

LESSON EIGHT: How to Know THE WILL OF GOD

SESSION FOUR

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

This session concludes Pastor Adrian Rogers' biblical study of how to know and apply the will of God in our daily lives. This segment will continue to expound upon the practical ways in which we can know God's will, and thereby live fulfilled 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

In the last session, Pastor Rogers began to discuss practical ways that we can discern the will of God. He shared that we could know God's will through miracles, His Word, and through the counsel of godly people. In this session, Pastor Rogers introduces three additional practical ways that God uses to communicate His will to believers.

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

- How can a Christian discern the difference between the persuasion of the Holy Spirit and one's own personal will, or even demonic influence?
- In what ways does God express His wisdom to us, and how do you think we can come to know it?

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

The Holy Spirit never shoves; He guides and leads. If you find a hand between your shoulders blades just shoving you, that’s not the Holy Spirit. —**Adrian Rogers**

Amplification: A forth practical way to know the will of God is through the influence of the Holy Spirit. But we need to remember that the Holy Spirit persuades gently, He never forces. We always have the ability to disregard or disobey His gentle influence which will tend to lead to the unfortunate circumstance of missing the Lord’s blessings (see Psalm 1). When discussing spiritual truths, all human analogies tend to fall short, but one possible way to understand the work of the Holy Spirit is to consider the needle of a compass. We cannot see, touch, or even feel the effect of magnetism on the compass, yet the needle spins around to give direction in the way one should go. An experienced woodsman or soldier knows how to navigate using a compass, but he must **trust** and **obey** the compass needle. There are times when, deep in unfamiliar woods or jungle, surrounded by darkness, the strong human instinct is to turn to the left, but the compass indicates the way to go is to the right. Despite what he may **feel** is right, the woodsman or soldier must choose to trust and obey the direction given by the compass in order to safely reach his destination.

For Discussion: Have there been any times in your life when you experienced an inner struggle where you “felt” something was the thing to do, but the Holy Spirit seemed to be leading you in another direction. If you are willing, share the experience with your group and what you learned from it.

Amplification: The fifth practical way we can know the will of God for our lives is through His wisdom. A true born-again believer has access to the wisdom of God through the renewing of the mind. We are told in Romans 12:1,2: “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

Also in Ephesians 5:15-17, we read: “See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.”

So, the question then becomes, “How can we know this wisdom?” One obvious way to receive God’s wisdom is to be a student of God’s Word. The Bible says in 2 Timothy 2:15, “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” A very practical way to become filled with godly wisdom is to make a habit of reading a chapter from the book of Proverbs every day. A simple way to do this is to read the chapter corresponding to the day of the month. By the end of the month, you will have read through the entire book of Proverbs. Repeating the practice month after month will begin to cement godly wisdom into your daily thought processes.

Another obvious way to know God’s wisdom is to simply ask Him for it. James 1:5 tells us, “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.” However, in asking, we must approach God with a willingness to hear, and to obey. James warns us in the next three verses to ask in faith, and to not be “double-minded” (literally two-souled), wavering and unstable.

For Discussion: How important do you feel it is to know, and practice, godly wisdom? Is biblical wisdom still applicable today; how so, or why not?

Amplification: The sixth practical way to know the will of God is through God's providence. This is sometimes difficult to grasp because it requires an absolute surrender to, and acceptance of, God's will. The age-old question of "Why do bad things happen to good people?" is only correctly understood in the light of God's providence. God does not wish anyone harm, nor is He the cause of bad things (meaning all the evil that is in the world). He is deeply grieved over every wickedness that has befallen mankind since Adam, and that is why Jesus came into the world. Though we live in a fallen world and all must deal with the effects of sin, God providentially allows us to choose to look to Him for salvation (deliverance), and to trust in His providential care. That does not mean we can live our lives without problems, frustrations, illness, or even physical death, but it does mean that we can trust Him because, "We know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28). We tend to see life and our world like the backside of a tapestry with all of its knots and myriad of colored threads that appear as a tangled, meaningless, mess. Yet, on the opposite side of the tapestry is an intricately woven design that reveals a magnificent landscape or tells a wonderful story. We may not understand or like what may befall us, but we can trust Him to make it into something good.

For Discussion: Has there been a time in your life when you questioned what God was doing? How did you approach the situation at the time, and what did you learn from the experience?

PERSONAL APPLICATION

This week during your quiet time with the Lord, review any notes you have taken during these sessions and focus your attention on any areas that you might want to develop further to better understand God's will for your life.

GROUP PRAYER REQUESTS

Suggested group prayer – "Lord, we are grateful for Your love, and for how You desire for us to know and respond to Your will. As we conclude this study, help us to live for You so that You may be glorified through our lives."

ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURES TO STUDY

Read I Kings 19:11-18. As you do so, place yourself in Elijah's shoes as he struggles to understand God's will for his life. Meditate on how the Lord was not in the dramatic manifestations of fire, wind, and earthquake, but that He spoke to Elijah in a "still small voice." Consider also how the Lord directed Elijah to return to the city of Damascus where Ahab and Jezebel were waiting to kill him, and how Elijah despaired at the thought of being all alone, yet the Lord had preserved seven thousand who had not bowed to Baal.

Readings from Proverbs

The subject of wisdom is found addressed in the book of Proverbs more than 50 times, and usually in the context of understanding or discerning God's will. Consider the verses and determine to make it a priority to seek and apply the wisdom of God in your personal life.

Proverbs 3:13-18 "Happy is the man who finds wisdom, And the man who gains understanding; for her proceeds are better than the profits of silver, and her gain than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies, and all the things you may desire cannot compare with her. Length of days is in her right hand, in her left hand riches and honor. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her, and happy are all who retain her."

Proverbs 4:5-7 "Get wisdom! Get understanding! Do not forget, nor turn away from the words of my mouth. Do not forsake her, and she will preserve you; love her, and she will

keep you. Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom. And in all your getting, get understanding.”

Proverbs 9:10–11 “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. For by me your days will be multiplied, and years of life will be added to you.”

ADDITIONAL READING RESOURCES

- Carolyn Nystrom, “Listening to God,” (IVP Connect, 2015)
- C. I. Scofield, “The New Life in Christ Jesus,” (The Bible Institute Colportage Association, 1915)
- Matthew Henry, “Secret of Communion with God,” (Solid Ground, 2005)

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