
How to Find
God's Will
for Your Life

For many of us, this is the million-dollar question...

"What does God want me to do with my life?"

How can we find out?

How can we know for sure that we're following His will?

Through this study you'll discover three important steps which, when put into practice, play a crucial role in helping each of us to discern God's guidance, and ultimately find His will for our lives!

Step 1: Submit

What is “*submission*”?

- Unfortunately, this word is given a very negative connotation in today’s society. It is often likened to bondage, or the giving up of one’s rightful freedoms. However, Biblical submission—the kind that God calls us to—is in fact the **exact opposite**. Keep this in mind, and we’ll come back to it shortly.

Proverbs 3:5-6 ⁵ *“Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; ⁶ in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.”*

What does it mean to trust in God with *all* your heart?

- To hold nothing back from Him—to have **complete** confidence in Him in all things.
 - We must be honest with ourselves, and take note if there is any part of our lives where we aren’t trusting God 100%. Some examples could include not fully trusting Him with our career choice, our finances, our health, finding a spouse, protecting us from harm, etc.
 - **A good litmus test:** If we find ourselves stressed out or anxious about any aspect of our lives, it’s a sign that we’re not fully trusting God in that area.
- To rest in His wisdom alone, with no need for affirmation from earthly sources.
 - God will certainly call us do to things that are not popular, or even “wise,” according to the world’s expectations. When these situations arise, it’s imperative that we trust God’s counsel above any earthly counsel. As **Romans 3:4** says, if it comes down to trusting God or trusting man, we are to *“let God be true, and every man a liar.”*

What does it mean to not lean on your own understanding?

- We should not think ourselves to be wiser than God!
 - **Proverbs 3:7-8** ⁷ *“Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and depart from evil. ⁸ It will be health to your flesh, and strength to your bones.”*
- We so often fall into the trap of thinking that we have a better idea of what will make us happy than God does. But we must remember that He created us!
 - **Psalms 139: 13-16** ¹³ *“For You formed my inward parts; you covered me in my mother’s womb. ... ¹⁶ Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them.”*
 - He knows us better than we even know ourselves, and He had a perfect plan for our lives written out before we were even born! Only He is able to guide us into this path—the path which He knows will bring us ultimate joy and fulfillment.

How can we acknowledge Him in all we do?

- Acknowledging God is two-fold:
 - We can acknowledge Him **before** we make a decision, and also acknowledge Him **after**, when we see the results of that decision.

Before: We can ask for His wisdom and guidance for **all** of our decisions.

- God wants us to confide in Him first and foremost, above anyone else. When tough decisions arise, we often think to call our mother, father, sister, friend, etc., when our first instinct should be to go to God in prayer.
- In **Isaiah 9:6**, Jesus is called our “Counsellor”, and this is one of the main purposes that the Father intended in giving us the gift of His Son’s Spirit.
 - **Isaiah 30:21** is a promise from God to His people, and it says: “Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, “**This is the way, walk in it,**” whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left.”
 - And this provides the answer to the question you may be thinking of—“*Won’t it be tedious to ask for God’s counsel on every single decision I make?*” Every morning we can pray and ask Christ to be our Counsellor, to guide our steps throughout the day. Then, as decisions come up, we can listen for His still small voice to impress us with the proper action to take.

After: As we get into the habit of approaching our daily decisions this way, we’ll begin to start recognizing and testifying of God’s leading regularly, even in the smallest things. When we trust Him with **everything**, we will begin to see His hand manifest in **every** area of our lives.

What promise does He make to those who follow this counsel – to trust in Him with all their heart, to not lean on their own understanding, and to acknowledge Him in everything they do?

- He **will** direct their paths!
- Remember that God’s love is founded in **free will**, so He will not *force* His will upon your life. If we don’t want to submit a certain area to Him, He won’t forcefully take control of that area. However, if we follow this counsel and seek His guidance in all we do, He will keep His promise to direct our paths.
 - **Psalm 16:11** “**You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.**”

James 4:7 “*Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.*”

What is true submission to God?

- As was mentioned before, the idea of submitting has gained a bad reputation in today’s culture. Many minds connect it to the thought of being in *bondage* under the authority of another person. However, this understanding is in polar opposition to what God has intended. The submission God calls us to is meant to bless us, not to bind us.

- We find light on the difference between man's idea of submission, and God's intention for submission, in the story of the prodigal son found in **Luke 15:11-32**. We see something amazing when we compare the relationships of each son to their father...
- **The Younger Son:**
 - What did the younger son do?
 - **Luke 15:12-14** ¹² *"And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me.' So he divided to them his livelihood. ¹³ And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living. ¹⁴ But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want."*
 - He rejected his father's counsel and protection, and went off into the world to live how he wanted to without having to answer to anyone. When he realized that the things the world offered couldn't bring him true happiness or fulfillment, he repented of his decision and chose to return home. However, notice what he felt he must do to be accepted by his father...
 - **Luke 15:18-19** ¹⁸ *"I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, ¹⁹ and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants."*
 - This son had the same misconception that many people do today about what submission entails. He thought that to be accepted back under his father's roof, he would have to take the place of a servant in bondage. He did not know his father's heart.
 - **Luke 15:20-24** ²⁰ *"And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. ²¹ And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.' ²² But the father said to his servants, 'Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. ²³ And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; ²⁴ 'for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' And they began to be merry."*
 - The father didn't want a servant, he just wanted to bless his son with love, protection, and provision. God's heart is the same towards each of us. But notice that this son had to choose to submit himself to this channel of blessing, just as we must do the same with God! The boy's father didn't force him to stay under his care, and God will not force us either.
- **The Older Son:**
 - What about the older son? We don't often talk much about him...
 - **Luke 15: 25-30** ²⁵ *"Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. ... ²⁸ But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him. ²⁹ So he answered and said to his father, 'Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends. ³⁰ But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him.'"*

- The older son had remained under his father's care, but he was not living in true submission either; he was not resting in the channel of blessing. This was revealed by his jealousy for not having been thrown a party like his brother who'd returned home. He didn't realize how blessed he was to be living under his father's protection, provision and guidance. He didn't see that everything he could need or want was already available to him.
 - **Luke 15:31-32** ³¹ *"And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and **all that I have is yours.** ³² It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.'"*
- Some people may have the outward appearance of "submitting" to God's instructions, but may be doing so out of fear, obligation, or wanting something in return. They are not truly at rest in the peace of joyful submission. This is why, in many cases, we have to make the mistake of following after our own plans and ambitions until we discover that they can never fulfill the deep desires of our heart. Then we can return in true repentance, as the younger son did, and **joyfully** surrender and submit to our Father's ways.

It's only as we give ourselves **completely** into God's hands in trust and love, that He can guide us into His perfect will for our lives. Joyfully submitting to Him, accepting His wisdom above our own, opens the channel of blessing from our Heavenly Father to us, His children. In this submission we allow Him to take control—to guide us, work in and through us, and protect us from the enemy's attacks. Which brings us to the next part of this verse, and the next step in our lesson...

Step 2: Resist

James 4:7 *"Therefore submit to God. **Resist the devil** and he will flee from you."*

What does it mean to resist the devil?

- To stand firm on God's promises and not be swayed by the enemy, who is the father of lies.
 - **John 8:44** *"... He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because **there is no truth in him**. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it."*
- But what is the only way that we can be able to *discern* his lies?
 - It is only possible for us to detect a lie when we know the **truth!** We must keep ourselves grounded in truth daily by reading God's word, and asking for Christ's Spirit to give us wisdom and discernment.
 - **John 17:17** *"Sanctify them by Your truth. **Your word is truth.**"*
 - **John 14:6** *"Jesus said to him, **'I am the way, the truth, and the life. ...'**"*
- If we hold any part of our lives back from God, it leaves an area of weakness where the devil can come in and exert his influence.
 - If we notice a particular area where we're really struggling (ex. we seem "cursed" with bad relationships, health issues, etc.), it's a likely indication that we're not fully surrendering that area to God, and therefore leaving it open and vulnerable for the enemy's attacks.

No matter what areas we may be currently holding back from God, He is there waiting patiently for us to let Him in. He longs to kick the devil out of those areas and set us on His intended path for us, but it's up to us to humble ourselves and come to Him in surrender. Furthermore... Any effective resistance needs armor!

Ephesians 6:10-18 ¹⁰ *"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armour of God, **that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.** ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.*

¹⁴ *Stand therefore, having **girded your waist with truth**, having put on **the breastplate of righteousness**, ¹⁵ and having shod your feet with the preparation of **the gospel of peace**; ¹⁶ above all, taking **the shield of faith** with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. ¹⁷ And take **the helmet of salvation**, and **the sword of the Spirit**, which is the Word of God; ¹⁸ praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints."*

What is special about this suit of armor?

- It's not physical armor, but *spiritual*. God is reminding us here that every step of our lives—everything we see happening in the physical world—is influenced by a war that we can't see. And so, to be prepared to withstand spiritual battles, we need to be clothed in spiritual armor.
 - **The Belt of Truth** – Truth is what holds the entire armor together. If the things we believe are not truth, then our whole protection falls apart. Why? Remember that what the enemy most often attacks us with is his speciality – lies. If we don't know the truth, we cannot discern the lies, and if we can't detect the attacks coming at us, how can we be prepared to resist them?
 - **The Breastplate of Righteousness** – What does the breastplate specifically protect? The heart. Righteousness is being in harmony with God's character, and this harmony protects our heart. All of God's commandments are given for our protection, because He knows that straying outside of His will only causes misery and heartbreak. This is how righteousness—not only living in harmony with God's law, but with the *underlying principle of God's law*, which is selfless love—protects our hearts. When we fall out of harmony with God, we become disconnected from the Source of love Himself, and this can only lead us down a path of heartbreak.
 - **Feet Shod with the Gospel of Peace** – This element of the armor directs our steps and keeps us moving forward despite the dangers of being in enemy territory. When the direction of our life is motivated by the urgency to share the news of God's love with as many souls as possible, no obstacles that Satan tries to set up will be able to stand in our way.
 - **The Shield of Faith** – *"Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."* (**Hebrews 11:1**) Faith is believing in what God's Word says even when our human experience tells us differently. Satan's #1 attack strategy is to make us doubt God's promises using the things we see. He says, *"Look how many times you've fallen back into sin! You'll never be able to overcome it."* or *"Look at all these people dying from cancer. You think God will actually heal you?"* In times like these we must exercise faith, the most powerful piece of armor to *"quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one"*. It is our shield, our first line of defense. Satan's darts are powerless to touch us when we walk by faith and not by sight.
 - **The Helmet of Salvation** – A helmet protects our brain—our mind. We're encouraged to set our minds on the things above, not on things of this earth (**Colossians 3:2**), because this mindset protects us from Satan's attempts to overwhelm us with the cares of daily living. Keeping our minds focused on our eternal salvation, and the salvation of those around us, allows the cares of this world to fade into insignificance.
 - **The Sword of the Spirit** – The **only weapon** in our suit of armor is the Word of God, *"living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow."* (**Heb. 4:12**) When Jesus had been in the wilderness for 40 days without food or water, He was left with no physical strength and could thus illustrate a life-saving principle. He answered every tempting lie of Satan with *"It is written..."*, and the devil had no rebuttal. At the mighty Word of God, the enemy is rendered powerless. This is why it is crucial to memorize Scripture, so that we can reject the devil's lies the moment they try to come against us.

How do we obtain this armor?

- The first step to obtaining this armor is to ask God to send the Spirit of His Son, Jesus Christ, to dwell within you, believing in the sure promise of this gift.
 - **Galatians 4:6** *"And because you are sons, God has **sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts**, crying out, 'Abba, Father!'"*
- Consider this amazing reality in connection with each of the pieces of armour...

Jesus **IS**:

- Our Truth
 - **John 14:6** *"Jesus said to him, **"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."***
 - Our Righteousness
 - **2 Corinthians 5:21** *"For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become **the righteousness of God in Him.**"*
 - Our Good News
 - **I John 4:9** *"In **this** the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent **His only begotten Son** into the world, that we might live through Him."*
 - Our Faith
 - **Rev. 14:12** *"Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and **the faith of Jesus.**"*
 - Our Salvation
 - **I John 5:11** *"And this is the testimony: that God has given us **eternal life**, and this life is **in His Son.**"*
 - And the Living Word of God!
 - **Rev. 19:13** *"He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called **The Word of God.**"*
- **Everything** we need to resist the devil is found in Christ! Only by receiving His Spirit can we be fitted with the armor necessary to withstand all the schemes of the enemy.
 - **Romans 13:12-14** ¹² *"The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on **the armor of light.*** ¹³ *Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy.* ¹⁴ *But **put on the Lord Jesus Christ**, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts."*
 - And the second step is to continue abiding in Him – reading His Word, seeking His Will, and praying for His indwelling Spirit every day. As we grow in Christ our armor will become stronger and stronger, until the enemy will have no power to sway us away from the path God intends for us.

Step 3: Expect

Expect God to send the Spirit of Christ into our hearts, to be our Counsellor and Guide!

- **Luke 11:13** *"If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, **how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!**"*
- **I John 5:14-15** ¹⁴ *"Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask **anything according to His will**, He hears us. ¹⁵ And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, **we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.**"*
 - Do you think it's God's will to fill us with His Spirit?... Of course it is!
 - Then, according to this verse, from the first time we sincerely ask to be filled with the Spirit of Christ, we can **know** that we have received it! We may not feel any different physically, but we must remember that this is a spiritual reality. This is where faith comes in – to believe in the things we cannot see, and trust that God is faithful to keep His promises.
- **Hebrews 11:6** *"But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God **must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.**"*
 - God **will not fail** to reward those who seek Him by giving them the gift of His Spirit.
 - **Note:** This belief is what will actually translate into having the confidence to live the way Jesus lived – speaking the truth in boldness and rebuking the enemy in Jesus' name. When we **truly** believe that Christ is living in us, we will know that we have the power and authority to do these things. This will then translate into acting on that belief, to free ourselves and those around us from the enemy's oppression, and fulfill Christ's great commission. (**Mark 16:15-18**)

Expect Him to show us where He wants us to go!

- **Psalm 32:8** *"I will **instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye.**"*
 - God used to guide His people by sending counsel through His prophets, but today He has spoken through His Son (**Hebrews 1:2**), and desires to speak directly to us through the Spirit of His Son!
 - Check out just a few examples of God's people receiving specific instructions from Christ's Spirit within them. He desires to guide us in the same way!
 - **Acts 8:29** *"Then **the Spirit said to Philip**, 'Go near and overtake this chariot.'"*
 - **Acts 10:19-20** ¹⁹ *"While Peter thought about the vision, **the Spirit said to him**, 'Behold, three men are seeking you. ²⁰ Arise therefore, go down and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them.'"*
 - **Acts 13:2** *"As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, **the Holy Spirit said**, 'Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.'"*

- **Acts 16:7** "After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but **the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them.**"
- If we claim the promise of His Spirit, and listen for His still, small voice, Christ's Spirit will surely guide us into God's will.
 - **Psalm 37:23-24** ²³ "The steps of a good man are **ordered by the LORD**, and He delights in his way. ²⁴ "Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; for **the LORD upholds him** with His hand."
 - **Jeremiah 29:11** "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of **peace** and not of evil, to give you **a future and a hope.**"

And finally...

Expect to experience God's will for our lives!

- **Proverbs 37:5** "Commit your way to the LORD, trust also in Him, and **He shall bring it to pass.**"
- **Isaiah 58:11** "The LORD **will guide you continually**, and **satisfy your soul** in drought, and **strengthen your bones**; you shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water whose waters **do not fail.**"

God wants nothing more than to see each one of us walking in the purpose for which He created us. When we joyfully **submit** to His ways, **resist** the enemy by abiding in Christ daily, and **expect** to see God's leading, He will fulfill His promise to guide us into His ultimate will for our lives.

I pray that you'll join me in taking these steps! It is on His path alone that we can find the fullness of joy, peace, excitement, and fulfillment that He desires for us, and I can testify that you will never, ever regret the decision to surrender your life into His hands. For "eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him!" (**1 Cor. 2:9**)

He awaits patiently for us to place ourselves within His channel of blessing. Will you take the first step today?