

Meet Your Psychiatrist: He Helps You Make Decisions

by Warren Wiersbe

The will of God is not a mechanical thing, but a living thing that involves faith, love, and a growing knowledge of God.

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Scripture: Hebrews 5:12

Topics: "Gods Will", "Faith Growth"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the importance of knowing and doing the will of God. He emphasizes that knowing God's will is not just about making practical decisions, but about growing in our knowledge of God and enjoying a relationship with Him. The speaker highlights three essentials for knowing and doing God's will: faith in Jesus Christ, love for all the saints, and a growing knowledge of God. He explains that these essentials are foundational and must be present before we can effectively seek God's guidance in our lives.

Transcript

Whenever I have the time, I enjoy rummaging through the books in used bookstores. And there are two or three in the city of Chicago that are still worth checking. One day I was looking at some books on a table, and one book in particular interested me, so I picked it up and I looked at it and I thought, I think I'll buy that book.

I thought, no, and I put it back down. I started to walk away and I came back and I picked it up again and I looked at it and leafed through it and said, I think I'll buy this book. And I said, no, I don't think I will, and I put it back down.

I walked over to a different shelf and began looking and came back and picked that book up again. I did this, I think, five or six times. Finally, I did not buy the book.

But as I walked out of the bookstore, I began to chuckle to myself because the title of the book, would you believe, was How to Make Decisions. Now I laughed at myself for being so stupid, I really needed the book. But then I thought to myself, I wonder how many times we've done this as Christians.

This whole matter of the will of God becomes so nebulous sometimes. I want to talk with you tonight about the place of the Holy Spirit in determining and doing the will of God. Of course, all of us realize how important it is to know the will of God and we know how important it is to do the will of God.

But many people don't realize how important it is to understand the will of God. You see, the kindergarten level is doing the will of God. The grade school level is understanding the will of God.

The high school level is understanding and doing the will of God from your heart. It's possible to do the will of God grudgingly and with a complaining spirit. And the college level, the graduate school level, is understanding and doing the will of God for God's glory.

Now please don't let the will of God become a mechanical thing. All of us know the rules for determining the will of God. We've learned this from our youngest days as Christians.

You can recall the first time you raised your hand and said to your Sunday school teacher or your youth sponsor or perhaps your counselor at camp, how do I find out what God wants me to do? And so they wrote it on the blackboard. Number one, you read the Bible. This is true.

God guides us through his word. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. And they say you pray.

This is true. You pray for God to direct. And thirdly, you watch circumstances.

And God closes doors and God opens doors. And fourthly, you watch your own heart. And when you have God's peace in your heart, and when circumstances have fallen the way God wants them to fall, when the word of God commands you, and when through prayer you've had his guidance, then you take that step.

And we all know this. But I fear sometimes the will of God becomes a rather mechanical thing. Why do you want to know the will of God? If the will of God is the result of pushing the right buttons and getting the right print out, then we can use the will of God selfishly.

And I think some people do. For example, I've often had a problem with Christians who are in competitive sports. How do you pray as a Christian in competitive sports? Do you pray, O Lord, may we win? Or do you pray, O God, help me to do my best for your glory? And even if we lose, to be able to be happy about it for your glory.

Or do you pray, O God, what is your will? Now, if we can just push the right buttons and find out what God's going to do, we could abuse that. Here's a man who's in business, and if he knows what the stock market is going to do, he could make a killing. Should he pray and ask for God to guide him to make a killing on the stock market that's going to hurt somebody else? See, the will of God is not just a mechanical thing where I pray for God's guidance and you pray for God's guidance and I go my way and you go your way.

Uh-uh. The will of God is not a mechanical thing. The will of God is a living thing.

And I'm glad that it is. As I mentioned in a message a couple of weeks ago, if the will of God is a mechanical thing and one part breaks down, the whole thing stops, I would not want to live for one minute if the will of God is not operating. Nor would you.

Now, the will of God is not like a machine that if I make some step that's wrong or if I disobey, the whole thing falls apart. The will of God is like the human body. And you can remember the last time you got sick.

Some part of your body wasn't functioning right. But the rest of your body compensated for it and kept you going until you could straighten that out. The doctors call this homeostasis.

The body wants to maintain its balance. Now, the will of God is this way. There is not a person here tonight who could say honestly, I have always done the will of God.

And yet have you not discovered that in spite of ignorance, in spite of disobedience, yes, sometimes even in spite of rebellion, God has ruled and overruled and he's accomplished his purposes. He did it with Moses. He did it with David.

When we disobey the will of God or act against the will of God, we suffer. But the will of God is not going to suffer. I have to believe that almighty God is going to accomplish his purposes in this world.

I cannot believe that God is the victim of my stupidity and my ignorance and my weakness. Did I tell you about the lady who came up to the great Presbyterian theologian, I'm sure I did, Benjamin Warfield? And she said, Mr. Warfield, do you believe that what's going to be is going to be? And he looked at her and said, Madam, would you have me to believe that what's going to be isn't going to be? Now, we're not saying that we have a God up in heaven who is a dictator, who bypasses my intelligence, who overrules my own individuality. No, of course not.

There is not a theologian alive in the world today who can explain to you the mysterious interworking of man's responsibility and God's sovereignty. You can't do it. It's like a house.

When you're outside of a house, you see only two walls. When you get inside the house, you see all four walls. Now, God's truth is this way.

Whether we like it or not, we know in part. And we're seeing through a glass darkly. And we see only two walls of the house.

And some of my friends see the two walls that say human responsibility. And some of my friends see the two walls that say divine sovereignty. And they all peek around the walls and shoot at each other.

God never meant it to be that way. I read my Bible. I discover human responsibility.

I go back and read it again. I discover divine sovereignty. And the thing that encourages me is that the book of Revelation is in the Bible.

The Alpha and the Omega is going to accomplish His purposes on this earth. Now, I may miss out on some of the blessing because of my disobedience. And I may miss out on some of the reward because of my disobedience.

But I don't believe that when one member of the body is not functioning right, the whole body dies. The body compensates. Now, this lifts the will of God to a much higher level.

It's much more than just the peace of God in my heart and the Word of God before my eyes and the circumstances, the providence of God. There's much more to it than that. That's why I invite you to turn to Ephesians 1. Ephesians 1, verses 15 through 23, we read here about the Holy Spirit of God who is the

spirit of wisdom and revelation.

Ephesians 1, verse 15. Paul, who is in prison in Rome, is writing to the believers at Ephesus and other places. He's just finished one of the longest sentences in the Bible.

When you read it in the Greek, it just goes on and on and on and on. He's been telling them all that God has done for them. Now, verse 15.

Wherefore, because of this, I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and love unto all the saints, and these are living saints, not dead saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers. I'm always interested in what Paul prays about. Here's his prayer.

That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, the eyes of your understanding, or literally the eyes of your heart being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in that which is to come, and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all. Now, in this particular prayer, Paul indicates the essentials for knowing and doing the will of God. You say, well, Pastor, you've already talked about reading the Bible and praying and watching circumstances and having God's peace in your heart.

I did. That's the how of the will of God. I'm talking now about the why of the will of God.

I want to lift this to a little higher level, because knowing and doing the will of God involves much more than should I take this job or that job, marry this girl or that girl. These are important decisions. You marry the wrong girl, you'll find out how important it is.

You get the wrong job, you'll find out how important it is. I am not belittling these things at all. All I'm saying is it's time for some of us to just move to a little higher level in this matter of knowing and doing the will of God.

Now, Paul tells us that there are three essentials that we must possess if we are going to know and do the will of God. And they're so simple, they just jump right out at us. When I name them, you'll settle back and say, well, it's so obvious.

But stay with us. Let's see how obvious they are. Verse 15, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

That's essential number one. Verse 15, love for all of the saints. That's number two.

Now, they possess those things already. And so he prays for the third essential, which they did not yet possess. That is a knowledge of God, a growing, deepening knowledge of God.

This is why he prays in verse 17 that God might give to them the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge not of the will of God, not of the stock market, not of the want ads, the wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him. Now, in our authorized version, the word spirit is in lowercase letters, small s, meaning our spirit. You could translate it this way, that He may give to you an attitude, the right attitude

that involves wisdom and knowledge.

But you know, whatever happens in my spirit has to come from the Holy Spirit. When I was saved, the Holy Spirit came into my body and moved into my spirit. God's Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.

So that I think we can, without doing any injustice to the text, capitalize that s. That the Holy Spirit of God who lives in you may give to you, in your spirit, this wisdom and this knowledge in the revelation of God. Now, will you look with me at these three essentials? Because, if I do not possess faith in Jesus Christ, love for all the saints, and a growing knowledge of God, I am wasting my time with the other four steps. Let's take number one, faith in Jesus Christ.

Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus. Now, faith in the Lord Jesus is essential if we're going to know the will of God in two ways. Number one, salvation.

And number two, surrender. I think it's obvious that an unsaved person cannot come to God and pray, Oh God, show me your will. God will show him his will about salvation.

If you'll just turn the page to Ephesians chapter 4, you'll discover how impossible it is for the unsaved person to understand the will of God because something's wrong with him. Ephesians 4.17 This I say therefore and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, and that means the outsiders, the unbelievers, in the emptiness of their mind, the vanity of their mind. Do you not know that most unsaved people, I should say all unsaved people, but it shows in different ways, most unsaved people live for the vanities of this world.

Now, some don't live for the vanities of this world, they live for the vanities of the philosophy of this world, or the vanities of the praise of this world. But all unsaved people are guilty of this particular sin, vanity of the mind. Verse 18 Having the understanding darkened.

Not only is the mind wrapped up in vain things, it's darkened. Now this reminds us of what Paul wrote over in 2 Corinthians chapter 4, that their minds have been blinded. Satan has blinded the minds of those who aren't believers.

Being alienated, separated from the life of God. Now here we have people who have vain thinking, dark thinking, and dead thinking. They are dead people trying to think through the ignorance that is in them.

Now you put these four together, you can understand why the unsaved person is completely befuddled about the will of God. This is why when you are witnessing to unsaved people, don't talk about predestination and election, or even don't go too deep into the second coming of Jesus Christ. They can't grasp it.

When you preach at a rescue mission, you preach Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures. You don't confuse them with other things. Unsaved people are not able to grasp, understand, and put to work the will of God.

That's why when God saved the apostle Paul, he said, now the Lord saved you that you might know His will. He's going to call you that you might go out and preach the gospel and open their eyes that they might see what the will of the Lord is. So the unsaved person who hasn't put faith in Christ cannot know the will of God.

That's tragic. There are many reasons why a person ought to be saved. One, of course, is he's going to hell.

People don't like that word, but it's a good Bible word. The unsaved person is already condemned and he's going to hell. For that reason and that reason alone, he needs to be saved.

Secondly, he is enslaved to sin, and he could be set free. Thirdly, he's going to waste his life. What would you say? Many unsaved people do many good things.

This is true. On the human level, they do many good things. But from the divine point of view, it's never going to avail.

He that doeth the will of God abideth forever. And so if I speak to one person here tonight who has never been born again, you've never trusted Christ, you hear me. You'll never know what it is God wants you to do.

You'll never understand what God is doing until that darkness is removed. Now, once you put your faith in Jesus Christ, then you are prepared to know and do the will of God. But it goes a little further.

Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ means not only salvation, it also means surrender. I'm asking this question. You've trusted Him to save you.

Have you trusted Him to direct you? You know, so many Christians haven't. And they have to worry about this and worry about that, and stay awake at night worrying about something else. When all the while, God is saying, look, I did the hardest thing possible for you.

I saved you. Now, if I could do the hardest thing, can't I do the easy things? If you trusted me for the most difficult thing, the miracle of salvation, can't you trust me for the other things? That's the whole theme of chapter 6 of Matthew, where Jesus says, what are you worrying about? Is your worrying going to add one more minute to your life? Quite the contrary. Our worrying takes minutes off of our lives.

Doctors will tell you that people who are perpetual worry warts are often sick. So Jesus says, what are you worrying about? Can't you just surrender? The birds don't worry. And the flowers don't worry.

And all of nature is trusting Him. And the angels are trusting Him. Can't you trust Him? I think this means that when we wake up in the morning, we come to our Savior and we say, I've trusted you for salvation.

Now I'm going to trust you for today. You know the burdens I carry. You know the problems I face.

But I'm going to trust you right now. That's the meaning of that little addition in Matthew 11. Everybody quotes, Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

That's good. It's true. You come to Him tonight and trust Him.

He'll give you a rest. What about the next verse? Verse 29, Take my yoke upon you and learn of me. What's it mean to take a yoke? It means to bow down in submission.

He says you'll find rest under your soul. When you come to Him for salvation, He gives you rest. When you come to Him in surrender, you find rest.

One is peace with God. The other is the peace of God. One is the peace that means I'm no longer afraid of hell.

The other is the peace that says I'm no longer afraid of life. And so the first essential is faith in Christ. Now let me explain why.

Now listen closely. God's will for your life is arranged to help you grow more and more in your faith in Christ. God does not plan His will for your life or my life just to make us happy.

Happiness is a byproduct. He plans His will for our lives that day by day we might grow in our faith in Christ. And sometimes this means pulling the rug out from under us.

Sometimes this means coming up behind us and taking away our crutches. Sometimes it means putting us in the boat and thrusting us out into the deep. And sometimes it means thrusting us out into the deep and sending a storm.

And you know what He's doing? He's wanting us to grow in our faith in Christ. That's why He plans His will for us. Now the second essential is your love for all the saints.

Now the two go together. I think some evangelicals have been guilty of dividing that which God has put together. Jesus said that which God has brought together let not man put asunder.

God has joined together faith in Christ and love for God's people. God has joined together thou shalt love the Lord thy God and thy neighbor as thyself. John has written if you say you love God whom you cannot see, how can you hate your brother whom you do see? Now Paul says a very devastating thing here.

He says your love unto all the saints. Now watch this closely. When the Lord hit me with this it just was like a steamroller going over me.

Because there are times when we pray selfishly. Oh Lord what is your will for my life? Because I want to do your will and be a successful Christian. I want people at Moody Church to say you know, he's a great Christian.

Lord I want you to show me your will for my life because, because what? You see God's will for my life cannot contradict God's will for your life. If I'm doing the will of God and you're doing the will of God we ought to be walking together. Isn't that right? If you're serving God in His will and I'm serving God in His will we ought not to be like this, two fists hitting each other.

We ought to be like this. Now it may take a little time for us to get this way but God helping us will do it. I cannot believe that God would lead me to do something that would hurt you.

But we see this today. We see Christians who say they're doing the will of God and they're tearing down somebody's work. I've never felt it necessary to sit down at my typewriter and write an article for Moody Monthly or for Moody Church News that tore down somebody else's work.

If the only way I can make Moody Church look better is by making some other church look lesser there's something wrong with me. But this goes on. Paul is saying here that if I am going to be guided in the will of God, if the Holy Spirit is going to guide me in the will of God I have to love all of God's people.

Now this bothers me because there's some of God's people we find it hard to love. We can't believe that God's people wouldn't love us. There's some of God's people we don't love.

This is because we don't really realize what Christian love is. Christian love is not a sentimental feeling. Christian love is an act of the will.

I repeat what I have said many times. Christian love means I treat you the way God treats me. That's Christian love.

God forgives me, I forgive you. God in His love covers my sin, I cover your sin. Love covers a multitude of sin.

God is kind to me, I have to be kind to you. God is honest with me, I have to be honest with you. That's Christian love.

Christian love doesn't necessarily mean I want to live with somebody. We may have different personalities. Even Paul and Barnabas had a difference.

Paul is saying here that if I'm going to be guided in the will of God there has to be love. You know what this means? This means that if in my life I am deliberately not getting along with somebody and I haven't straightened it out God's not going to guide me. You know why? I'm being selfish.

I'm disobeying His Word. You've noticed, I'm sure, in the so-called Lord's Prayer that the pronouns are plural. You've noticed that.

We don't come and say, My Father. We say, Our Father. Instantly I am in contact with all of God's people.

Give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us our transgressions. Lead us not into temptation.

Jesus is teaching us in that prayer that if I'm in the will of God I'm not going to create problems for you. I'm going to help you solve your problems. If I'm in the will of God we're going to get closer together, not farther apart.

If I'm in the will of God we're going to be building up, not tearing down. And in our evangelical world sometimes there's some awful selfish praying. I never believed that God wanted to tear down some other gospel preaching church to build up another one.

I've never believed that God wanted to wreck one missionary work to help another one. Mr. Spurgeon used to say, if you build your church with borrowed bricks, watch out. And Paul is saying here to us that the second essential for guidance is love for all the saints.

Now we could stop right there and go to the altar. Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, love for all the saints, we've fallen short of that. Now you know why love for all the saints is one of the essentials for God's guidance.

Because the will of God is designed to help us love each other more. You know why God has permitted some of the so-called tragedies to come to our lives? So we can learn about the love for God's people. You know why sometimes God pulls the rug out from under us so some Christian can jump up and catch us? We can discover how wonderful it is to have Christian love.

So if the will of God is at work in my life, my faith is going to grow and my love is going to grow. Anything less than that is not the will of God. Now the third one is the hardest.

Faith in Christ, love for the saints, and a growing knowledge of God. Now this next statement is going to perhaps drop like an atomic bomb, but I want to say it lest I don't say it later on. The purpose of God's guidance in your life is that you might get to know God better.

The purpose of God's guidance in your life is that you might get to know God better. The most important thing in life is to get to know God better. That's the most important thing in life.

Not to know the Bible better. There are people who can outline their Bibles and diagram their Bibles and never get through to God. It's sort of a road map.

It's not really a living relationship. Paul is praying here that the Holy Spirit of God might so work in my life that I might have a growing faith and I might have a growing love and a growing knowledge of God. The will of God is designed that I might grow in my knowledge of God.

I learned more about the grace of God in a 15-minute ambulance ride than I ever learned in 5 years in seminary. Now at the time it was painful. But I learned more about the grace of God bleeding in an ambulance than I ever did studying in a seminary.

I'm not against the seminary. I don't suggest they move the seminary to an ambulance. But I'm saying that God in His will ordains certain things to happen.

And as we pray, now I want Your will to be done in my life, certain things happen. We say, why did this happen? We weren't planning on that. That wasn't in the rule book.

That wasn't there. That's not in the flight plan, Lord. But after it's all over, we discover we know God better.

What is the purpose of man? The purpose of man is to come to know God and enjoy Him forever. And if you and I are not growing every day in our knowledge of God, we're not growing. Let me use a simple illustration from education.

All of us know who have done any studying at all, either in high school or college or university or specialized school, that it's just as important to know the teacher as it is to know the material. You know that, don't you? You study your teacher. And you find out how your teacher thinks and how the professor works so that when the examination comes, you just about know how it's going to be done.

Not always, but usually. This is true among children. As children are growing up in a home, they get to know mother and father better.

And they think, now here's the way dad thinks, here's what pleases mother, here's what pleases dad. And if they're smart, they'll keep growing in their knowledge of their parents and they'll know their parents will better and get greater cooperation from them. Now this applies to the Christian life.

If you and I are growing in our knowledge of God, it's going to be much easier to determine the will of God. Because one of the essentials is growing in our knowledge of God. God doesn't just want to hand you a road map that says do this, do that, go here, go there.

He can do this with puppets. He says do this and do that and go here and go there that we might look up and come to know Him better. This is the real purpose for the will of God.

Now when you and I do not do the will of God, we don't grow in our knowledge of God. And when we don't grow in our knowledge of God, we stay pygmies. And then God has to treat us like kindergarten children and bring us back up again.

That's what happened in the book of Hebrews. He says for the time you've been saved, you ought to be teaching other people. But you've slipped back into second childhood and you've got to learn all over again the ABCs of the Christian life.

Let us go on to maturity. One more word on that and then we'll just jump into what he wants them to know about God and then we'll close. Somebody here tonight needs to know God's will about something.

Marriage or money or a job or education or some problem. And you pray, oh God, show me your will. Stop praying like that.

Start praying, oh God, show me Yourself. Show me Yourself. That's what God did with Isaiah.

Isaiah was all concerned. The king had died. What's going to happen in the year that King Uzziah had died? I saw the Lord.

And once he had seen the Lord, then he knew God's will for his life. You know why God wants us to see Him before He shows us His will? Two reasons. Number one, knowing Him is far more important than knowing His will.

I want my children to love me, not what I do for them. Secondly, when you see God, everything else falls into perspective. Oh, you say, my problem is like nobody's ever had before.

Then get a good look at God. It will fall into perspective. When you see how great God is and how gracious He is and how wonderful He is, everything else just falls into perspective.

And you stop being frantic and fanatical. Now Paul prays specifically that they might grow in their knowledge of God in three areas. The eyes of your heart being enlightened that you may know, number one, what is the hope of His calling.

You see, everything He's doing today relates to what He's going to do tomorrow. I have no right to ask God to do something today that is not going to accomplish His purpose in the future. The hope of His calling.

What is the hope of His calling? He's going to gather together a people for His name and take them to heaven to the glory of God. So it's wrong for me to ask God to do something. It doesn't work into that scheme.

It's like the building of a building. Before this building was constructed back in the 1920s, they had blueprints. Right now those blueprints, I think, are lying up in the trustees' room.

They're sheet after sheet of blueprints. Somebody designed the building. Now, once you have the design, that takes care of it.

You just put the blocks and the steel and the concrete where they belong. And somebody comes along and says, oh, I think we ought to put this flying buttress up here. I mean, they have these on other buildings, you know, and they look at the blueprint and say, sorry, it doesn't fit in.

And if you did put it in, it would throw everything off. Now, we do this with the will of God. Oh, God, I've just got to have this girl.

I've just got to have this job. Oh, do we? How does it fit into God's total picture? And so we come and we say, Father, I'm not sure what I'm supposed to do, but I want to know you better. If I know you better, I'll know your will better.

And most of all, I want your will to fit into your future plans. Don't let me, oh God, invent some new blueprint. The hope of his calling.

The riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints. Now, we could spend the rest of the evening until midnight on that. He's saying, look, do you know how valuable you are? Ever dawn upon you how much God paid for you? Don't you think he wants to show you what he wants you to do? You're valuable to him.

You're a part of his inheritance. He has enriched you and you have enriched him. I just have a hard time believing God can get any glory out of me.

But one of these days, he's going to gather us all together up in heaven and we're going to bring glory to his name. I don't understand how, but he'll do it. The riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.

This says to me, oh God, don't let me get involved in some cheap little worldly toy. I've been purchased by the blood of Christ. I'm a part of your eternal glory.

Don't let me get involved in some little sandbox thing. In other words, don't pray too small. Pray for the greatness of God to be revealed in our lives.

And that leads to the greatness of his power. You see, as I pray about the will of God, and God says, all right, here's what I want you to do, my next reaction is, Lord, I can't do it. I just can't do it.

Time after time, God opens a door and says, I want you to go through. I say, Lord, I can't do it. You've got the wrong man.

He said, have you forgotten what is the greatness of my power? You see, he's talking here about God's purpose, the hope of his calling, and God's possession, the riches of his glory, and God's power. Now, the astounding thing is this. Have you fastened your seatbelt? The astounding thing is this.

The power that raised Jesus from the dead is available for your life today. You say, I'm facing something I know I just can't do. Fine, that's how you grow.

Phillips Brooks used to say, do not pray for opportunities to match your abilities. Pray for abilities to match your opportunities. And so we're concerned about the will of God.

My job, oh, but in comparison to the eternal purpose of God, he can work this out. It's not a minor matter. It's a major thing.

We never say, oh, Lord, this is not important. It is important. You belong to him.

Everything that relates to my children is important. And all that relates to his children, it's important. And so Paul says now, essential number one, faith in Christ.

The purpose of God's will is to increase your faith. You keep on doing the easy things, you'll never grow in faith. Love for all the saints.

And sometimes God has done things in my life that just force me to knock down walls and start building bridges because the will of God is designed to help me love the saints. And thirdly, a growing knowledge of God. The will of God is designed to help me get to know him better.

Now the Holy Spirit's the one who does this. Verse 17, that he may give unto you the spirit, notice these three words, wisdom, revelation, in the knowledge of him. Where's the revelation come from? The word of God.

He's not saying, oh, God, that I might have a vision, that I might hear a voice, that an angel might come. I might be afraid if an angel walked into my study. God doesn't work that way.

Here's the revelation. The Holy Spirit gave me the revelation right here. Isn't that wonderful? The Holy Spirit loved me so much he wrote a book for me.

I don't know of anybody else in history who's ever written a book for me. He did. That's the revelation.

Now the knowledge comes from the revelation. The Holy Spirit of God who wrote it teaches it to us. And as we read the word of God, we see God.

As we get to know God's person better, and God's purpose better, and God's possessions better, and God's power better, we get to know God's will better. The will of God is really a byproduct of knowing God. And so the revelation is here in the word of God.

The knowledge is the illumination of the Holy Spirit. What's the wisdom? The wisdom is taking the knowledge and applying it to life. It's what James calls being doers of the word, not hearers only.

Wisdom is the right use of knowledge. And knowledge comes from revelation. And so the Holy Spirit of God who lives in you has these three purposes in mind.

He wants to increase your faith. Consequently, he guides us into circumstances where we have to trust him more. But this word is the word of faith, and faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

So the Holy Spirit gives us the faith to trust him. He wants to increase my love. And so he gets me into circumstances where I have to love.

I have to grow in my love. I can't stay with my own little clique. The people I'm just very comfortable with, I've got to learn to like and love some uncomfortable people.

But he does this through the word. The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. And finally, he wants me to get to know God.

That's the important thing. My faith in God helps me to get to know him better. My love for the saints helps me to get to know him better.

And it comes out of this book. What I'm saying in a faltering way is simply this. The will of God is a byproduct.

A byproduct of what? A relationship. What kind of a relationship? A growing relationship between me and God by the Spirit through the word. So that that Christian who spends time in the word and sees God, and has a growing knowledge of God, and a growing love for God's people, and a growing faith in Christ, is going to know the will of God.

He'll develop a spiritual intuition. He'll develop a spiritual radar. He'll know that the steps as well as the stops of a good man are ordered by the Lord.

He'll make mistakes, but God will compensate for it. There'll be delays, but God will give him patience. There'll be dangers, but God will see them through.

And it's all through the Holy Spirit. Have you ever prayed, O God, give to me, through the Holy Spirit, wisdom and understanding in the knowledge of God. Beyond the sacred page I seek Thee, Lord.

My spirit pants for Thee, Thou living Word. Let's pray. Is someone with us tonight before we pray and dismiss the meeting who has never trusted Christ as Savior? You've never taken that first step toward the will of God which is to be saved.

You say, is God willing to save me? Of course He is. My Bible says God is not willing that any should perish. I'd like to pray for you tonight.

You'll say, Pastor Wiersbe, I am not a Christian. I'm not sure if I'm a Christian. Please pray for me as you close the service.

I'm going to lift my hand. Folks are praying and they're not looking around. Here's my hand lifted high.

Pray for me. I need to be saved tonight. Would you remember me as you close the service? God bless you.

Thank you. Is there someone else? You may put your hand down, sir. Thank you.

Are there others? Yes, there in the back. God bless you. Anyone else now? We aren't going to embarrass you.

I'm going to pray for you. God bless you. Thank you, son.

Anyone else? Here at Moody Church, we never have embarrassed people or pushed people. We do pray for you. Someone else? You say, here is my hand.

I'm not saved or I'm not really sure of it. When you pray for the others, pray for me. That's my need tonight.

Anyone else? I don't want to miss anyone. Secondly, is there a Christian here tonight who says, I have some big decisions to make and I want you to pray for me. I need to know the Lord better that I might live in the will of God.

Anyone like that? Yes. God bless you. Oh, there are many.

God bless you. God bless you. All right, let's pray.

Now, Father, we pray first of all for these who need to be saved or who need the assurance of salvation and ask that tonight you will speak to them and help them. May they come to know Christ. Give them the grace to step out from their place and just to come and to pray and talk with the counselor.

And Lord, for our church family, many of whom listed their hands, decisions to be made, Father, we don't pray just for wisdom in making the decision. We pray, first of all, show yourself to us. Help us to get to know you better and to love your people more and to have more faith.

And then we know you'll show us what you want us to do. I help those to come to whom you're speaking. We pray in Jesus' name.

Amen.

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