

**THE
YOUNG MINISTERS'
FORUM**

**BY THE
WILL
OF
GOD**

**STRENGTHENING YOUNG MINISTERS
TO SERVE GOD'S PURPOSE**

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For permissions, inquiries, or distribution requests,
contact +2348089440040 or send a mail to:

theyoungministersforum@gmail.com

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ISSUE PAPER:

BY THE WILL OF GOD

Introduction

“To understand the will of God is my problem; to undertake the will of God is my privilege; to undercut the will of God is my peril.”

—Paul S. Rees

One of the biggest questions Christians, especially young believers and ministers, ask is: What exactly does God want me to do? The will of God is a subject we cannot afford to take lightly.

We know there is the general will of God, which is revealed in Scripture for all people. For example:

- “It is the will of God that all men be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:4).
- “This is the will of God, even your sanctification” (1 Thessalonians 4:3).
- “In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you” (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

In a broader sense, the general will of God is to keep His commandments. Luke 8:21 says that Jesus’ “brothers and sisters” are those who “hear the word of God and do it.” In Matthew 12:50, He says that “His brothers and sisters” are those “who do the will of my Father in heaven.” Luke explains what Mathew called the will of God; Luke calls it “hearing the word of God and doing it”. This shows us that the will of the Father is found in the word of God. In other words, hearing and acting on God’s Word is precisely what it means to fulfill His will.

A major focus of this paper is the directive will/Particular will. It is about the particular will of God — those specific, personal directions God gives us that are not explicitly written in the Bible. Questions like: What career should I pursue? Whom should I marry? When should I relocate? Which ministry assignment should I accept? Most problems in the directive will of God was summarized by Jack Arnold in three ways:

1) Vocation: what do you want me to do in life? 2) Location: where do you want me to live geographically? 3) Situation: seeking divine guidance and knowing God's will for every situation.

John Stott wrote on this:

*"Nothing is more important in life than to discover and do the will of God. Moreover, in seeking to discover it, it is essential to distinguish between his 'general' and his 'particular' will. The former is so called because it relates to the generality of His people and is the same for all of us, e.g. to make us like Christ. His particular will, however, extending to the particularities of our life, is different for each of us, e.g. what career we shall follow, whether we should marry, and if so whom. Only after this distinction has been made can we consider how we may find out what the will of the Lord is. His 'general' will is found in Scripture; the will of God for the people of God has been revealed in the Word of God. But we shall not find His 'particular' will in Scripture. To be sure, we shall find general principles in Scripture to guide us, but detailed decisions have to be made after careful thought and prayer and the seeking of advice from mature and experienced believers." (Stott, J. R. W. *God's New Society: The Message of Ephesians*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press)*

The Bible gives us principles to guide our decisions on the "particular will of God", but not direct statements for each case (You can't get whom to marry directly from the Bible, you don't want to marry the dead). And here is where the struggle often lies. Rees (Check the first quotation) admitted that he found it difficult to understand the will of God in this particular sense. He said, "To understand the will of God is my problem; We face the same challenge today. We all have questions and uncertainties coming from the limitations of our humanity. As Scripture says:

"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways," declares the Lord. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." (Isaiah 55:8–9)

This applies to the vast difference between God's perspective and ours. Many times, our natural reasoning is far from the way God thinks. Our minds are limited, but His wisdom is infinite.

The problem is not that God's will is impossible to know, but that it requires humility, patience, dependence on Him, and, importantly a Renewed Mind. These qualities take some time to develop. For many believers, especially young ministers, the greater struggle is not so much in undertaking the will of God as in understanding it. Many have not been properly taught, and other times we swing to extremes, either expecting an audible voice (or other spectacular means) for every decision or assuming God leaves the specifics entirely to us without any form of involvement in our lives.

Yet, as Rees said, "to undertake the will of God is my privilege". Once we know God's will, obeying it should never be a burden but an honor. It is a joy to partner with His purposes and live a life of trust and obedience. The will of God is the believer's natural environment — like a fish in water or a bird in the sky, we find our home with real freedom and fulfillment. To know it's a privilege makes "the yoke easy and the burden light". Like Jesus said, "My meat is to do the will of Him who sent me and to accomplish His work" (John 4:34). He saw it as the sweetest delicacy, utmost priority, and only sustenance for life. It's the secret of fulfillment and satisfaction.

A bird is free in the air. Place a bird in the water, and he has lost his liberty. A fish is free in the water, but leave him on the sand and he perishesThe Christian is free when he does the WILL OF GOD and is obedient to God's command. This is as natural a realm for God's child as the water is for the fish, or the air for the bird." Henrietta Mears

But Rees also warns that "to undercut the will of God is my peril". When we resist or undermine God's purpose, we harm ourselves. Jonah's disobedience placed him in the peril of the storm and the great fish (Jonah 1:1–17). The Pharisees, as Luke 7:30 records, "rejected the counsel of God for themselves." The Israelites in the wilderness "limited the Holy One of Israel" (Psalm 78:41). Disobedience is self-destructive, bringing spiritual loss and lack of fulfillment.

That is why this subject must be approached with seriousness. In this paper, we will look closely at the phrase "***by the will of God,***" which Paul often used in his epistles. His life and ministry were anchored entirely in God's purpose, and his example will guide us in learning how to live and serve with the same conviction.

The approach of this study is threefold: first, exegetical, meaning we study the Scriptures plainly and carefully; second, devotional, reflecting on their meaning for our hearts and lives; and third, practical, applying the truths to our daily living. Additionally, we will draw insights from the writings and experiences of those who have gone before us, quoting them when and where necessary. This approach is crucial because, although many attempt to answer these questions, their guidance is often ungrounded in biblical teaching and sound wisdom. The question we must always ask is: What does the Bible say? How have godly men and women seen and practiced it?

By the Will of God

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God... (1 Corinthians 1:1; see also 2 Corinthians 1:1; Ephesians 1:1; Colossians 1:1; 2 Timothy 1:1)

Paul repeatedly grounds his apostleship in the will of God. The Greek word for “will” is *thelēma*, which means determination, choice, purpose, inclination. Paul was saying: My ministry is not a human appointment. I neither sought nor received permission from men. My authority and calling come from God Himself. ***“God has chosen my choice for me”***, that is what ‘by the will of God’ means. He did not ask for my consent or ideas. He decided what my life should be about.

God’s Sovereign Choice

We often talk about human free will and how God gives people liberty to make their choices. That’s true, but often overstated. Look at creation: when God created man, He made the choices: He decided man’s frame, that man would bear His image, that man would need a helper. He set things in order before Adam was even aware. God didn’t ask Adam what he wanted; rather, God decided what he wanted, what he should be—His image.

Even when humans “exercise their will,” it is still within the boundaries of God’s determination. Don’t get me wrong: it’s obvious they had volition, but that choice came with consequences. “Freedom” would mean choosing without a sense of judgment from someone they are accountable to. But were they ever truly ‘free’ in that sense? Scripture

shows that even in their choices, they are still accountable to God. God has marked out a boundary for them.

"So, God's purpose determines my choices. What my life is and what my purpose is must align with what pleases God."

Human free will is real, but it is not ultimate. From the beginning, God has determined the framework in which human choices operate.

- He decided man's frame and image (*Genesis 1:26–27; Psalm 139:13–16*).
- He decided man would need a helper (*Genesis 2:18–22*).
- He created everything for His pleasure (*Revelation 4:11*).

Even when humans “exercise their will,” they do so within God's ordained boundaries. Our choices are accountable to Him (*Genesis 2:16–17; Ecclesiastes 11:9*). God's will (thelēma) determines our calling and purpose; human choices operate within God's ordained boundaries. There was a Command and consequence in Eden (*Genesis 2:16–17; 3:1–19*). Moral accountability doesn't cancel volition; it defines it under God's rule.

It is what pleases God that defines me; Paul says he is an apostle because God made that choice, not because he planned it himself. He was saying, ***"I would not have chosen this life; I did not choose it—He chose it. He desired it and He wanted it"***. And all things exist to give Him pleasure and glory. Would you like to go Paul's way, to also mention your name and discern God's will, and say "by the will of God"?

The Nature of God's Will

Building on Paul's repeated statement that he is an apostle by the will of God, we now look into what this will actually is, how it functions, and how it relates to our calling and purpose.

"Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will" (Ephesians 1:5).

Here, God planned from eternity our destiny; to make those who believe His children through adoption, according to His pleasure and will. This leads to the praise of His glorious grace.

Verse 9 adds, “Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself.”

Insights from these verses on the nature of the will of God:

1. God’s Will as a Mystery:

The text emphasizes that God's will is a mystery, kept within Himself. This secrecy, the nature of His plans, which are not always apparent or understandable to humanity until they're revealed. In the New Testament usage of the word, according to Don Fleming "a mystery is not a puzzle or a secret that leaves people in ignorance, but a truth that God reveals. It usually refers to something that people normally would not know, but that God in his grace makes known to them (*Eph 3:4-5; Col 1:26; Rev 17:7*). Don Fleming explains further that “the truths concerning salvation through Jesus Christ are mysteries in this sense. People could not work them out by themselves, but God who planned salvation from eternity has revealed them (*Rom 16:25-26; 1 Tim 3:9,16*)”.

The word mystery means God’s plan can only be understood with the Holy Spirit’s help. I must quickly add that though the Scriptures is the revealed will of God, it came through the self-disclosure of God by the agency of His Spirit. The Scriptures should be seen as revelation of the mystery of God. I should talk about the categories of God’s Will as stated by theologians to learn few things.

Categories of God’s Will

Theologians have identified several categories to help explain this:

I. The Sovereign or Hidden Will: God’s eternal purposes and plans, including His governance over history and ultimate designs for creation. This encompasses what God ordains and accomplishes, often beyond human comprehension.

II. The Revealed Will: God's will as explicitly revealed in Scripture — His commands, instructions, and moral directives for humanity. This is knowable to all who read and study His Word.

III. The Permissive Will: What God permits in the world, including human choices and actions, even when they involve sin or suffering. While He does not directly cause sin, He allows human freedom to operate within His larger purposes.

IV. The Directive Will: This refers to the guidance God gives in particular situations in our lives, often through the leading of the Holy Spirit. Unlike the revealed will in Scripture, the directive will is not always apparent or explicitly written, but involves personal direction, decision-making, and spiritual discernment. It is through prayer, the Spirit's illumination, and godly counsel that we discern this aspect of God's will.

Nb: This category is integrated and connected. I do not consider it perfectly different.

2. According to His Good Pleasure (Eudokia): The phrase "according to His good pleasure" indicates that the nature of God's will is not arbitrary; it is rooted in His joy and satisfaction. This suggests that God delights in His purposes. He loves to see His divine plans come to fruition.

3. Purposed in Himself (Prothesis): Purposed in Himself" [prothesis] means to set forth, like exhibiting intentions—it is what He has planned by Himself; what gives Him good pleasure is to see what proceeds from Him and by Him; His delight in is in His purpose. God's intentions are self-originating. He sets forth His plans independently, showing His sovereignty and authority.

4. "Worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." vs 11: Everything God does revolves around His will. He does not need advice, counsel or strategic blueprint from anyone. He works in His own way, by His own infinite wisdom, at His own time, and for His own glory. He is own counsellor. This shows that God's workings on the earth are purposeful, he has an "architectural blueprint that determines his labors". Yet, he needs no counsellor. He is self-sufficient.

Ephesians 1 is all about God's will, purpose, and plan—His praise, pleasure, and glory centered in Christ. **When Paul says, “I am an apostle by the will of God,” he means I was chosen and predestined for this life and purpose. I have come to discover this by revelation, not by flesh and blood. This is what God desired and planned all along, for His own pleasure and glory. It is by Him and for Him. He has done this according to His blueprint. I didn't plan the design; he did, and it's all towards His ultimate goal.**

Every believer must be able to say the same thing.

Called

*Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, **called to be an apostle**, separated unto the gospel of God,(Rom 1:1 KJV, Emphasis mine)*

In *Romans 1:1*, Paul does not use the exact phrase "by the will of God," as in many of his other letters. Instead, he uses the word "called". But the word "called" gives insight into what he meant when he wrote "by the will of God". He was simply saying the same thing: **"I am only doing what I have been summoned by God to do. This word "called" (Greek: klētos) implies being invited or appointed.**

The term klētos is often associated to being invited to a feast or being presented before someone noble, indicating a divine selection rather than a human decision. The word is often used in the New Testament to describe **salvation**. This calling signifies that believers are invited into a relationship with God through Christ. We must always remember that our salvation is God's act rather than our initiative. We have been called to stand before the Holy King clothed by the blood of the lamb, to live a life that matches the new name he has called us in Christ as saints. This is often called the general will of God.

Other Scriptures showing the general call:

- *1 Corinthians 1:9: "God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord."*
- *2 Thessalonians 2:14: "To this He called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."*
- *Romans 8:30: "And those whom He predestined He also called, and those whom He called He also justified, and those whom He justified He also glorified."*

Specific Ministry

The term "klētos" not only refers to the call to salvation but is also used for the specific purposes and roles assigned to believers within that salvation. Each individual's calling can vary, reflecting the unique ways God intends for them to fulfill His purposes. Within the context of our salvation, we may be called to specific roles. Paul's use of "klētos" in relation to his apostleship illustrates a specific vocation within the broader context of being called to salvation. Imagine salvation as the gate to a mansion and specific call as different doors opening to different rooms within the building—salvation came for Paul before answering the call to Apostleship. Ultimately the call to salvation comes with other "calls" (Galatians 1:15; Ephesians 4:11-12, 2 Timothy 1:9)

Comparison of Terms for "Call" in the New Testament

In addition to "klētos", there is another significant Greek term for "call" in the New Testament: "kaleō". While klētos specifically refers to those who have been called or invited, Kaleō is the verb form that means "to call" or "to invite." So, they are of the same root. Contextually, Kaleō emphasizes the action of calling, while klētos focuses on the status of being called. Kaleō can be used in more general and various contexts, including invitations to events or gatherings but klētos is used more for divine appointments.

The word kaleō is also used by Jesus when He called His disciples to Himself. In *Matthew 4:21-22*, it states, "And going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets. And he called them." In *Acts 13:2*, it is used when Paul and Barnabas were called for a special work among the Gentiles: "While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.'" They did not choose this work; rather, they were called into it. The will of God is what a man is called to do, God's purpose defines each individual's calling. What has God called you to do?

Holy Summon

Put off your shoes,
On holy ground now you stand.
Stay away from what is common,
Shed the mundane cares.

On the mountain of the Lord,
The mountain of purpose, now you stand.
The holy wonder: the bush burns,
Yet it is not consumed.

Turn aside and see
The workings of God in your daily life,
The voice from the burning bush—
A call from your busyness,
A call away from distraction.

Can't you hear?
"I need your rod."

God often mysteriously awakens the hearts of men by His wonder. He brings us into His calling through such holy moments. Isaiah had such a moment when he encountered the heavenly choir. He would have loved to join that host, hearing the call:

“Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?” (Isaiah 6:8, ESV)

We walk in the will of God when we enter into His holy calling in Christ Jesus, a call to salvation. Paul received his vision on the road to Damascus, as recorded in Acts 9, leading him to salvation and then actively to help others. Paul was again called into His active Apostolic ministry to the Gentiles after salvation. Then again he was called to certain locations by divine promptings.

Acts 16:10: And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.

"Assuredly gathering" is from the word "sumbiazo", it is a mental effort that requires making conclusions from observations. It is to rightly interpret "signs" and make applications for action.

This word means “to bring together” — it can be used for:

1. Bringing facts or ideas together in the mind (reasoning, comparing, drawing conclusions).
2. Uniting or knitting together people or things.
3. In this context, Luke is describing how Paul and his companions took the vision Paul saw, combined it with their prior circumstances (doors closing in Asia and Bithynia, the Spirit’s leading, etc.), and mentally reasoned that God was directing them to Macedonia.

So, “assuredly gathering” here isn’t a mystical feeling — it’s a careful interpretation of God’s guidance by:

- Observing events and signs (the vision + prior divine restrictions).
- Reasoning them together (sumbibazō).
- Concluding and acting — they set sail immediately.

It involves thoughts and evidence being joined together until the path forward becomes clear. This is a vital way to recognize the call of God and the leading of the Spirit. We must observe the signs of God’s providence, divine promptings, and also restraints.

Paul had been restricted in his previous journey; the Spirit had prevented him from preaching in certain places. Only when the vision came did he see exactly what God wanted him to do. As Job reminds us, “God speaks in one way, and two, though man does not perceive it” (*Job 33:14*, ESV). Paul perceived it “twice” and concluded that he was summoned.

He didn’t wait for perfect weather or more confirmation. He “sumbiazoed” God’s mind — he interpreted, concluded, and acted. Many hear God speak, but never join the pieces. Some interpret, but never step out in faith. The call of God is not only to be discerned — it is to be obeyed.

A Holy Call

When He says, “Come,”
Though it seems a word so small,
I know it is a holy call,
Though on water He bids me come.

Though he gives not much clue when He says, “Come,”
But He walks on the waters where he bids me “Come”
He who sovereignly rules the storm
Can be trusted when He says, “Come.”

So, I go;
I answer the call!
Now, on His word—my voyage,
I ride the waves.

Not of Human origin

“Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead).” (Galatians 1:1, KJV)

In Galatians 1, Paul does not use the exact phrase “by the will of God,” but he says “not of men, neither by man”—meaning his apostleship did not come from human recommendation or authority. His ministry was entirely God’s initiative.

This is similar to *John 1:13* (KJV): “Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” Just as new birth is from God, not human effort, ministry and calling are supernatural in origin. Left to human choice, Paul would never have become an apostle; he could have remained zealous in his former religion. God’s plan, however, was different.

Paul was a Jew, trained in the law, and excelled in his religion: “Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless” (*Philippians 3:5-6*, KJV).

Yet God’s will was not for Paul to be an influential Pharisee, but a faithful minister of Christ. God’s call required him to leave his former

life, as he says in *Galatians 1:15-16* (KJV): “But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen...”. Paul understood that the will of God predate his existence. In his embryological process, there seems to be the workings of God in His DNA.

This mirrors Jeremiah’s calling: “*Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations*” (*Jeremiah 1:5, KJV*).

God’s will is not about the moment of the realization of calling; it is ordination before birth. Jeremiah was set apart before he was conscious of it. Similarly, the Messiah was called from the womb:

“The Lord hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name. And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he hid me” (*Isaiah 49:1-2, KJV*).

Even Jesus knew His calling early in life. At twelve, He understood He was about His Father’s business: “*How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?*” (*Luke 2:49, KJV*).

Psalm 139:13-16 (KJV) helps us see God’s involvement in us from the womb: “*For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother’s womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.*”

This confirms that God has a plan for every life, even before birth. He forms us with purpose, weaving our gifts, talents, and paths according to His will. While some callings are highly visible, God’s plan for each person is unique. Every believer has a special place in God’s overall purpose.

but with your own eyes you saw my body being formed. Even before I was born, you had written in your book everything I would do.

(Psa 139:16 CEV)

Genesis 1:26 (KJV) says: “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.”

Even before man was created, God had a purpose for humanity: to bear His image, to have dominion, and to fulfill His plan for creation. God sets purposes before any individual comes into being.

Jeremiah 10:23 (KJV) reminds us: “O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.”

This shows that it is not of man to determine his ultimate path or calling. Our purpose is established by God, not self-determined. From this, it is clear that God has a plan for every person, not just a select few. He ordains our purpose and prepares our path before birth. The book of Proverbs again and again emphasizes this principle: human counsels and ideas are limited, but God’s will only stands:

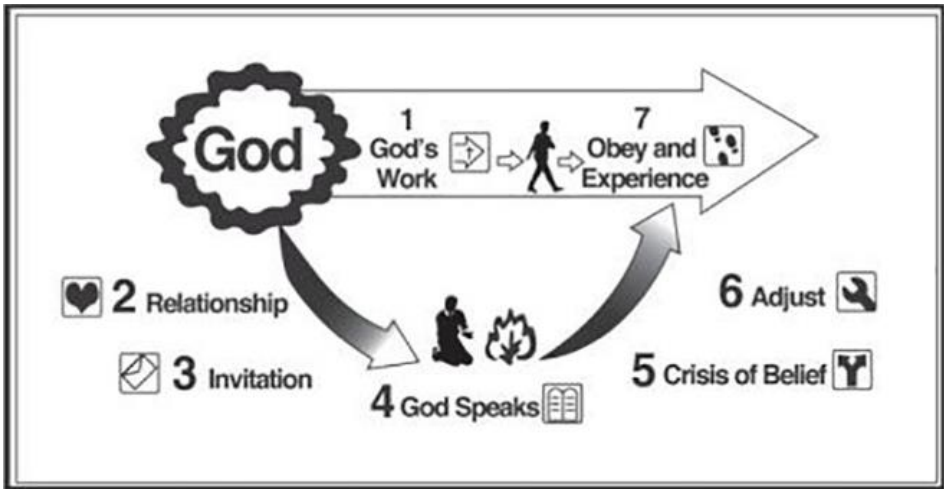
“There are many devices in a man’s heart; nevertheless the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand.” (Proverbs 19:21, KJV)

*“A man’s heart deviseth his way: but the Lord directeth his steps.”
(Proverbs 16:9, KJV)*

“The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord.” (Proverbs 16:33, KJV)

Even when we plan and make choices, we must prayerfully seek that it aligns with God’s counsel.

How to Identify and walk in the will of God



Henry Blackaby gave this diagram of Seven Realities that can help a person walk in the will of God. Let's go through the steps one by one:

1. God's Work (Exodus 3:1-10; Genesis 50:20; Isaiah 46:9-10)

The first thing in knowing the will of God is to understand what God is doing around you—the purposes He is accomplishing in the world. This can be understood when we see God's plan for salvation. The Bible shows that God is drawing people to Himself, changing lives, building His church, accomplishing His purposes in history, and preparing opportunities for His work.

For example, in Moses' life, God was already at work even while Moses was still at the back of the cycle. God was working to save His people, and Moses eventually joined that work when called. But it wasn't only Moses—Aaron, the elders, and Miriam also discerned what God was doing, and they entered the chariot of God's work alongside him. This shows that God's work precedes our involvement; He is already active, He is working in Nigeria, Africa, Asia, Europe etc! We must see and connect our lives, careers, professions or jobs, marriage choice, family, parenting, and all to what God is doing.

2. Relationship (Exodus 3:5-6; Psalm 25:14; John 15:4-5)

To accomplish His purposes, God draws us into an intimate relationship with Himself. This is the foundation of knowing and participating in His work. It is not just about knowing what to do, but about developing intimacy with God. A greater relationship is to know God more, see Him as holy, and allow that vision to shape our conduct and govern our desires.

For Moses, God revealed Himself as the God of his fathers and reminded him of His promises and covenant with the fathers. Intimacy with God comes through a real and dynamic relationship with Him, which involves: fellowshiping with God via His word and prayers personally and corporately, thereby understanding His nature, mind, and will, knowing His promises and covenant so we can align our lives with His nature and will. This is essential in knowing the will of God, for we get acquainted with His ways, and then our minds get renewed. We get to start liking what God likes, feeling what God feels, seeing what God sees, and thereby catching His heart!

Intimacy with God allows us to understand His trajectory for our lives and see Him better. “The will of God is not a road map, it is a relationship”.

3. Invitation (Exodus 3:7-10; Isaiah 6:8; Matthew 4:18-20)

As a person relates to God, an invitation to join Him in His work will come. As a man begins to sense what God is doing in Him and responding, He begins to see what God is doing around Him. Just like Isaiah, who was captured by the heavenly vision, the Spirit of God was working in his heart, purifying him. He began to discern what God was doing around Him.

When a man walks with God, he starts to sense what God is putting in his heart for the expansion of His kingdom. He comes to a holy consciousness of heavenly response to earthly groanings. This comes through burdens and circumstances around him. His invitation came from his relationship with God; even though he was at the backside of the desert, he was now positioned on the mountain. Cultivating the attitude of spending time in fellowship with God allows a person to sense

these invitations: burdens, groanings of people—nations, certain genders, ages, cities, villages, people groups, continents, etc!

4. God Speaks (Exodus 3:10-12; Numbers 12:6-8; I Sam 3:3-10, John 10:27)

God spoke to Moses and gave him specific instructions about what he should do. Similarly, God still speaks today, giving guidance, leadings, and instructions tailored to each person's situation. There are many ways God communicates his directive will, God is never silent; He always communicates with those who are in fellowship with Him. The key is that He speaks specifically, not vaguely, so a person can act in alignment with His will. However, what God says will always align with His Word, because Scripture is the ultimate measure of His truth.

Before discussing the methods or details of how God speaks, the most important point is this: God will definitely speak to a person who is cultivating a relationship with Him, understanding His ways, and being sensitive to His guidance. This is why it is crucial to always set aside time to fellowship with Him, study His Word, and wait for His voice.

Moses' experience shows this principle: God only revealed the specifics of his mission during the atmosphere of intimacy with Him. Similarly, we must be in the place of relationship to discern the clear, personal instructions God has for our lives.

4. Crisis of Belief (Exodus 3:11-14; 4:1-17; Judges 6:36-40)

There is a crisis of belief that a person faces when walking with God. Moses experienced this himself. He had self-doubt, even though he was already settled—he was doing well with his family, living in a village life (no stress), and shepherding. But doing fine doesn't mean doing the will of God. Being comfortable in your own space is not the same as walking in God's purpose.

When Moses asked about the will of God, he was disturbed. He was being called out of his comfort zone, and self-doubt arose. Past failures, his present life, and many uncertainties all contributed to a crisis of belief. At that moment, he saw God helping him question his own ability. He wrestled with feelings, fears, and even questioned whether people would accept him. He questioned God's plan for choosing him.

Faith often worries because some of us encounter moments where God calls us to something greater, and we begin to feel incapable. We may start to make compromises, hesitate, or linger in self-doubt and pity. A person who truly walks in the will of God is one who overcomes that moment, who can make a decision at the crisis point. God is displeased when a person disobeys Him or lingers in self-doubt and pity instead of trusting His guidance.

But this time is a time to learn to align our hearts with His will. When we say, “not my will but Yours,” it is a time to submit and synchronize with God’s plan. Following His will is a time of aligning our hearts with His purposes.

5. Adjust Exodus 4:18-20; Romans 12:1-2; Luke 9:23, Luke 14:26-23

After the crisis of belief, there is a place of aligning and following God’s will. To do this, we often must make changes. We rearrange priorities, let go of comforts, and shift our direction to align with God’s plan. Moses had to leave his shepherding life behind and step into the calling God had for him. He relocated! Sometimes you need relocation!!! Everyone God calls must pay a price. There is a leaving and a cleaving—a letting go of certain things, a forsaking, an adjustment in attitude, and a readiness to follow. We begin to cut off excesses, change our mindset, and sometimes leave familiar places or routines to obey God.

Adjustment can also involve doing things we may not want to do, or tasks that stretch our personality. For example, Moses was likely an introvert who struggled with speaking, yet he had to find ways to communicate God’s message. Following God’s will often changes us, shapes our character, and stretches us beyond our comfort zones.

6. Obey & Experience Exodus 14:13-31; Joshua 3:14-17; Mark 16:20

When we obey, we begin to experience God working through us. Our faith grows as we step into His work and see His power in action. Obedience connects us directly to God’s ongoing work on earth. For Moses, when he obeyed, he experienced the miraculous. The rod in his hand became God’s rod to part the Red Sea. He saw miracles unfold and realized it was not his power but God working through him. Obedience

allows us to participate in God's purposes and understand that our role is to cooperate with Him, not to initiate His work.

This step completes the cycle of the Seven Realities: noticing God's work, developing a relationship, receiving an invitation, listening as God speaks, navigating the crisis of belief, adjusting our lives, and obeying to experience God's power. Obedience leads to deeper insight, faith, and ongoing partnership with God. Remember: ***"To walk out of God's will is to walk in nowhere"*** -- C.S Lewis.

Key Principle: This journey is about a vital relationship. God's work precedes our involvement, and the cycle continues as we recognize His work, deepen our relationship, respond to His invitation, and obey His guidance. Not only leaders like Moses but others like Aaron, Mariam other Israelites demonstrate that multiple people can discern God's work and participate in it when they are sensitive to His activity.

God's work is not confined to church preaching or formal ministry. Your vocation, daily tasks, and professional skills are all part of His active work in the world. By doing your work with been sensitive to His guidance, you are participating in the Kingdom of God every day.

The Renewed Mind and Knowing the Will of God

"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." Romans 12:2

When Paul says "good, acceptable, and perfect," I don't think he's giving three separate categories — as if the will of God comes in "good, better, best" grades. He's describing the nature of God's will: it is always good, always acceptable, always perfect. This is the picture of a joyful life in God. To know it, to walk in harmony with it, we must let the Word of God dominate our consciousness.

This is more than just reading Scripture for information; it's the devotional, applicative use of the Word, letting it change the way we think, reshape how we see life, and align us with God's perspective. It means cultivating a biblical worldview so deeply that it changes our appetites and trains our discernment. It is thinking God's mind and letting it dominate how I think, feel and act.

For example, before making a marriage choice, you should view the opposite sex in a sanctified way, “treat younger women as sisters, with absolute purity” (1 Timothy 5:2, NIV), not as an instrument of immorality. Think of sexual intimacy as something honourable, reserved for marriage, “Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure” (Hebrews 13:4, NIV). Think of love as a Christ-centred commitment, “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her” (Ephesians 5:25, NIV), not as the fictionalised version portrayed by Hollywood.

Consider companionship, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him” (Genesis 2:18, NIV), sexual fidelity, “You shall not commit adultery” (Exodus 20:14, NIV), God’s mission for marriage, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it” (Genesis 1:28, NIV), and the raising of godly seed for Him, “Did He not make them one? ... And why one? Because He was seeking godly offspring” (Malachi 2:15, NIV). Marriage is also a call to display the sacrificial love of Christ and His Church, “Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ” (Ephesians 5:21, NIV), in your community so that your love and submission become a witness to the Gospel.

When you see marriage in this light, you will understand that it can only be shared with someone who holds the same values. “Do not be yoked together with unbelievers” (2 Corinthians 6:14, NIV). These views come from God’s Word, while the world holds an entirely wrong understanding of marriage.

Such a renewed mind, “Be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will” (Romans 12:2, NIV), will guide you not only in choosing a marriage partner but also in your career.

How should a Christian feel, think, and act in the secular space, in his calling or profession? “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters” (Colossians 3:23, NIV).

That’s what sound judgment is: the ability to make sanctified decisions in life because your mind has been shaped by truth. It’s learning to ask

in every choice, Where will Christ be magnified? Where will faith be built? Where will people be loved? Where will His will be done?

This is why meditation on the Word and prayer are inseparable. Jesus taught us to pray, “Your will be done”. Why do we pray for God’s will to be done? God has chosen to work through us and our prayers shows our submission, trust and yieldedness to Him. We cooperate with God in prayer to see His will done on the earth. First, God’s will must first be done in us then it can be done through us. Prayer causes the Spirit to brood over God’s word in our lives. It brings light, application and empower our will. As we pray and study God’s word, our mindset is transformed, our priorities shift, and we can see God’s will more clearly. We would even rightly interpret spectacular guidance: Visions, dreams, trance etc.

Here’s where John Piper’s words fit so powerfully:

“When we are faced with a choice, there is something in our renewed mind (1 Corinthians 2:16b) which is able to discern where Christ would be magnified, where faith would be built, and where people would be loved... The Spirit shapes the mind and heart through the Word and prayer so that we have inclinations toward what would be most glorifying to Him (1 Corinthians 10:31). The prerequisite of divine guidance is not the quest for messages, but the quest for holiness. Guidance is the product not of ecstatic heights but of spiritual depth.”

That’s the heart of it — divine guidance is not first about getting a mystical message; it’s about cultivating intimacy with God and living in conformity to His purposes. It is about sanctified living! The renewed mind is the fruit of that walk in holiness. It refuses to think according to the world’s patterns — the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life. It doesn’t make decisions by what looks greener or easier, like Lot choosing the plains of Jordan. It thinks Scripture-first. It asks, What will glorify God most? And it acts on that.

This is how the renewed mind proves the will of God — not by guessing the future, but by living so deeply in His truth that whatever we choose in obedience is pleasing to Him.

The Spirit and Walking in the Will of God

The indwelling of the Spirit of God in the believer is a guarantee of being led and walking in the will and purposes of God. The Spirit is the agent of divine revelation and illumination, coming to dwell in us so that we may be guided and empowered to fulfill God's purposes for our lives.

The Bible speaks about being filled with the Spirit, which equips a believer to walk in God's will. *Ephesians 5:18* says: *"And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit"*. If we consider the preceding verses (*Ephesians 5:15–17*), Paul exhorts believers:

"See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is."

Therefore, the Spirit helps us to walk in the will of God. A major aspect of the work of the Spirit of God is akin to a resident counselor or divine guide within the believer. He illuminates the heart and mind, guides in understanding God's purposes, and helps believers discern His will in daily life. As Jesus explained, the Spirit is the Spirit of truth, who will teach all things, bring to remembrance all that Christ has said, and guide into all truth (*John 14:26; John 16:13*).

The Spirit functions as a divine intelligence within, enabling the believer to navigate life according to God's purposes, perceive His direction, and respond in alignment with His will. This is His work in the new creation.

"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." *1 Corinthians 2:9–10*

Even though the will of God is not always apparent to our physical senses, it is discernible to the spiritual man through the Spirit of God. **The will of God can be known.** The Spirit is seen as the agent of revelation and illumination, helping believers understand the hidden things of God and perceive His will in situations that are not evident to human observation.

The believer can therefore have assurance and confidence, saying: “I have the Spirit of God; I know the will of God; I walk in the will of God.”

The Spirit’s work is subjective and ongoing. He gives the inward witness of salvation, but His testimony continues in daily life, confirming God’s direction and providing illumination and application of the Scriptures.

The Inward Witness of the Spirit

The Bible teaches that the Spirit of God gives the believer an inward witness. Romans 8:16 says: *“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.”*

This inward witness is a subjective experience in which the Holy Spirit confirms to the believer that they are indeed a child of God. At salvation, a person does not simply believe in the gospel abstractly; the Spirit enables the believer to know and experience this reality. The faith of the believer is accompanied by a real, internal testimony that assures them of their adoption into God’s family.

However, this witness is sometimes diminished or silenced in the lives of believers due to poor teaching/discipleship or falling into sin, leading to lack of consciousness of the Spirit’s ongoing work. Proper instruction in Scripture helps the believer give volume and weight to this inward witness, ensuring that it continues to affirm their identity in Christ.

The witness of the Spirit is not a one-time event but an ongoing experience of His work in the believer’s life. Flowing from Christ’s finished work, the Spirit continually testifies that we are accepted by God, assuring us that we are His children (Romans 8:16; 1 John 5:10). We could know the mind of God’s forgiveness because of the Spirit’s witness. This inner testimony enables us to discern our adoption our reasoning but by the Spirit’s assurance. In the same way that He confirms our acceptance before God, the Spirit also bears witness in guiding, confirming, and illuminating God’s will in our daily lives (John 16:13; Acts 8:29; Acts 10:19). Thus, the Spirit’s witness is both foundational, in assuring us of our salvation and ongoing, continually affirming God’s truth to our hearts and making us sensitive to His leading.

Some describe this inward witness as spiritual intuition, inward knowing, the inner witness, the still small voice, or the inner voice. Believers may experience it in different measures or degrees or volume, yet one truth remains: it is the Holy Spirit who works through all of these ways to assure, guide, and confirm the will of God. This ongoing work is evident in the Book of Acts, where the Spirit speaks to and directs God's people: the Spirit spoke to Philip (... *"Rise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza"*...Acts 8:29), spoke to Peter (... *"Rise, Peter; kill and eat"*...Acts 10:19), and Agabus (... *"Signified by The Spirit saith, Behold, there shall be great dearth throughout all the world"*...) (Acts 11:28). These examples show the Spirit actively guiding and informing the actions of believers.

Paul exhorts believers, *"Do not quench the Spirit. Do not treat prophecies with contempt but test them all; hold on to what is good, reject every kind of evil"* (1 Thessalonians 5:19–22, NIV). This shows that there is such a thing as the move of the Spirit, and we must not resist or despise the Spirit's flow in our lives. Yet Paul immediately adds that everything must be tested. Not every impression, feeling, dream, or word someone have is automatically the voice of God. To avoid the danger of subjectivism—mistaking every inner impulse for God's will—we must begin with a renewed mind grounded in the truth of God's Word (Romans 12:2). God's Word gives us sound judgment so that we can weigh, prove, and discern all things. When we have a prophecy, vision, or dream, Scripture calls us to test it, to hold fast to what is truly from God, and to reject whatever is false. Thus, we walk in the freedom of the Spirit without being carried away by error, cultivating a life of both openness to the Spirit's leading and discernment by the truth of God's Word.

The Spirit and Knowing the Will of God

The New Testament emphasizes that the dispensation of the Spirit of God is central to knowing and discerning God's will. Peter quoted Joel 2:28, saying: *"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions."* (Cf. Acts 2:16-18).

This prophecy shows the Spirit's role in revelation: to reveal what is in the mind of God and to enable men to know and communicate God's purposes. All believers can partake of this prophetic dimension "in measure", experiencing God through dreams, visions, prophecy, and other manifestations (Num 12:8-9).

The Book of Acts provides a practical demonstration of this ongoing work. From the first to the last chapter, we see continuous supernatural guidance of the Spirit, including:

I. Direct speech of the Spirit (Acts 8:29; Acts 10:19)

II. Prophecy (Acts 11:28)

III. Dreams and visions (Acts 2:17; Acts 16:9-10)

IV. Angelic manifestations providing direction (Acts 5:19; Acts 8:26)

V. Perception and discernment of God's will (Acts 15:28)

VI. Other spiritual manifestations confirming God's plans (Acts 10:44-46; Acts 21:10-11)

These diverse experiences show that God opens the hearts of believers to perceive His will through multiple channels. The Spirit speaks directly but has also opened the faculties of perception to spiritual things. Even when the Spirit is not speaking directly, He works through manifold ways; dreams, visions, prophecy, angelic guidance, and other manifestations to reveal His purposes i.e., it is because of the operation of the Holy Spirit that we can have the diverse experiences of seeing and knowing the mind of God like they had in the Bible.

What Jeremiah said was later quoted by Paul in the book of Hebrews: *"And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord" (Jeremiah 31:34, KJV; cf. Hebrews 8:11)*

The New Testament makes this promise a present reality: all believers have the opportunity to personally know the Lord. In the Old Testament, people often relied on prophets, priests, or teachers to understand God's mind and instructions. But in the New Covenant, God writes His will

directly on the hearts of His people: “*But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people*”(Hebrews 8:10, KJV)

While the context of Jeremiah’s promise emphasizes the moral will of God, it also anticipates the Spirit’s inward, revelatory work in the believer’s life. As Paul explains: “*Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: being manifested that ye are a letter of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart*” (2 Corinthians 3:2-3, KJV). Through this work of the Spirit, believers are empowered to know the mind and purposes of God and to live in accordance with His will. This is the distinctive dimension of the New Covenant: ***The Spirit’s inward operation, enabling both understanding and obedience. The Spirit gives us God-driven desires, inclination and power to please God.***

The Spirit’s work is further emphasized in the New Testament: He dwells in believers, opening their hearts to perceive God’s voice, understand His will, and respond in obedience. We are God’s temple, God moves freely within us (1 Corinthians 6:19; John 16:13-15), the Spirit enables divers supernatural activities, heavenly voices and melodies echoes within our bellies! Our hearts explode with the rhythm of heaven choruses! You should see this and expect God’s holy move in your heart as He wills.

Knowing and Fulfilling Your Ministry

Understanding what God has called you to do begins with recognizing the sovereign distribution of the gifts and ministries of the Spirit. The Bible shows⁹ that the Spirit guides believers into God’s will: “*Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, **dividing to every man severally as he will***” (1 Corinthians 12:4–11).

The New Testament speaks in several places about the gracious endowments God gives to His people *as he wills* (Cf. Heb 2:4). These gifts are not rewards for human effort but manifestations of God’s grace, given through the Spirit, the Son, and the Father, for the building up of

the body of Christ and the advancement of His purposes on the earth (Romans 12:6; 1 Corinthians 12:4–6; Ephesians 4:7).

While the Bible itself does not present these gifts in rigid categories, it is helpful for our understanding to observe the different emphases found in the main passages where they are listed. This arrangement is a teaching aid, not an inspired division.

- Christ's Gifts for Equipping His People – Given by the risen Christ to prepare believers for ministry, promote unity, and bring the body to maturity (Ephesians 4:11–13).
- Gifts Given by the Spirit for Service and Fellowship – These empower everyday ministry, enabling believers to serve, teach, exhort, give, lead, and show mercy within the body of Christ (Romans 12:6–8).
- Manifestations of the Spirit's Power – Supernatural operations that reveal the Spirit's presence and confirm God's purposes, such as wisdom, knowledge, faith, healings, miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, tongues, and interpretation (1 Corinthians 12:7–10).
- God-Appointed Roles in the Church – Apostles, prophets, teachers, miracles, gifts of healings, helps, administration, and various kinds of tongues, all given for the ordering and strengthening of the Church (1 Corinthians 12:28).

Observing the Spirit at work in your life—through serving the Church, engaging in fellowship, and participating in ministry—helps you discern your calling and the operation of God's gifts in your heart, guiding you toward fulfilling your ministry. Ask yourself what has been distributed to me according to the will of God?

Providence and the Distribution of God's Will

James teaches that the life of a believer must be lived with a conscious awareness of God's will. In James 4:13–15, he writes:

Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit"—yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that."

This isn't a ban on planning. It's an invitation to plan in humility — to think and decide with the posture, "If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that." That's dependence. That's submission to His sovereignty. The New Testament church lived like this.

Paul in Acts 18:21 said, "I will return to you if God wills." When the believers in Acts 21:14 could not persuade Paul to avoid Jerusalem, they said, "The will of the Lord be done." In Romans 1:10, Paul prayed that "by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you." The same tone appears in 1 Corinthians 4:19 and Hebrews 6:3 — "This we will do, if God permits." They didn't just move; they moved in sync with God's will.

Paul's own journey to Rome shows this. He longed to visit (Romans 15:22–24), prayed for it (Romans 15:30–32), and even made plans. *But providence carried him there a different way — through chains and trials.* Acts 23:11 records the Lord telling him, "*As you have testified of Me in Jerusalem, so must you also bear witness at Rome.*" By Acts 28:16, Paul arrived in Rome, not as a free traveler but as a prisoner, yet the gospel advanced (Philippians 1:12–13).

Here's the point: we pray, we plan, but God's providence shapes the road.

And this providence is not random. God, in His sovereignty and power, shows a pattern of mercy — not just for Paul, but for all who would later believe (1 Timothy 1:16). Even before Paul was saved, God was at work. His birth into a devout Jewish family, his upbringing in Tarsus (a city of learning), his Roman citizenship, his mastery of Greek, his training under Gamaliel, his tentmaking trade — all of it was providential equipment. God was shaping him for a mission Paul couldn't yet see. The same zeal that once fueled his persecution of the church would, after conversion, drive his apostolic ministry.

Scripture also says He determines "the times before appointed, and the bounds of our habitation" (Acts 17:26). That means your generation, your location, your moment in history are not accidents. Ecclesiastes 3:1 says there's a time for everything — and God is the One who sets it.

And just as He appoints our times, He also distributes our stations and gifts. "*As God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk*" (1 Corinthians 7:17). This distribution is

assignment. It includes your social context, opportunities, abilities — all the things that shape where and how you serve Him.

Here's the principle: after you are called(saved), your job is to do God's will where you are. That place you live, the work you do, the environment you are in — that's your God-appointed station. It's not random; it's providential.

Acts 13:36 says, *“David served the purpose of God in his own generation.”* The same is true for us. God has intentions for every generation — Gen Z, Millennials every age. He weaves together our upbringing, our skills, our relationships, and even our limitations, to prepare us for His work. The circumstances around you might just be signposts of His intention — but you need the eyes of the Spirit to read them.

Your Vocation and the Will of God

Ephesians 6:6: Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;

Ephesians 6:5–7 connects doing the will of God to our vocation, showing that our work can be a platform for living out God's purposes. Paul writes that we should serve “not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart” (Eph. 6:6). This means that whatever profession or role we find ourselves in, we should see it as an offering unto the Lord.

Doing the will of God in the context of our vocation involves:

1. Living a life that glorifies Christ: Our work becomes a reflection of God's character, expressing obedience to His commandments and ethical principles.
2. Excellence in service: Ephesians highlights that work should be done “heartily, as to the Lord” (Eph. 6:7). Whether in small tasks or major responsibilities, God's will is realized when we perform our duties with diligence, intelligence, and integrity. The way we carry out our responsibilities becomes a testimony of God's presence and guidance in our lives.

3. Connect your work with the preaching of the gospel: Work is not just for survival, it is a God-given platform for evangelism. Aquila and Priscilla used their tentmaking business as a bridge to meet people and minister to them (Acts 18:1–3, 18–28). Through their trade, they disciplined Apollos and helped advance the gospel. Our workplaces and professional relationships can become opportunities to share the gospel and lead people to salvation.

4. Participate in what God is doing in the Church: Through our jobs, we can contribute to God’s ongoing work in our Church communities. Just as believers in the early church joined in meeting spiritual and practical needs (Acts 4:32–35,), we can use our roles to support outreach, missions, and church growth, becoming active participants in God’s agenda where we live.

5. Give generously from the fruit of your work: Work provides the means to meet not only our needs but also the needs of others. Paul wrote, “Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth” (Eph. 4:28). The generosity of Tabitha (Acts 9:36–39) shows how one person’s resources can bless the household of faith. As 2 Corinthians 9:8 reminds us, “God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.” Good work here is generosity.

6. Do all under the authority of Jesus and for His glory: Paul says, “Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus” (Col. 3:17). Our work—whether it’s running a business, teaching, building, or serving—should be done with the conscious aim of honoring Christ and expanding His Kingdom.

In short, our professional lives are not merely a means to earn a living—they are a platform for God’s will. When we align our work with His purposes, we glorify Him, grow in character, impact the world around us, and help advance the gospel through both our influence and our resources.

Thinking of “Full Time ministry”? This interview will give solid seasoned counsel that will set your heart aright. It’s practical and timeless. Counsel From Pastor John MacArthur!

Chris: Pastor John, my name is Chris.

Pastor John: Hi Chris.

Chris: I know that you've spent a large portion of your ministry, and even your life, training men for the ministry. I think the building right to my left is a testament to that. So I have a two-part question for you.

First of all, what would you say to a young man who was aspiring to be in full-time ministry, who strongly desired it but wasn't quite sure that he was called by God?

And secondly, what are some major pitfalls that that same young man should be looking out for?

Pastor John: Sure. I think I know who that young man is. That's wonderful, Chris.

Look, you're in the same place everybody's in. I never had an epiphany. An angel never showed up. I never heard a voice out of heaven. When I looked at my own life and said, *What do I want to do?*—there were no supernatural events. There were no supernatural events.

All I could look at was a desire, and I think that fits perfectly the New Testament pattern. **1 Timothy 3:** *If a man desires the office of an overseer or pastor, he desires a noble work.*

The assumption there is that this is the normal way that God indicates the calling—through desire. And as that desire flourishes and strengthens, it becomes a singular desire.

All I can tell you is there were times in my life when I thought I would be a preacher. Then there were times in my life when I hoped I would be a preacher. Then there were times in the progression of that when I knew I would be a preacher. Then there were times when I knew I couldn't be anything other than a preacher or a pastor.

And I think it's that desire that grows and develops. What grew it in me was not so much the nature of ministry itself, but my undying passion for

the Book. When I went to college—I'm not going to give you a whole lot of useless information about my past—but my whole life I got notes that I had to take home about how bad I did in school, the “*Johnny could do better*” notes, you know. My mother was always saying to me, *We know you can do better. We know you can do better.*

And I was always trying to convince her, *No, no, this is it. I'm maxed out. I'm giving it my best shot. That's all I can do. No, you can do better. You can do better.* And the teachers would say, *Johnny can do better.* The point is—I was no scholar. I was no academic. That was true all the way through high school.

And in college, I didn't let my books get in the way of my education either. I went through college from one event to another—student life, athletics, every sport. I played every sport in my college days. And I was involved in all kinds of activities. As I got toward the end of my college years—I think it was my junior, senior year—the Word of God took on a whole new depth for me. And what it came down to was this need to know what the Bible meant.

That's what drives me, by the way. It's not you that drive me—it's *this* that drives me. I really became a preacher of the Word of God because I didn't want to do anything in my whole life but that—because I wanted to know it, and I wanted to share its glorious truth with others.

And so it just kept developing in my heart.

I remember when I went to seminary—remember now, I had convinced my mom that I'd maxed out with, you know, C's and B's—and I went to seminary, and I remember the first time I showed her my first semester report card. She just... *I knew you hadn't been telling me the truth all these years.* I went through seminary and I did so well, and I graduated with honors and all of that. And there was one driving reason: I was doing what I really loved, and the passion was there.

So the other components of that—the desire, the growing explosive desire in your heart that eliminates anything else—**the next thing that comes along with it is confirmation from the people.** You know, people saying, *You want to teach? Let's hear you teach.*

And that's fine as far as it goes. But if you say, *I'm called to teach*, and you teach, and everybody says, *Oh no, you're not*, maybe you ought to think about that. But where there's affirmation of your giftedness, and where there's confirmation by the leadership of the church that your **character and your giftedness fit this**—so you have the laying on of the hands, like in the case of Timothy—that's significant.

But all the way along, sure, there's a certain sense of, *Is this really what I ought to do? Why? Because there's this nagging unworthiness.* There's this reality: *How am I going to survive? How am I going to be faithful?* And, you know, **you just take it a day at a time.**

And I will tell you that it is the greatest joy—and it continues to be the greatest joy—of my life. But it continues also to be more important than it's ever been in the past. It's a growing joy that I have.

So there is a certain sense in which it's a desire—a flourishing, developing desire. Eventually, you can't do anything but that, because that begins to completely capture your heart. Then you have to look at your giftedness, response, affirmation from spiritual leaders around you.

Set aside your fallenness—the only kind of people the Lord can use are broken vessels, because that's all there are.

And when it comes to that—and I tell young guys this all the time—all ministry, all ministry, comes back to *this Book*. All of it. All of it is informed by this Book. So when you want to get trained, get the tools to understand this Book. ***And then when you've gotten that foundation, you can go take whatever field you want—whether you want to teach in a university, whether you want to teach in a seminary, pastor a church, or be a missionary.***

But at the end of the day, ***all ministry is a dissemination of divine truth, right?*** And that's what you want to make sure you grasp.

If you're young enough, you still have a little bit of doubt about whether this is what you want to do—and I can honestly say that I had no idea when I went to seminary what I was going to do. I just was driven to dig

into the Word of God, and I loved it. I don't think I even knew until I finally got to my third year where it would go. But I think you can start there. And if the Lord continues to make that desire flourish, you're going to find you're in the right spot. My guess is if that's already a passion for you, that's the work of the Lord in your heart.

Chris: Thank you.

Pastor John: Amen.

Chris: Amen.

As we conclude:

Genesis 24:27 – “...*I being in the way, the LORD led me to the house of my master's brethren.*”

The life of Eliezer reminds me of how God leads in ways that go beyond our own understanding. In this chapter, it is obvious that he found Isaac's wife by God's direction. Even the people themselves said, “*The thing proceeds from the LORD; we cannot speak unto thee bad or good*” (Genesis 24:50). Without a direct audible voice from God, Eliezer still knew that the Lord had led him “*I being in the way, the LORD led me to the house of my master's brethren*” (Genesis 24:27, Cf 24:48). Likewise, the family of Rebekah confirmed the same truth, saying, “*Behold, Rebekah is before thee, take her, and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife, as the LORD hath spoken*” (Genesis 24:51).

Eliezer was led “in the way.” He kept going, though he did not know exactly where he was headed because Abraham had given him the trajectory: “*You shall go to my country and to my kindred, and take a wife for my son Isaac*” (Genesis 24:4). Abraham's instructions were rooted in God's covenant with him.

In the same way, believers today already know certain things from God's Word—principles and commands we are to follow. We may not have the exact, specific details of every decision before us, but we can commit to doing exactly what God wants, pray for His direction, and move forward in obedience. Eliezer prayed specifically (Genesis 24:12–14), and God

led him to the exact person, place, and time. Abraham had prayed that the angel of the Lord would go before him (Genesis 24:7), and though no angel was seen, God's hand was at work. I believe angels were involved.

Even when we do not visibly see God's activity, we keep moving based on what we know. *"For it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure"* (Philippians 2:13). As we delight ourselves in the Lord, *"He will give you the desires of your heart"* (Psalm 37:4). We have new holy desires by the Holy Spirit, aligned with His will, and as we walk in them, the Lord leads us step by step. So, keep doing the things you know are persuaded of. Keep practicing the Word of God. Keep obeying what He has already revealed. Keep acting on the opportunities His providence opens before you. Keep using your gifts. As you do these things each day, you will find the Lord guiding you to the exact point where He wants you to be—just as Eliezer testified, *"I being in the way, the LORD led me."*

This is how to find and know the will of God. It is not passive inactivity; it is walking "in the way"—praying, acting, moving forward in faith. In matters such as marriage, a job, or even a move to another place or country, you walk in the opportunities before you while seeking the Lord in prayer. You keep applying, keep searching for the job, ministering to people, keep doing what you can at the moment, and you will discover that, without even realising it, you are already where God exactly wants you to be. Then you would also say: *...I being in the way, the LORD led me...*

***Those who forever seek the will of God are overrun by those who do it.*— Reinhard Bonnke**

ABOUT THE YOUNG MINISTERS' FORUM

The Young Ministers' Forum (TYMF) is a parachurch movement committed to strengthening and equipping young ministers to fulfill God's purpose. Our goal is to inspire and train a new generation of Gospel-driven leaders who will actively advance the Great Commission in every sphere of influence. We provide mentorship, teaching, and fellowship to help young ministers navigate challenges such as distractions, ministry decadence, loneliness, and balancing life responsibilities.

Vision: "Strengthening and Equipping Young Ministers to Serve God's Purpose."

MISSION

Mentorship: We connect young ministers with experienced leaders who provide biblical teaching, practical ministry insights, and personal guidance to foster spiritual growth and effectiveness.

Training and Equipping: Through workshops, seminars, and structured training sessions, we enhance ministerial effectiveness, doctrinal understanding, and active ministerial engagement.

Fellowship and Camaraderie: TYMF provides a network for like-minded ministers to connect, share experiences, and strengthen one another in faith and ministry.

Resources and Support: We produce resources like tracts, booklets, ebooks, evangelistic and study materials for outreaches and strengthening local churches.

Personal and Spiritual Development: We emphasize character building, spiritual disciplines, and holistic growth, ensuring that ministers are well-grounded in faith and integrity.

Mission and World Evangelism: With a strong passion for evangelism and cross-cultural ministry, we encourage young ministers to embrace their calling to spread the Gospel globally.

TYMF invites young ministers seeking growth, mentorship, and alignment with God's purpose to join our community and benefit from its resources.