

*<sup>35</sup> Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty. <sup>36</sup> But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe. <sup>37</sup> All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. <sup>38</sup> For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. <sup>39</sup> And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. <sup>40</sup> For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.”*

*<sup>26</sup> “When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me. <sup>27</sup> And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning.”* (NIV84)

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## AS GOD WILLS

There is a long and varied list of things that have been done throughout history in a quest to do God’s will. The crusaders waged numerous wars on the Holy Land, presuming to please God by attempting to take back Christ’s birthplace into the hands of Christians. Thousands lost their lives, because of these ill-fated attempts to do God’s will. The Apostle Paul persecuted and killed Christians, because he was following what he thought was God’s guidance. The World Trade Center Towers were destroyed along with 3,000 of the people who were inside because a group of extremists were trying to follow their god’s will. It’s an important thing to do God’s will, but you can get yourself into trouble when you make yourself the one who decides what that will is!

In the Lord’s Prayer, we pray “Thy will be done!” And that is certainly a noble prayer. But today we’ll explore just what exactly God’s will is and how that prayer is answered in our lives. We’ll strive to make it a life motto that we will live - **As God Wills.**

We should start this discussion about God’s will by clearly stating that there are two types or subcategories of what we would define as God’s will. Those could be called God’s hidden will and his revealed will. The difference is pretty self-explanatory. God’s revealed will is the things that he tells us specifically in Scripture. God’s hidden will is the things that he chooses to hide from us and doesn’t promise to reveal.

We should probably start with a discussion on God’s hidden will, since it is the one that is most debated and misunderstood today. Many people, including many Christians today are curious what God wills for their life. And so whenever they are faced with a major decision, they get curious what God thinks about their decision. They try to figure out what God wants them to do. The irony is that in most situations, what God wants is for you to make a decision. It’s your decision not God’s. Should I take this job promotion or stay in my current one? Should I move my family there, or should we stay here? Should I marry this person, or look for someone else? All of these are major life decisions, but they fall into the category of God’s hidden will. God isn’t somewhere behind the scenes crossing his fingers hoping that your decisions fall in line with his. He isn’t keeping score for the number of trivial decisions that you made the same choice as he would have made. That’s not our God. He lays choices before us, allows us to make choices and promises to bless us either way.

## John 6:35-40

Nowhere does God tell you he will reveal that hidden will to you. He does not promise to visit you in a dream, whisper in your ear, or align the circumstances in your life to reveal a particular choice. That's why it's called his *hidden* will. And it's useless to try to find out what that will is because God keeps it hidden from us for a reason. Can you imagine what a nut case you'd be if you knew in advance every accident or illness that came your way? Or if you knew the year, month, and day of your death? How unproductive you would be! And so God hides certain things from us for our own good.

Someone once asked a question, and the smart aleck in me loves it. The question that's been asked is this, "How do you know that burning in your heart is God speaking to you and not just indigestion?" The answer is that there is no way to know! If we are not careful, we might get ourselves in trouble - attributing some feeling or emotion in our lives to God's attempts to communicate his will to us. Many a good intentioned Christian has walked off a cliff, presuming to be following the feelings in their heart that God was supposedly creating.

Before we go much farther, I should clarify. Can God speak directly to people? Yes. He is almighty God. Does God speak to people? is a different question for which there is no clear answer. Perhaps he does, or maybe he doesn't. This much we know! There is no clear directive from Scripture to look for such communication. Therefore we can and should say nothing more about God's will than what we find in Scripture.

That is God's hidden will, but there is a revealed will of God as well. This will is all the things that he tells us in Scripture – that he reveals to us. Sometimes this revealed will comes into play in our everyday decision making. Sometimes God does have a clear will that is revealed. Let's go back to some of the situations that were brought up before. If one of the choices that lies before me is sinful, then God clearly reveals his will that I avoid sin. If I have a choice of staying at my desk job or becoming a drug dealer, then God has a will for me in that. If my choice of a place to live will afford no opportunity for worship and spiritual growth and I have no intention on filling that gap, then God wills that you stay where you are. If my choice of a spouse is going to be physically or spiritually dangerous to me or my family, then yes God wills you not to join with such a person to become one flesh. Those decisions God does have a will in because he wants you to obey his commandments.

The crowds that gathered that day with Jesus asked him a God's will question. Just a few verses before our text they asked ***They asked him, "What must we do to do the works God requires?"*** (John 6:28) People very often asked Jesus what were the things that God wanted them to do. They were in essence asking for God's will to be revealed to them. Jesus answers that question in various ways, always considering the mindset and intentions of the inquirers. Very often the answer revolves around obedience to the 10 Commandments.

So let's ask the question. What does God want me to do? What choices does he want you to make? What do the commandments say? God wills that you love him above all else, that you love his Word and are eager to hear and learn it. He wills that you respect the government and all in authority, that you honor his gift of life and do all you can to maintain it. He wills that husband and wife love and honor each other and that singles and married alike remain pure in thought and action. He wills that you don't steal - even from your employer by working less than 100%. He wills that you tell the truth and do all you can to give others a good reputation. He wills that you be content with the countless blessings he's given and not be in a constant pursuit for more.

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Fourth in *Lord, Teach Us to Pray* - Sermon Series on the Lord's Prayer

## John 6:35-40

In short, it is God's will that you "***Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind***"; and, "***Love your neighbor as yourself***." (Luke 10:27) and it is God's will that if you "***Do this... you will live***." (Luke 10:27) You'll live forever in heaven with him.

You know what he wants. So, how well have you done God's will? Jesus says to the lawyer who asked – ***Do this*** - obey the commandments perfectly – ***and you will live***. That means that there is another thing that we can say about God's will. That those who fail to obey his law be punished. ***You are not a God who takes pleasure in evil, with you the wicked cannot dwell*** (Psalm 5:4). ***The soul that sins is the one that will die*** (Ezekiel 18:20). These are God's will as well. They are his law revelation in his Word – the reality that is ours because of our sin. They describe us. We deserve punishment, death and even hell because of our disobedience.

And if God's will ended there, there would be no hope, no reason to continue, no reason to be here in God's house, no reason to worship him. But we have all of those things because we know that God's will doesn't stop with law – it stops at love. It's that love revelation that Jesus reveals to the crowd who asked him. He says to the crowd of 5,000 that he just miraculously fed

***For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me.***<sup>39</sup>  
***And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day.***<sup>40</sup> ***For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.***"

It is God's will that no one be lost to the hell they deserve. In 1 Timothy 2:(4) God makes it clear he "***wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth***." What truth? The truth about his Son and what he did.

God came up with a plan that his will might be done. He sent his Son to earth to live a perfect life in our place. That's why Jesus said,<sup>38</sup> ***For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me***. He always did what God wanted - perfectly - always. He never broke a commandment. He never sinned. Not even with a thought. And then, because the Father willed, and because he willed, he gave that perfect record away to you and me. And he took our guilty record on himself and paid the penalty of hell for our sin because it was the Father's will that "***everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life***."

And this truth changes our lives and our outlook on life. It gives us different perspective on God's will. No longer to we need to plague ourselves trying to find the hidden will of God. We know that we aren't on an impossible mission to determine the inner thoughts of our holy God, but rather we recognize the joy and freedom of making our own decisions and privilege of being able to apply God's Word in our lives and make decisions that are pleasing to him. We recognize the importance of being in his Word so that we can grow in our understanding and appreciation of his will. And even when we slip and fall, even when we fall short of God's revealed will in our lives, we know that we will never fall short of his gospel love. We can never change his will for us that ***everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life***. It's a joy to live for a God of love and to be able to say in life in death and into life eternal – **As God Wills!** Amen.

John 6:35-40