



Finding God's Will for my Life

Ever wondered...

How do I find God's will for my life? What does God want me to do?

Good question!

1. God has a good and unique plan for you



So it's good to start at the start. God has a good plan for your life. And it will fit you well. If we compared our lives to a model wearing clothes, then God won't ask you to wear 'clothes' that don't fit. He will kit you out in the right 'clothes' that work for you – even if you sometimes have to 'grow' into them!

But we need to know something really important. What God defines as 'good' may not be quite the same as what you define as 'good'.

Don't worry, it's not like your idea of good is being married but God's idea of good is that you live alone on a desert island! It's more that God's got a wider and deeper way of seeing what good is – for you and for God's purposes in the world. So God wants us to love him, love others, grow in our relationship with God, to treat people right and things like that. But he's also interested in what you're interested in too!

So what does God say? In Jeremiah 29.11 God tells Israel he has good plans for them.

"For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope."

We can also say that God says the same to us.

2. God knows who you are and helps you!



I used to be worried about what God would ask me to do – 'What if he wants me to go to the middle of Africa... I don't want to go to Africa' !

My brother did want to go to Africa and that's where he went! I didn't want to go and so I've done other things in other places. God knew me and he knew my brother. We were different and so we did different things! The same is true for you.

The great thing about God is that he puts desires in your heart (ones that line up with God's way of thinking!) and if you don't want to do something but God asks you to do it, he'll put the desire and ability in you. So we don't have to worry.

The Bible says: "For it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose." (Philippians 2.13)

So God will work in us to make happen the things that he calls us to do. Our part? We just say yes to God and agree to obey him!

3. God puts desires and abilities inside of you



One of the worst pieces of advice I ever heard was someone saying 'lay down everything you want to do and even what you're good at and ask God for his plan instead.' It's good advice in one way but it's bad advice in another way!

So – God wants to give you his plan for your life. He won't simply say yes to whatever we want because he knows what's best for us and what we need! So if we say to God 'I want your ways above my ways' then that's good. Often our ways come from the 'human' part of us but God's best comes from the Spirit of God in us and is so much better!

But – God puts desires, skills, ideas inside of each of us and usually that should give us an idea of the kinds of things God wants us to do – or gives us freedom to do. So if you're good at something, that's probably the kind of direction God wants you to take.

Finally, the more we grow close to God, the more our desires become the same as God's desires and the more God trusts us. So God gives us freedom! Sometimes he's really clear about things but other times he gives us the wisdom and freedom to decide!

In the movie, "The Lady In The Van" we read about the true story of a lady who ended up living in a van on someone's drive for 15 years. One of the reasons she ended up there was that she was a gifted pianist but felt to become a nun. At the convent, she was encouraged to give up piano to 'show her dedication to God.' This dragged her down and she ended up in the van, her spirit crushed.

God may ask you to give something up if it's harmful for you and others. But he doesn't put good gifts and skills in you and then ask you to never do them. There is no way God told the woman to give up piano. That is religion and religion only brings death. God brings life!!

4. We put God first and things start to happen



Jeremiah 29.12 says that when we seek God with all our heart, we'll find him. It's not that God is in hiding. He's not playing hide and seek. But sometimes God hides for us and not from us (oooh, profound!)

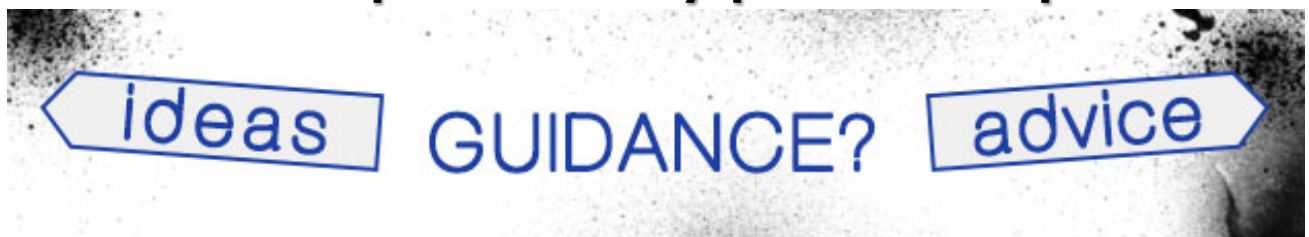
Have you ever seen some romantic type movie where the woman is running along somewhere and hiding away from the guy chasing her. She's not actually running away from him, she wants him to pursue her.

OK so God isn't really like a romantic movie. But sometimes God walks a bit further away to build our faith and to help us find our way. He encourages us to take "step out and find out" rather than just asking him about everything. It's called growing up in God, just like we (should!) grow up from being children to adults.

The Bible also talks about committing our way to God. So this means we say to God, 'God, this is what I'm thinking or what I've got to do. Help! Be involved! I need you!' or words like that. It's about involving God in everything. There's a famous verse in Psalm 37.4 which says that as we delight ourselves in God, he gives us the desires of our heart. It means that as we get close to God, we get to want what God wants. God also lets us do and have things that are good for us!

The last thing to remember is that God will block wrong ways if we're seeking him and want to obey him! So pay attention to what God says and any warnings he gives you! It will save you a lot of trouble.

5. This is helpful but any practical tips?



Here's a few practical tips for you... Remember that the Holy Spirit wants to guide you into all truth (John 16.13). It's wise not to take any one thing alone to make a decision.

1. Read the Bible and see if anything specific 'jumps' off the page. Be consistent in reading the Bible. Opening it up and pointing your finger at a random verse may work at first but God wants us to grow up!

2. Ask wiser Christians around you – those who won't crush your God-dreams! Get alongside people who've done stuff for God, love God, aren't all bitter and

twisted and those who have been faithful – of any age. Definitely ask people for prophetic – God – words but always check them against the Bible and don't just accept everything.

3. Your circumstances also often point to how God is leading you – what opens up? What closes down?

4. The Holy Spirit will lead you. It's like a 'prompting' in the area of your stomach – a 'gut feeling' or a 'knowing'. This is God's leading but you should check it out against the Bible!

5. Sometimes God hides his will for us – revealing it as we walk. So God opens up things as we're faithful and put him first.

6. Do something. Be active in looking for God's will. Try for a job, volunteer in church and see what works. Sometimes you wait on God but other times if it's something you're interested in, then push the door and push again to see if the door budes!

7. As you grow up in God, he gives you freedom to decide. God's will for us as Christians is to be like him. God will work through whatever circumstance you're in and whatever job, school, University or town!

8. Just ask God and be specific. He's promised to answer you when you seek him with real passion. Remember to let God work his plans out for you – don't try to force things!

9. Get alone with God and sit in silence with him. It's hard but it's good practice. To hear, you have to listen!

10. Are there any needs that you feel passionate about? Get involved in that and watch what God does.

Finally, chill out. When you're walking with God, putting him first and doing what you can, God will do the rest. You'll hear his voice behind you whispering when you turn left or right. (Isaiah 30.21) He's. The. Best. Guide. Ever.