

A new year usually brings about a desire for change. We take these opportunities to make a change in our own lives. We talk about our own desires yet we grasp for things we can attain versus what God will change. How do we know what God's will is? Sometimes we hope that our ideas, desires, and plans will become His. Have we asked the Lord about desires for this year? Begin first by asking God for His wisdom and reading a chapter of the Book of Proverbs a day.

**Proverbs 19:21** *Many plans are in a man's heart, but the counsel of the Lord will stand. The Message version... We humans keep brainstorming options and plans, but God's purpose prevails.*

What brainstorming plans have you done? God wants to reveal His will to us. His plans will be revealed. Desire His plans at the beginning of this year by humbling ourselves and asking for His will to be revealed in our lives. God is not concerned as much about my plans as He desires that His purpose be known. How can we know God's will for our lives?

First, God does not make it difficult to know. He wants us to know His will more than we desire to know it. God pursues us but it means laying down our own will. The key to discovering God's will in our lives is a willing heart. We tend to like the solution and then we'll follow it. Are we committed to God's will even if it doesn't line up with our own plans? God reveals to those willing to follow.

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

**TRUST:** to lean upon; to rest upon with all your weight. Trust is when our hearts are fully upon the Lord. When we hold a part back by having a backup plan, then our hearts are divided. When we recognize that where we are being led is fully by God, we don't need a backup plan. Humanly it looks foolish; biblically it is trust.

**LEAN:** to rest upon something by giving it part of the weight... like leaning on a cane.

**UNDERSTANDING:** the mental process of analyzing a problem. God gave us minds to process situations. Sometimes we are confused by an outcome by leaning on our own understanding. But Solomon is saying don't give your understanding any support but rely on God's will - to give our hearts into His hands and plans by not trusting in our own plans. Following God doesn't always make sense but we can trust Him and lean on His ways.

**ACKNOWLEDGE:** The Hebrew meaning is a command or a word of action. It's to deeply know someone - an emotional knowing of God. Is God invited to sit with us in every situation, relationship, or failure in our lives? Let God come in and fill that place with His presence.

**MAKE OUR PATHS STRAIGHT:** This doesn't mean that the path is easy or fast or easy to stay on.

We tend to deviate from His course for us. God takes responsibility when we surrender our will in favor of His will. We don't know the best solutions so we need to surrender to Him.

Our job is to trust and rely. His job is to direct and reveal. What areas do we need God to direct and reveal in our lives? Especially in these past few years of uncertainty, anxiety, heartbreak, and hardship, it's hard to see God working. But trusting God begins to change something within us. It places the outcome in God's hands and takes the burden out of our hands. Philip Yancey says, "I have learned that faith means trusting in advance what will only make sense in reverse."

What do we do with our questions about God's will? It is not a destination with a desire to "get there."

God's will is a journey that will never end this side of eternity. God is always revealing new things to us - the next step, the next activity, the next relationship, word, or encouragement. God is never early - but He is always here. He provides what is needed for each moment. Step by step God's will becomes clear.

**Matthew 6:34** *Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.*

**James 4:13** *Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit"; whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow.*

Are we so committed to our plans that we miss His plans? God will lead us better than we can. How could this year look different if we began with a willing heart to follow His plans? The disciples left everything to follow Jesus. What are you holding back saying, "what-if"? What do we do when things don't become what we desire? What if this marriage doesn't work out? Am I holding out parts of me? What if the next step of faith destroys it all? There are no what-ifs in faith. It is believing in advance what will make sense looking back. Don't lean on your own understanding. If we fully understand all that is happening in our lives then we are not walking in faith. Trusting God's will always results in a deepening of our faith. What would this church look like if we all were led beyond our own abilities? What impact would we have on the world? Be willing and trust God. This is the first step - willingness to follow where He leads and always be increasing our faith to the very end.