted. We may not understand how or when God's purpose will come to pass, but we can be certain it will. The rotation of the stars and planets throughout the universe is an example of God's sovereign will. So is the sovereignty and immutability of His Word. Here are some examples:

Proverbs 19:21 "There are many plans in a man's heart, nevertheless the LORD's counsel—that will stand."

Isaiah 55:11 "So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it."

Matthew 5:18 "For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled."

Matthew 24:35 (cross reference Mark 13:31; Luke 21:33) "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away."

For Discussion: How does the sovereignty of God's will impact your view of world events? Does it strengthen your faith, or do you feel things are spinning out of control?

Amplification: The second type of will that we see God exercise is called His "general will," or His "permissive will." Many people question the existence or goodness of God when they ask, "Why do bad things happen to good people?" Or, "Why does God allow evil to be in the world?" God certainly does not desire for bad things to happen to good people, or for evil to run unchecked, but He has sovereignly given mankind, beginning with Adam, the ability either to follow Him in obedience or to suffer the consequences of sin and death. This permissive will is foundational to understanding how we have a free will to either choose or reject obedience. Here are some examples:

Deuteronomy 30:19 “I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live;”

Joshua 24:15 “And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”

2 Peter 3:9 “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”

For Discussion: How would you handle a conversation with someone who rejects God because of “All the starving children,” or some other such evil in the world?

Amplification: The third form of will that God exercises is His personal will for every believer. He has a general will for each believer’s sanctification, to be set apart unto Him. But, there is a specific will for each of our lives. Again, we can either choose to obey Him in His plan for our lives, or we can be disobedient. Some people believe God’s plan or “calling” has to be something significant; like being a CEO of a great company, an important politician, a preacher, or a missionary. Although those are certainly possibilities, sometimes the most significant thing we can ever accomplish is just to be faithful in our day-to-day devotion and obedience to Him. We may never know the significance of the part we play in the great mosaic of God’s providence this side of Heaven, but our steadfast commitment is what He seeks.

Psalms 37:3-5 “Trust in the LORD, and do good; dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness. Delight yourself also in the LORD, and He shall give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass.”

For Discussion: Do you feel that you are fulfilling God’s plan for your life? Why, or why not?

PERSONAL APPLICATION

This week in your personal devotions, ask the Lord to help you know more of who He is and what He would have you do. Make that a daily prayer of your life.

GROUP PRAYER REQUESTS

Suggested group prayer – “Lord, we are grateful for Your providential, permissive, and personal will. Help us to be ever mindful that You do have a plan for each of our lives, and help us to obediently follow that plan.”

ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURES TO STUDY

If you have children that you are raising, you know what it is to guide them with your eye. One look to a child who is inherently intent on pleasing a parent can correct their behavior without a word. That is how our relationship with the Lord should be. Our trust and commitment to Him should be such that He does not have to harness us with “bit and bridle.”

Psalms 32:8-10 “I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye. Do not be like the horse or like the mule, which have no understanding, which must be harnessed with bit and bridle, else they will not come near you. Many sorrows shall be to the wicked; but he who trusts in the LORD, mercy shall surround him.”

Proverbs 3:5-6 “Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.” Proverbs are not promises, but are principles by which we are to live. The best way to discover God’s will for your life is to fully trust and be committed to Him with all of your heart, and by so doing, not to trust in your own understanding or abilities.

Ephesians 2:10 “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”

As you meditate on the depth of meaning of this verse, consider for yourself what the “good works” are that God has prepared for your life. You may want to list them in a journal and make certain determinations to actively fulfill them.

Additional Reading Resources

- Charles Caldwell Ryrie, “A Popular Systematic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth,” (Moody Press, 1999)
- Jerry Bridges, “The Pursuit of Holiness,” (NavPress, 1996)
- Timothy Winters, “Discovering David’s Destiny; Insightful Expositions to Help Christians Discover Their Personal Destiny,” (Mount Carmel Books, 2004)

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VIDEO PRESENTATION NOTES

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