

What is God's Will for My Life?

A Message by James R. Newby

Text: I Thessalonians 5:11-18

Throughout my professional life of ministry, I have been asked the question, “What is God’s Will for my life?” It is a question that I have asked myself...many times. If you believe as I do, that our purpose in this life is to grow spiritually, then it naturally follows that you believe that God has a plan for such growth. I believe that the parameters of such a plan, however, are wide and filled with many choices.

In Paul’s First Letter to the Church at Thessalonica, he shares some of what it means to follow the Will of God—*Respect those who labor among you...Be at peace among yourselves...Admonish the idlers (What does this mean?)...Encourage the faint hearted, help the weak...See that no one repays evil for evil...Rejoice always...Pray without ceasing, and give thanks in all circumstances.* In various other letters, Paul expands on what he believes it means to follow the Will of God. For our purposes this morning, and with the help of our Quaker methodology of using queries as a *means* to grow spiritually, I suggest that there are four queries that we can ask ourselves that will help to shape our understanding of what the Will of God is for our lives. These queries can be helpful in all aspects of our life experiences.

The first query is: Is the choice that I am making one where Truth and Integrity are present? Truth and integrity should reside at the core of who we are as persons, and who we believe God is as Spirit. This has been so important to Friends that one of our testimonies is the *Testimony on Integrity*. John tells us to worship God “in spirit and in truth.” In Ephesians we read that we are to “speak the truth to our neighbors, for we are members one of another.” If I make a choice or choices where my integrity is compromised and where truth is not present, then I can assume that such a choice or choices are not a part of God’s will for my life.

The second query is this: Is the choice I am making one that promotes the cause of Justice and Righteousness in the world? The first requirement of God as expressed in Micah 6:8 is “to do justice.” I believe that the God I worship, and the God of my Quaker Faith is a God of justice, and that we are called to *expose injustice* whenever and wherever it is found.

In his famous *I Have a Dream speech*, Martin Luther King Jr. quoted the Prophet Amos when he challenged the conscience of America by saying, “...let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.” I believe that God’s Will for humanity involves choices that lead to acts of justice and righteousness for all people.

The third query is this: Is the choice I am making one where Love and Caring are present? “God is love, writes John, “and those who abide in love abide in God and God abides in them.” To make choices out of a caring and loving center, in whatever form such choices take, is to help fulfill God’s plan for my life.

Finally: Is the choice I am making one where Beauty and a sense of Awe find expression? I believe that God is present in all that lifts my spirit into a sense of awe. To be in touch with life experiences that put our souls in a place where we know true spiritual beauty, whether it is found in others persons or in nature, is to be in touch with the Living God. In the sense of awe that results, I can begin to understand God’s Will for my life.

I won’t dare say, as the Apostle Paul did after his list of concerns, that we will know, beyond any shadow of a doubt, what the complete Will of God is. I believe, however, that these four queries are *helps along the path of our own spiritual journeys*. By asking them before each life choice is made, may not bring me instant clarity on what God’s Will is *for my life*. They will, however, bring me closer to understanding *who* God is, and by understanding more and more about who God is, I will be able to begin the process of learning what God’s Will is for my life.

