

What does God Want Me to Do?

In every stage of life, especially around the time of college, we are faced with making major life decisions. Some decisions can leave scars (like relationships) and some can be reversed but could take years to change (like career choices). We hear “Hey! Remember! God has a plan for you.” And we say “Any time I’ve tried to pray, I could barely “hear” the voice of God in the first place, but I should try to ask Him for direction in my life.” Then we stand up, and maybe for the first time in our lives because of the gravity of the decisions we face, out of desperation, we pray. Like actually really pray, and we cry out about the decision we’re facing and ask God for guidance. Then if we try and don’t hear a response for some time, we start to panic a little and get frustrated and turn back to God and say, “God, why don’t you speak to me?! I’m a good person and I pray, and I serve, and I go to church. I feel like You’re ignoring me!”

He told us that He has plans for us (Jeremiah 29:11) but we’re still lost. We pray and cannot hear, we ask and do not receive. We doubt if He’s even there sometimes then feel guilty for doubting. “Why do You leave me here alone God? Wondering if you’re there or if you can hear me. I’m here, faced with a decision, please show me.” God, our loving Shepherd, who does have a plan for us, sits there and says “My child, I’ve been trying to tell you My will for you every day but you reject Me.” You see, God has already revealed the vast majority of His will to us. How? Through His Words.

Essentially, there are two aspects to the will of God: His general will for us all and His specific will for each one of us. His general will for us is not a secret. HG Archbishop Angaelos says, “There is no secret about who we are meant to be and what life we are meant to live because our Lord tells us ... we are sent as those who represent not only the purity and simplicity of a Godly life but represent obedience in the world to God.” Just a few examples are: not to put anything or anyone above Him, not to throw His name around like it’s meaningless, to love (not just tolerate) EVERYONE, to forgive everyone, to not harbor lustful thoughts, to be caring and considerate, to not cheat or steal or curse, to be honest always, to lead a pure life, and to be thankful and not jealous of what anyone else may have. To live differently than the world as His ambassadors to the world.

But so many times we take this lightly and say, “I know, but some of those things are too extreme or are ‘for the holy people’. What’s the problem if some of the stuff I do is the same as what the rest of the world does? God still loves me and doesn’t expect me to be perfect.” We begin taking whatever shortcuts possible with the part of God’s plan for us that is so clearly and explicitly defined and don’t care to seriously try to follow all of it, convincing ourselves that we’re already doing enough. We cut corners trying to save God only for when we need Him or for when He’s not too inconvenient. Then, how can we really expect to talk to Him in the first place?

Take your relationship with God seriously. Go all in. Don’t compromise. God told you most of His Will already through **His words**. If you’ve been comfortable enough doing it all on your own and trying to do the minimum, then don’t come ask Him for His will when you’re worried.

Despite this, sometimes He still answers but we can’t we hear Him. Why? That’s because every other time He has tried to speak to us through the Scripture or through sermons or advice we ignore Him and do what we want or what we think is best. We’ve quenched the Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:19). How do we hear Him then? Commit to listening to that which He’s clearly told you to do - that general will of God. When He sees you actually trying your best, He will with no doubt open and reveal Himself to you. “He who has my commandments [hint: We do] and keeps them [hint: we usually do not] it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and **manifest Myself**

to him." (John 14: 21). If you're not willing to commit to this you're not willing to take God seriously and shouldn't be surprised when you can't hear Him.

Here, our motive finally begins to shift. Our *primary* focus is no longer what career I should pursue or college to go to or what relationship decision to make or job to take. Our primary focus now becomes trying to experience God's presence in our lives.

Now we can start discussing His specific will in our lives. Sometimes there will be a couple options in front of us: we have our foundation set that we don't want to lose God's presence and we want to make it stronger but still have a decision to make. That's when we start looking to see if God has a specific plan for us. We ask Him, seek His will. If God has a decision that He deems is a best fit and if we are genuinely listening and are willing to obey, we will see God opening doors that could not be opened and closing doors that could not be closed, and external forces outside of our control pushing us toward a certain path or set of paths. There are, however, many cases where He does not have a specific "correct" choice for us. He loves us and gives us the free will to make our own decisions using the tools He has given us, keeping in mind the goal of all our decisions – His Presence in our lives.

Pope Shenouda says that when we look at God and ask Him, God where do you want me? God looks at us and says "I care for your heart of love." Let us not give in to the pressure of getting caught up in all the details of this life which will distract us from our main goal: an eternal, real, and serious relationship with Him that starts today.

Always remember that you are beautiful, you are loved, and you are not alone.

"He has shown you, O man, what *is* good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?" – Micah 6:8