

### Am I in the will of God?

I have written many times about the will of God (including books on the subject\*), and I have preached dozens of sermons on the subject, but today I feel impressed upon to emphasize something again about the will of God.

Most Christians view the will of God as a decision at a critical moment. They ask questions like “which course should I study in the university,” “who do I marry,” which offer of employment should I accept,” etc. To most of us the will of God is the choice of God in these situations. Well, that is only a small part of the truth. Of course, it is very true that God a specific choice in these matters which He desires each person to follow, however when the bible talks about the will of God, it is not first about specific choices when we are faced with important decisions.

The will of God is actually a thinking process and the order of our lives. The most important way I can describe the will of God at this point is that it is our life. It is a process of living. The will of God is actually something you are supposed to understand.

*So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. Eph 5:17 NASB*

The will of God is the way I think. The will of God is more of the way I make choices than it is the choices I made. This is why Paul wrote to the Thessalonians about the will of God. Note that he said this *is*.

*3 For this is the will of God, that you should be consecrated (separated and set apart for pure and holy living): that you should abstain and shrink from all sexual vice,*

*4 That each one of you should know how to possess (control, manage) his own body in consecration (purity, separated from things profane) and honor,*

*5 Not [to be used] in the passion of lust like the heathen, who are ignorant of the true God and have no knowledge of His will,*

*6 That no man transgress and overreach his brother and defraud him in this matter or defraud his brother in business. 1 Thess 4:3-6 AMP*

Notice that the will of God is just one thing – consecration (or *sanctification*, according to other versions of the Bible). The will of God for the Christian is to be separated from the world into a life of purity and holiness. There is no other will of God for your life apart from these things really. If you do this will of God, every other thing that you will need to obey as the plan of God in your life will come to you easily. You will be guided into them without much effort on your part.

Many times Christians spend time trying to hear God so as to know His will. They learn how to go on long fasts so that God may reveal His will to them, but actually the will of God is not like that. Please don't get me wrong; I am not saying there is no part for seeking the face of God in alone-ness and prayer, but I am saying that when we want to know the will of God, we are not to start with specific decisions but to seek to learn the life of consecration in that aspect of life.

Consecration (or sanctification) is the thing called the will of God.

Let me explain practically. If a man comes to me and asks, "What is the will of God concerning marriage for me?" I will tell him simply, "shun pre-marital sex." It may be just that simple. The will of God is not "should I marry Angela or Mary?" No, No, No! The will of God about your marriage is much simpler than that! It simply is that you do not desire to go to bed with either Angela or Mary or any other person until you have married them. It implies you understand why anyone should marry at all. Instead of trying to make the decision on who to marry, use your prayer and fasting to kill the lusts in your flesh and understand why you should marry. Get the mind of God concerning what marriage is supposed to be and remove the idea dictated by human traditions from your mind. Remember, the will of God is sanctification, simple.

Please let me talk more about this sanctification or consecration matter still using marriage as our example. Sanctification starts from your thought processes. That is why we are told in Rom 12 not to be conformed to the world, but to be transformed through the renewing of our minds. Our minds refer to our value system, the importance we put to things and the way things affect us. These are the things that determine what we do in life. A sanctified Christian thinks differently; he or she doesn't hold on to the value systems of the world. Money, to him, is not what it is to the world. She understands that marriage is not for the rich or settled man. She doesn't judge whether a man is ready to marry primarily by what material possessions he has acquired. Marriage to her is not a way out of poverty but a matter of a phase of life and a way of better fulfilling the plan of God for her life. The sanctified man sees marriage differently from the men of the world. He is willing to become one flesh with a woman. 'He (or she) is not from my village or race or ethnic group' is totally out of their minds; a true Christian understands that we are all one body in Christ Jesus, and that in Him there is no white or black, Ibo or Hausa, rich or poor. People who think like this are consecrated or sanctified and are already in the will of God concerning marriage. Marrying the right person will come to them extremely easily.

I told a humorous story in my book 'Should I Say Yes?' A brother asked me whether God said anything to me about the wife I should marry. I replied in the affirmative. When he asked how, I told him that the officiating minister said 'I pronounce you man and wife.' I told him that was the voice of God as far as I was concerned. Did I marry the right person? I trust God I did. It was not whether I heard voices or had visions that mattered; it was the kind of heart and the kind of life I had before I married that determines that. In that book I titled the chapter 'I married the girl I liked.' I solved all the conflicts in my heart with the word of God. I was careful not to conspire against the Lord in my thoughts and in my words. I just wanted to please God in my ideas. Read the book and that chapter and you will discover the points I deciphered from the word of God concerning what my wife should be. In that book, I sought to describe to people what marriage is supposed to be. Once you sanctify your heart and your flesh as I described in that book, I make bold to say to you that you CANNOT miss the plan of God for the right mate.

A lot of people are not walking in the will of God, as I have already explained, but they want to marry the right person. Very funny indeed. Such people will end up deceived, and there is nothing they can do about it. A man is sleeping with some women in the church and is praying that God should show him the right woman to marry. This is an insult to the Almighty God. He is already walking outside

the will of God and the prayer is a plain contradiction. God will give him supernatural directions to the woman that will ruin his life. You cannot use visions to reap what you did not sow. You cannot sow to the flesh by your lifestyle and wrong beliefs which oppose divine truth, and expect to reap from the spirit a good spouse. No way! Any spouse you will get is the fruit of the seeds you sowed; visions from God don't overturn that principle.

Some think that you discover the will of God in visions and dreams or by prophetic utterances. Well, that is just deception manifesting. The fact that you see a vision or dreamt a dream doesn't mean you have discovered the will of God. Dreams do not at all prove you are in the will of God when you obey them. I must emphasize that the fact that God told you by a supernatural means what to do is not what makes the thing the will of God. God can give you a vision or lead you by a dream and you are still out of His will. The reason is that the will of God is a lifestyle, not a decision. The vision or dream only helps you to decide according to what you have made your life before that time.

Let us look at Israel at a particular point in their history as an example. Saul was directly chosen by God for Israel as king through the credible prophet Samuel. There is no doubt that it was God who made the choice for them; but what were the circumstances around the choice? Let us see.

*And the Lord said to Samuel, "Listen to the voice of the people in regard to all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them. Like all the deeds which they have done since the day that I brought them up from Egypt even to this day — in that they have forsaken Me and served other gods — so they are doing to you also. 1 Sam 8:7-9 NASB*

They were in *status quo* God-rejected. Ha! The people were walking in the rejection of God and His counsel for their lives, so what God gave them was the fruit of their rejection. It seemed like the will of God because it was by visions and revelations; but it was not. Let me emphasize it again: the prophetic words and the visions of God in the choice of Saul as king for Israel was the fruit of rejecting God; it was not a sign of spirituality in the nation. It was the best plan the Lord could come up with for people who had rejected Him. Don't be carried away by visions; they don't necessarily tell you if you are the will of God.

What would have been the will of God for Israel? They should have come to Samuel to learn how to react to the situations they were in. They should have asked him to inquire of the Lord for His precepts and plan for them at that time. That would have been a sign that they still accepted God as their ruler. That would have been the will of God – God remaining their ruler.

As I have just explained, many genuine dreams and visions from God do not reflect His perfect plan. The truth is that His perfect plan can only be discovered while we are in His will. With this uncertainty even with genuine dreams and visions, there is an added complication derived from the fact that most visions and dreams that people have are not even of God; they are products of a combination of a multitude of thoughts, desires, idleness, hunger (Is 29:8), overfeeding, etc, and even the influence of Satan on human spirits. In summary we should not even look towards dreams and visions; we should simply reach for the true will of God.

*For in many dreams and in many words there is emptiness. Rather, fear God. Eccl 5:7 NASB*

Oftentimes Christians think they miss the plan of God because they have not learnt how to listen to their spirits. They want to tune their spiritual ears to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit. That is nothing but a misapplication of what is true. The primary voice of your spirit, or inward witness, like we often call it, that a Christian has is that which speaks from imbibed truth. It is not a special communication from heaven. The way to train your spirit is by purging your heart of all forms of defilement; this purging is done with the water of the word of God (Eph 5:26) and repentance from dead works. Hearts thus purged speak up with truth to guide us in choice making. Remember that one of the primary duties of the Holy Spirit is to remind you of truth that you had heard (John 14:26). The Holy Spirit helps us to understand the word of God.

Many people who are seeking the will of God about their careers and choice of location have also misunderstood what the will of God is. Many who are asking for God's will in making a choice in these things have not yet sanctified their hearts concerning money and life. Contrary to the words of the Lord Jesus in Luke 12:15, they still think that a man's life consists in the abundance of things that he possesses. They are seeking God's will concerning how to have enough. They do not yet understand that a career choice isn't about making money but about demonstrating faithfulness and righteousness, and fulfilling the reason why we were born. Many are still afraid of tomorrow and so are trying to make a choice that would supposedly secure their futures. Their whole thought processes do not understand God as El-Shaddai and His hold over tomorrow. Indeed they have not yet discovered the will of God.

Remember that the will of God is sanctification. Your ideas about money and life must be renewed and sanctified; that is the will of God concerning your career. The will of God is that your thoughts are sanctified; I am not saying you will discover the will of God when your thoughts and ideas are sanctified; I am saying to you that sanctification is the very will of God. Once you have sanctified your thoughts and beliefs; then you are walking in the will of God and the plan of God will form itself in your life without much effort on your part.

I recollect the young man who used to listen to me on radio as I would teach "The Way of Success." One of those days he heard me teach that blessings in life are spiritual, and that God commands the blessings from above. He realized by those words that his life was not limited by his circumstances. He suddenly understood that promotion is indeed from above. He said to me in many words that he went into his closet and began to invoke the blessing of God from above. Shortly after this, his uncle called him and asked him what he wanted to do. The young man was undecided as he did not have enough information about life and the possibilities. Then the uncle offered him a scholarship to become a pilot, and paid for him to go to a school in North America. This was beyond what he had imagined. See, the will of God was when he sanctified his thoughts concerning the source of blessings. The result was that he walked into the plan of God for promotion for him.

So you see, the will of God for Joseph was not the throne in Egypt even though that was revealed with time as His plan. The will of God for Joseph was sanctification, that he abstained from sexual lusts and reject the advances of Mrs Portiphar. The will of God can be learnt and discerned. It is recorded in the scriptures and is more general than we realize. What I often refer to as the specific will of God is more like the plan of God for each person's life and it is rather automatic. It is not

possible to get outside of God's plan unless you are first outside His will. The will is a spiritual state of your heart. God doesn't expect us to beat our heads hard trying to discover His plan; He will reveal the plans to us when the time comes. It is His duty to reveal the plan to us. Most times He doesn't actually reveal them; we just find ourselves walking in the plans. Joseph did not have the opportunity to choose the direction of his life at any time more than when he had to make the choice to walk in sanctification. Every other thing that happened to him was imposed upon him. He never chose Egypt or the house of Potiphar. Sale into slavery took him to those places. He also never chose to become a ruler in Egypt. God lifted him in the due season. Do not worry yourself at all about knowing the plan of God; He will let you know it if it is necessary to have the knowledge ahead of the time of fulfilment. Just sanctify your heart as the will of God for you all the time.

As a minister of the gospel, many times people have to decide the kind of ministry to pursue. My experience is that most people miss it when they are not sanctified in their motives, their love for the word of God and their understanding of righteousness. Many are still trying to do what they call the work of God and the whole thing is based upon a wrong premise of the pathway of righteousness. They are trying to gain God's approval and attain to righteousness by working for Him. Please read my book 'How to Word for God' and learn details about this. Many people have started churches so they can collect tithes and offerings. Many of them claim it is the work of God they need the money for; they claim by having a base that brings in tithes and offerings they can now reach the whole world out there with the gospel. Again my experience is that such people never do. They end up being bugged down with church administration, planting of branches and maintaining the loyalty of workers and members (eventually they become Bishops); they never go into the world as they planned. They miss the plan of God because their hearts were wrong. You cannot start a church for the money it will bring it, no matter how noble your intention for spending the money may be. Every preacher needs to follow the example of Paul as written below and do only what can be declared openly as their intentions.

*But (we) have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. 2 Cor 4:2 KJV*

You know, years ago I heard the report of two senior brethren in the faith, Derek Prince and Lester Sumrall, both of them preachers, and they independently reported that they had not been out of the will of God in decades, not even for once. When I heard it I marvelled, but later I realized that it was not superfluous at all. I realized that once we realize what the will of God actually is, walking in His plan all of the times is not as hard as it seems. This is because He will do the leading.

*He guides me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Ps 23:3*

How many people today are walking out of the will of God and then asking to know God's will for their lives. We are not allowed to do that; we are only allowed to seek that spiritual state called the will of God, strive to enter therein, and the plan or specific will of God will easily unfold as we live every day before Him.

\*What Is God's Will Here? and many other books by Pastor Bankie can be downloaded free as PDF from [kwm.com.ng](http://kwm.com.ng)