

## Introduction

In Colossians 1, Paul starts the letter out by saying that he is an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God. How many of you feel that you have been called to be an apostle? How many of you feel called to plant churches? Most of us are quick to agree that this was God's will for Paul, but not His will for our own lives. It was God's Specific will for Paul's life. Not every time that the will of God is mentioned does it pertain to God's will for our lives. I do believe there are applications for our lives from that verse. I believe that each member of the body has been uniquely called and gifted to carry out certain functions. Some are called to be deacons and serve the body in that capacity. Some are called to be exhorters. Some are called to lead. Some are called to show mercy. Some are called to give. Some are called to prophesy. God has a specific will for each of our lives, and God's will for Paul was to do the work of an apostle.

(Col 1:1) "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,"

In Jeremiah 1, God called Jeremiah to be a prophet to the nations. Jeremiah was just a youth at the time, but God said that He knew Jeremiah before he was born, and He consecrated him while he was in the womb. God had a specific will and plan for Jeremiah. He has not called all of us to be a prophet to the nations, but that was His will for Jeremiah. Just as it was the will of God for Paul to be an apostle, it was His specific will for Jeremiah to be a prophet.

(Jer 1:4-5) "Now the word of the LORD came to me saying, {5} "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, And before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations."

In 1 Thessalonians 5:18, Paul told the church in Thessalonica that they were to give thanks in everything, this was not a specific word to an individual in that church; it was to all the members of that church. I believe Paul was revealing God's General Will for them and for all believers. All of us are to live lives that are full of gratitude. We are to give thanks in everything. When people see and hear you, do they see a person full of gratitude that is giving thanks in everything? Or do they hear you grumbling and complaining about everything. God's General will is for all of us to give thanks in everything.

(1 Thess 5:18) "in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

There is a General Will that God has for everyone, and there is a Specific Will that God has for each of our individual lives. This week we will be looking at discovering God's General Will for our lives, and next week we will talk about discovering God's Specific Will for our lives. I believe that the order of this is very important. One theologian said that if someone is not willing to obey God's General Will, why should God tell the person His Specific Will for their lives. There is a lot of truth in that. We must be obedient to His General Will.

Some theologians categorize God's will into His Sovereign Will and His Moral Will. As we look at the various examples or areas of God's General Will, you will see that much of it relates to moral issues. I don't use the term Moral will because there are areas of God's General Will that are not what I call moral issues. If someone does not give thanks about something, I don't consider them immoral. That is not a moral issue, but giving thanks is God's will for their lives. So, I use the term God's General Will rather than God's Moral Will.

Last week we defined our will as a “conscious deciding, willing, and choosing to do something.” Our will is part of our soul, which includes our mind, emotion and will. We also saw that the world lived according to the desires or lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life. We also saw that those who follow their own will are not going to enter into heaven. Only those that do the will of the Father are going to enter into heaven. Therefore, doing the will of God is extremely important. Jesus did not come to earth to do His will but to accomplish the will of the Father who sent Him. Even when praying about His upcoming death by crucifixion, He asked the Father if it was possible for the cup to be removed, “but not My will, but Thy will be done.” Our lives are to be characterized by doing God's will in our lives. This week we are focusing on God's General Will, which applies to everyone. We are going to look at how we find God's General Will and then some examples of His Will for all believers.

### **Discovering God's General Will For Our Lives**

1. How Do You Find God's General Will
2. What Are Some Examples Of God's General Will

#### **1. How Do You Find Out God's General Will**

##### **a. God's Word (2 Tim 3:16-17, Joshua 1:8)**

A few years ago we were trying to put a luggage top carrier on Karen's Honda Pilot. We had to get some cross beams and there was a tricky little step involved that was not obvious to me. So, we looked into the Honda Pilot's User Manual. In no time at all we had the luggage rack installed. Why did we go to the User's Manual? Because Honda manufactured the car and all the information about how to operate it was in their manual.

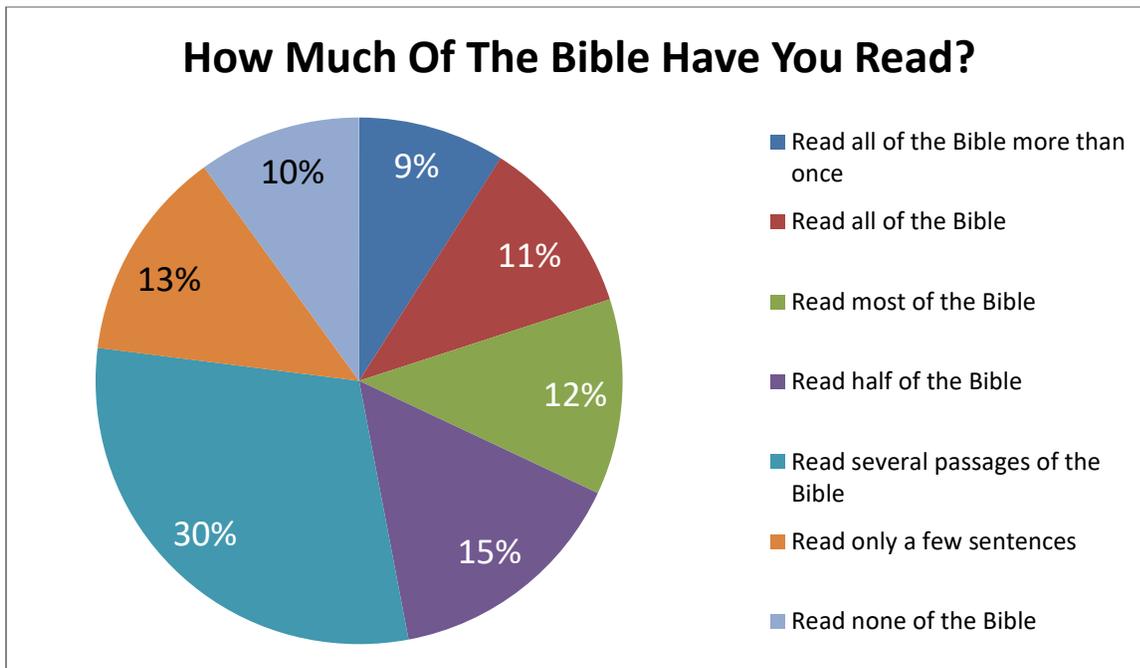
We are a little bit like our Honda. God created us. In Genesis 1 we found that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. God created us in His image. He was the one that designed us and He knows exactly how we are to operate. In His operating manual, which is called the Word of God, we find out how we are to operate. In 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Paul wrote that *“all scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”* We find God's will in God's manual to us. In His word He instructs us how He wants us to live. In His word, He reproofs us when we are not living the way He wants us to. In His word, He shows us how to get back on track. Finally, in His word He trains us how to stay on the path. God's word is an invaluable resource to help us live the way that God wants us to live.

When we do according to all that is written in the word of God, we are successful. Look what the Lord said to us in Joshua 1:8. *“This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.”* We will be successful when we do things according to the way that God has instructed us in His word.

For us to know God's will in all circumstances we have to become extremely literate and familiar with God's word. Reading a devotional is a good thing, but it will not replace a good reading program. Listen to some current statistics about Bible literacy:

- Half of all Americans have never read the Bible.
- Only 26% of Americans read their Bible on a regular basis. (Barna)
- Sixty-one percent of evangelical Christians have never read the whole Bible.
- Sixty-two percent of pastors do not read their Bibles in their quiet times.
- Twenty-four out of twenty-five Millennials don’t have a Biblical worldview.
- Nearly half of young Evangelicals (ages 18-29) favor same-sex marriage.
- 65% of all “Christians” believe there are multiple paths to Heaven.

Lifeway did a survey of how much of the Bible have people read. Take note that only 9% of “Christians” have read through the whole Bible more than once. Only 11% have read all of the Bible. Another 12% have read about half of the Bible.



Let’s put this in perspective. Joshua said that we had to do according to all that is written in it, and the majority of “Christians” have never even read what was in it. God told Joshua to meditate on it day and night so that he could be careful to do according to all that was written in it. Church, we must read our Bibles. We must do more than read our Bibles. We must meditate on the Scriptures. We must do more than meditate on the Scriptures. We must apply the Scriptures in our lives. On our Connection Church website, I have a tab called Connection Tools. There are several different reading programs given. I have a fairly aggressive reading program. In my current reading plan I get through the gospels four times a year. I get through the New Testament four times a year. I get through the book of Proverbs twelve times a year. I get through the Psalms 2 ½ times a year. I get through the Old Testament once a year. In past years I went through the whole Bible at least twice a year, and through the Psalms and Proverbs twelve times a year. I changed it up because I wanted to spend more time in the gospels and New Testament. This is not in my study time; this is just in my quiet times. In my study times, I have spent a lot of time in the Old Testament, especially preaching through the book of Genesis, which took a year and a half. Tom has an even more aggressive reading program. You don’t have to use my reading program, but do get on a reading program so that you can discover the

whole counsel of God. It will be difficult to know God's will for your life if you don't read what He has told you to do in His word to us.

When we read the Scriptures, let me give some pointers. Make notes in your Bible. Write down your insights, either in a journal or in the Bible. I read my Bible on my computer, and I type in notes that are tagged to a verse. Write down if this is a principle to follow. Write down if it is an example of a principle. Write down the cross reference, if it is not already there. Write down any applications from the text. Finally, pray the Scriptures. As I read, I pray. I pray the scriptures. God's word is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path. Do you want to know God's will? Do you want to know His direction in your life? We must saturate our hearts and minds with God's word. He will counsel us and direct our ways, and one of the primary ways is through His word. The average American household has 4.4 Bibles, but they rarely get read. Open your Bible and read it every day. Get on a daily reading plan.

(Ps 119:105) "Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path."

**b. Prayer** (Ps 32:8-9, Pr 3:5-6)

In Proverbs 3:5-6, God promises that when we acknowledge Him in all our ways, He will make our paths straight. We acknowledge Him by speaking to God about everything that we are doing. In Ps 32:6-8, God tells us not to be like a horse or mule whose trapping include bit and bridle or they will not come near. He tells us to go to Him and He will direct us in the way that we should go and He will counsel us with His eye upon us. One of the ways that we discover God's will for our lives is through prayer.

(Pr 3:5-6) "Trust in the LORD with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding. {6} In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight."

(Ps 32:8-9) "I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go; I will counsel you with My eye upon you. {9} Do not be as the horse or as the mule which have no understanding, Whose trappings include bit and bridle to hold them in check, *Otherwise* they will not come near to you."

A few years ago at another church that I pastored, we had a woman and another family begin attending the church. They immediately stepped in and began serving, and wanted to be greeters. I began to get some inquiries from people about the lady, as she was telling people that she was going to be preaching the following week. Of course I knew nothing about it. They also turned in their membership forms, and one of the answers to the questions on the form got my attention. I asked people if they agreed with the vision of the church. They were okay with that. I asked if they were okay with our doctrinal statement, and on this question, the lady had written no. So, when I met with them, I asked her to explain what she meant. She said that she did not agree with the Word of God being the final authority of all of our doctrine and practices. She said that we had to always obey what God tells us, not what is written in the Bible. She was always saying, "Yahweh told me this," or "Yahwey told me that." I told her that whatever we hear or think we hear must be run through God's word. She picked up my Bible and threw it on the table. She said I was teaching error, and said the Bible is just a book. We have to do what God tells us. In any case, I told her that this was a serious matter and that our church the word of God

is our final authority. Any word we get in prayer, in prophecy, in counsel, in teaching, in a dream, or in any other manner had to be checked against God's word. She and the other family never came back to our church. God does speak to us in prayer about His will for our lives. Many times He speaks about His specific will, which we will cover next week, but He also shares things about His general will for our lives. The Holy Spirit will bring to our mind passages that will give us the answer we are looking for. Many times in the morning when I get up, I look up the passages that the Holy Spirit has been speaking to me about during the night.

Sometimes, as we pray about whether to do something or not, we will have a great sense of peace, or we will have unrest in our spirit. God is leading us in His will through peace or a lack of peace. We have to be sensitive and listen to what the Spirit of God is saying to us. It is good to ask the Lord, why do I not have peace about this? What is going on? Am I missing something? In cases like this, I like to bring in my wife or another spiritual advisor to get their input. Whenever you are unsure about something, I would take it to the Lord in prayer. I would also search the scriptures for answers about the issue. I would also ask my authorities, and run things through other spiritual advisors.

### **c. Fasting**

Another way to discover God's General Will is through fasting. Fasting is mentioned many times in both the Old and New Testament. Fasting means to abstain from food. Many people today use the term to abstain from certain activities, like cutting out TV or desserts for a week. I had a man at a church that I was pastoring in Atlanta and he was fasting from everything but ice cream. He did not eat meats, vegetables, or anything else because he was "fasting." But he was eating ice cream every day. To me, the man was not truly fasting; he merely went on a very poor diet. There are others that go on a Daniel fast. In Daniel 10, he did not eat meat or tasty food, or drink wine. So, he probably ate bread and vegetables. I don't think that ice cream was part of that diet because he did not eat "tasty" foods. That was a partial fast.

There are total fasts, like Moses did, where a person does not eat or drink for a period, and in Moses' case, it was forty days. That is a supernatural fast because you cannot go forty days without drinking. Then, there is a normal fast, where you abstain from food, but you drink water. Then, there are partial fasts, like Daniel did for three weeks to mourn and to seek God.

Fasting is more than abstaining from meals; it is a humbling of ourselves to hear from God. It is to abstain from food and physical desires so that you can seek God and hear from God. Fasting is a way to humble ourselves before God. Sometimes there was a fasting in repentance, like at Nineveh after Jonah finally made it there and prophesied against them. They humbled themselves and repented of their sins and God changed His mind and spared them. Daniel fasted to get revelation and understanding of God's word and the prophecies that had been made about Jerusalem. If you just miss meals and spend your time watching the Cowboys play, or the World Series, you have eliminated some calories, but it is not really the fast that God speaks about. When we fast, we should fast to hear from God, and in particular, to hear God's will for our lives.

In Isaiah 58, the Lord spoke to the people of Israel about fasting. They had abstained from food and humble themselves, but they were not getting the results that they wanted. In verse three, God said that they had fasted to find their own desires. Fasting is not something we do to get

God to do what we want Him to do for us. Fasting is about humbling ourselves to see what He wants to do through us. That is very different. Notice in verse six that God says, "Is this not the fast which I choose, to loosen the bonds of wickedness, to undo the bands of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, to break yokes, to divide our bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into the house and to clothe the naked. These were the things on God's heart. These are the will of God for us. They had been fasting to get a favorable answer about what they wanted to see happen in their lives. They had not been fasting to see what God wanted them to do. True fasting helps us discover God's will for our lives. Through fasting we discover the things that we should be doing.

(Is 58:3-7) "Why have we fasted and You do not see? *Why* have we humbled ourselves and You do not notice?' Behold, on the day of your fast you find *your* desire, And drive hard all your workers. {4} Behold, you fast for contention and strife and to strike with a wicked fist. You do not fast like *you do* today to make your voice heard on high. {5} Is it a fast like this which I choose, a day for a man to humble himself? Is it for bowing one's head like a reed And for spreading out sackcloth and ashes as a bed? Will you call this a fast, even an acceptable day to the LORD? {6} Is this not the fast which I choose, To loosen the bonds of wickedness, To undo the bands of the yoke, And to let the oppressed go free And break every yoke? {7} Is it not to divide your bread with the hungry And bring the homeless poor into the house; When you see the naked, to cover him; And not to hide yourself from your own flesh?"

#### d. Conscience

This list is not an exhaustive list; it just gives some ways to discover God's General Will for our lives. But the word of God plays a prominent part in all of them. God gave all of us a conscience. Our conscience was designed to help us live upright lives. It is an instrument that helps us to decide what is right and wrong for our lives. If our conscience is calibrated with the Word of God, it is a great instrument to use. However, when our consciences get seared, we can easily become shipwrecked in our faith. Paul said that he did his best to maintain always a blameless conscience before God and before men. For our consciences to effectively help us, they must be calibrated with God's word, and we must live with clean consciences.

(1 Tim 1:19) "keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith."

(Acts 23:1) "Paul, looking intently at the Council, said, 'Brethren, I have lived my life with a perfectly good conscience before God up to this day.'"

(Acts 24:16) "In view of this, I also do my best to maintain always a blameless conscience *both* before God and before men."

#### e. Counsel (Pr 12:15, Ex 18:19)

In Proverbs 12:15, Solomon said "*the way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man is he who listens to counsel.*" If we want to walk in God's ways, we need to listen to counsel. Even Moses, the man whom God passed down His laws, listened to the counsel of his father-in-law, Jethro. (Ex 18:19) God can reveal His General Will to us through godly counsel. Many times we

are unaware of Biblical principles, and godly counsel can share God's principles with us. When I was a fairly young believer, I was unaware of most of God's principles about finances. I cosigned a note, not realizing that it was wrong. As I was taught God's word, and as I studied God's word, I became more familiar with God's principles about finances. Godly counsel would have helped me to avoid doing things contrary to God's will. All counsel should be checked against God's word. It is the counsel of the Lord that will stand.

**f. Teaching** (1 Tim 4:13, Pr 6:23)

Paul told Timothy to give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to teaching, and to exhortation. Reading God's word helps people become familiar with it. Teaching God's word gives understanding of God's word. Exhortation prods people to become doers of God's word. All three of these are important. If people do not read and are not familiar with God's word and His will, they won't do His will. If people do not understand His word, then they generally won't do it. I mentioned that God's word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. Teaching turns on that light for us.

(1 Tim 4:13) "Until I come, give attention to the *public reading of Scripture*, to exhortation and teaching."

(Pro 6:23) "For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching is light; And reproofs for discipline are the way of life."

**2. What Are Some Examples Of God's General Will**

We have covered some of the ways that God communicates His General Will to us. The rest of the message is pretty easy; it is just examples of God's General Will to all of us. This is not an exhaustive list, but it is a good starting place. I have taken passages that explicitly say this is God's will for us. However, a passage does not have to say this is God's will for it to be His will for all believers.

**a. Rejoice, pray, and give thanks** (1 Thess 5:16-18)

For example, in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, God tells us to "rejoice always, pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." There should be little doubt in any of our minds that it is God's will for us to do these three things. We should always rejoice. Are we full of God's joy at all times? Do we rejoice always? Do we give thanks in everything?

(1 Thess 5:16-18) "Rejoice always; {17} pray without ceasing; {18} in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

There are times in our lives where things go well and it is easy to rejoice and give thanks. However, there are also some difficult times in all of our lives, and we have to choose to do God's will. We have to make a conscious effort to rejoice and give thanks. James tells us to consider it all joy when we encounter trials, knowing that the testing of our faith produces endurance. We are to let endurance have its perfect result, making us more mature. So, in difficult times, we can rejoice and give thanks that God is helping us to learn perseverance. WE

can rejoice and give thanks that God is teaching us wisdom. We can rejoice and give thanks that God is maturing us and making us more complete. We can rejoice and give thanks that we will be able to comfort and give counsel to those who are going through similar things in their lives. In our difficult times, God is giving us wisdom and making us more mature. That may be difficult to do, but it is clearly God's will for our lives.

(James 1:2-5) "Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, {3} knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. {4} And let endurance have *its* perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. {5} But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him."

In Philippians 3, Paul tells us to rejoice in the Lord. In Philippians 4:4, he tells us, "rejoice in the Lord always; again I say rejoice." Paul does not say, "rejoice in the Lord always, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." He just tells us to rejoice in the Lord always. When God gives us a clear command in Scripture to do something, we can rest assured that this is God's will for us. It does not have to say, "this is God's will for you." If God says to go and make disciples, that is clearly His will for all believers. You don't have to have a special call to go and make disciples. This is God's will for all believers. When God says for us not to forsake the assembling of ourselves, this is not an option for believers. It is God's will for you and I to assemble together. The early church was devoted to fellowship, not a Sunday meeting. They were devoted to assembling together, whether it was on a Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, or Saturday. Whenever your congregation assembles, it is God's will for you to assemble together. It does not have to say this is God's will. God communicates His will to us in His word.

(Phil 3:1) "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things *again* is no trouble to me, and it is a safeguard for you."

(Phil 4:4) "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!"

## **b. Sanctification**

In 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8, Paul explicitly tells us that our sanctification is the will of God. He tells us that we are not to live in lustful passion like the Gentiles who do not know God, but we are to abstain from sexual immorality. The majority of Americans reject this idea and believe that sex outside of marriage is normal and acceptable. But, it is not God's will. God's will is for us to live holy lives. The Greek word for sanctification is *hagiasmos* (Strong's G38). The root word is *hagiazō* (Strong's G37), which means to make holy. The root word of *hagiazō* is *hagios* (Strong's G40), which means holy. God's will for you and I is to live holy lives. We are in a process called sanctification, where we are being made holy. That is progressive sanctification. We have positional sanctification, in that God has declared us holy by the blood of Jesus. But, our lives are becoming holy. That is God's will for our lives, that we lay aside the deeds of darkness and walk in righteousness. Paul addresses sexual immorality here, but it includes every area of our lives. Are we being transformed? Is our life looking more and more like Jesus? Am I walking in sexual purity? That is God's will for our lives.

(1 Thess 4:3-8) “For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; {4} that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, {5} not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God; {6} and that no man transgress and defraud his brother in the matter because the Lord is the avenger in all these things, just as we also told you before and solemnly warned you. {7} For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification. {8} So, he who rejects this is not rejecting man but the God who gives His Holy Spirit to you.”

c. **Submit to authorities** (1 Pet 2:13-15, Eph 6:5-8)

It is clearly God's will for us to submit to those in authority. God tells us in Hebrews 13:17 that we are to obey and to submit to our leaders, as those who must give account to God. But, God does not say it is the will of God in that passage, even though it is clearly God's will. But, in 1 Peter 2:13-15, God tells us to submit ourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, or to governors. Then, He says, “for such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men.” Submitting to our authorities is the right thing to do, and it is the will of God. Paul makes the same point in Ephesians 6:5-6 when he addresses slaves. He tells them to be “obedient to their masters...doing the will of God from the heart.” God's will is for us to be submissive and obedient to our authorities.

(1 Pet 2:13-15) “Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, {14} or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right. {15} For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men.”

(Eph 6:5-6) “Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ; {6} not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.”

In the church today, there is very little mention of submission to authorities. If you tell someone to submit to their authorities, they think of control and manipulation. There may be some authorities that try to control and manipulate, but that does not nullify God's will. It is God's will for all of us to be properly submitted to our authorities. That goes for our spiritual authorities. Many believers today are not submitted to a body of believers and to the leaders of that body. They are not in the will of God. Paul says in Romans 13 that when we do not obey our authorities, we violate our conscience. God gave us a conscience to help us do what is right, and when we rebel against our authorities, we sear our conscience and we will struggle with knowing God's will for our lives. In cases like this, we need to repent and submit ourselves to our authorities, and to God, and ask God to cleanse our conscience, which He can and will do.

(Rom 13:2-5) “Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves....{5} Therefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience' sake.”

**d. Repent** (2 Cor 7:8-11)

In 2 Corinthians 7:8-11, God tells us that it is His will for us to have a godly sorrow that leads us to repentance. Paul wrote very firmly to the Corinthian in his first letter. He addressed a number of sins in the church and told them to deal with them. Now, in his second letter to them, he said, “for though I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it.” Why did he not regret it? Because they had been made sorrowful to the point of repentance. Then, he added, “for you were made sorrowful according to the will of God.” God’s will is for us to be sanctified. And when we are not living uprightly, His will is for us to repent and to turn away from our sins. He wants us to have a godly sorrow that leads to repentance. If we have not been submitted to our authorities, whether secular or to our spiritual authorities in the church, God wants us to repent. That is His will for our lives.

(2 Cor 7:8-10) “For though I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it—for I see that that letter caused you sorrow, though only for a while— {9} I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to the point of repentance; for you were made sorrowful according to the will of God, so that you might not suffer loss in anything through us. {10} For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death.”

**Conclusion and Applications** (John 6:40, 2 Peter 3:9)

As we come to a close today, I want to mention one more specific verse about God’s general will. In John 6:40, Jesus said, “for this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.” God’s will is for people to behold or see Jesus and believe in Him so that they will have eternal life. In 2 Peter 3:9, Peter said that “the Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.” God commands us to preach the gospel and make disciples because it is His will that none should perish. It is His will for those that see Jesus believe and have eternal life.

(John 6:40) “For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.”

(2 Pet 3:9) “The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.”

If you have heard of Jesus, that He is the Son of God, and that He came to earth as a man, born of a virgin, and He died on the cross for our sins, and was resurrected from the dead on the third day, and you believe, then it is God’s will for you to have eternal life. Paul wrote in Romans 10:9-10 that if we believe in our heart that God raised Jesus from the dead and confess with our mouth that Jesus is Lord, we will be saved. If you believe, have you confessed Jesus as Lord? Have you asked Jesus to come into your life, forgive you of your sins, and to be the Lord of your life? Have you surrendered your will to him? If you would like to obey the gospel message this morning, I invite you to pray with me. (See 1 Peter 4:17.)

(Rom 10:9-10) “that if you confess with your mouth Jesus *as* Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; {10} for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.”

“Father God, I believe that You sent Jesus to the earth so that we could have eternal life. I believe that He died on the cross and paid for my sins. I believe that You raised Him from the dead. Father, I present and submit my life to You and I choose to live the rest of my days in the flesh for the will of God. I pray this in Jesus' name.”

There may be others here this morning that believe and have confessed Jesus as their Lord, but you have not been living for the will of God. You do not need to come forward; I would ask you to just tell the Lord that you do not want to live any longer carrying out your will, but you want to begin to do the will of the Father. If you want someone to pray with you, we will be glad to agree with you in prayer. If this is you this morning, I ask you to repent and make a fresh commitment to seek God's will for your life. Make a commitment to reading His word to discover God's will. Make a commitment to obey God's will in your life.

**Introduction** (Col 1:1, 1 Thess 5:18)**1. How Do You Find Out God's General Will**

- a. God's Word (2 Tim 3:16-17, Joshua 1:8, Ps 119:105)
- b. Prayer (Pr 3:5-6, Ps 32:8-9)
- c. Fasting (Dan 10, Is 58:3-7)
- d. Conscience (1 Tim 1:19, Acts 23:1, Acts 24:16)
- e. Counsel (Pr 12:15, Ex 18:19)
- f. Teaching (1 Tim 4:13, Pro 6:23)

**2. What Are Some Examples Of God's General Will**

- a. Rejoice, Pray, Give Thanks (1 Thess 5:16-18, James 1:2-5, Phil 3:1, 4:4)
- b. Sanctification (1 Thess 4:3-8)
- c. Submit to authorities (Heb 13:17, 1 Pet 2:13-15, Eph 6:5-8, Rom 13:2-5, 2 Cor 7:8-10)
- d. Repent (2 Cor 7:8-11)

**Conclusion and Applications** (John 6:40, 2 Peter 3:9, 1 Peter 4:17, Rom 10:9-10)