

How to Know the

WILL OF GOD

for your life

Sound Advice for Christian Young People

HOW TO KNOW THE
WILL OF GOD
FOR YOUR LIFE

by

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Suppose God had a plan for our lives?

- What an immeasurably superior plan it would be. How complete in every detail. How devoid of errors and blunders. It would be perfect. It would be the plan of all plans. A demonstration of the infinite wisdom of God's mind.
- God's plan would be better because He fully understands us. For it was God who in the beginning¹ made man and breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life. Man is the product of God's creative hand. He knows our abilities and He knows our² limitations. More than that, God knows about life and its difficulties, and the bearing these hardships have on accomplishments.
- God's plan would be better because He sees things in their true focus. God's throne is at the center of all time. He fully knows the end from the beginning. We rather dimly see the present. God sees all — past, present, future. Nor is there any modifying facts of which He is unaware. If ability to purpose and to plan is based upon proper knowledge and wisdom, then God alone is able to plan for us, . . . if He would.
- God's plan would be better, too, because of His power to accomplish. God's universe³ is so tremendously vast it literally staggers the imagination. Our world seems large and it is; but — compared to the giant worlds of the sky, the earth is a mere speck in the universe. There, the billions and billions of star systems revolve in their orbits at the command of God. He is greater, more powerful, mightier than all the things which He has created. All obey His will. All follow His plan.
- God's plan would be better because of His sympathetic approach. One might conceive of a wise, powerful God who scorned His creatures. But not our God. He loves us.⁴ He wants the very best for our lives.⁵ He unselfishly desires not His own advantage, but our advantage. Deep in His heart He wants us to be successful . . . successful in truest sense, successful in the light of eternity.
- Suppose God did have a plan for our lives? No, there isn't any supposition about it. God does have a plan,⁶ His plan. And this plan is not a better plan . . . it is the BEST plan. Don't you desire to know about it?

¹ Genesis 1:27

² Psalm 103:14

³ Isaiah 37:16

⁴ John 3:16

⁵ Ephesians 1:9, 10

⁶ Proverbs 3:5,6

God Plans Other Things . .

- God is a God of plans. You don't have to look much further than the end of your nose to see that the world,¹ and what we know of the universe² as well, are filled to the brim with evidences of God's design. Everywhere you look you see the marks of God's planning, the exercise of His will.
- Consider the beneficence of the seasons. We know, of course, that the earth is tilted $23\frac{1}{2}^\circ$ on its axis, but what remarkable results come from this tilt. Instead of having the monotony of every day just the same and all parts of the world exactly alike as far as temperature is concerned, we have the delightful and exhilarating variation of spring and summer,³ autumn and winter!
- Or consider how God planned the days and the nights.⁴ You see, there is co-ordination in this planning⁷ for man's body needs a certain amount of rest and during the hours of night there is restoration of strength and recuperation of ability. So, in order that man should have this needed rest, God divided the day from the night. During the daytime there is the huge brilliance of the sun in sky which sheds abundant light the world around for work and activity. But at night time this light is removed and in its place there is the soft and soothing illumination of the moon⁵ which is conducive to rest and sleep. Don't you see clearly that God plans everything?⁶
- Notice further the beautiful harmony of the earth's atmosphere and man's lungs. Every schoolboy knows that our atmosphere is composed of 80 per cent nitrogen, an inert gas. The other 20 per cent is oxygen, a very necessary and highly volatile gas. But this combination is exactly right for our lungs. Were we to have more oxygen as a steady diet, we would be too active and soon burn out, and our lives, instead of being lived their normal span, would be swiftly terminated. Or were we to have less oxygen, we would drag around in a half-dead state day by day with insufficient energy to perform our daily tasks.
- It would truly be doubly funny if our atmosphere were of two parts nitrogen to one part oxygen for that is what the dentist uses as "laughing gas." Or it would be tragic if our atmosphere were balanced with half nitrogen and half oxygen for this would be nitric oxide and would swiftly choke us.

¹ Psalm 24:1, 2

³ Genesis 8:22

⁵ Psalm 74:16

² Psalm 19:1

⁴ Genesis 1:4

⁶ Psalm 104:1-35

● On the other hand, how carefully the lungs of man are constructed¹ to transfer the precious life-giving oxygen from air to blood stream. You don't have to possess a microscope or a laboratory full of queer looking bottles to see God's planning ability. Everything God does is planned and He cares for all the details. Nothing is forgotten.

● Consider for a moment the story of water.² Two parts of hydrogen and one part of oxygen equals water. Rather strange isn't it? Hydrogen is a highly inflammable gas and oxygen an absolute requisite for every fire. Yet when these two combustible elements get together they form a compound to put the fire out.

● Now when you take this water and heat it to 212 degrees at sea level, it releases itself into steam and goes back into its atmospheric elements of oxygen and hydrogen. On the other hand, when you cool water down to 32 degrees it becomes ice. Now it is an irrevocable law of the universe that warm things are light and cold things are heavy. Yet when it comes to the matter of ice, it's cold, but it's light. Now why is this?

● Well, of course, you can readily understand the answer is fish.³ If, when the streams become cold they would be coldest at the bottom and start to freeze from the bottom up. Consequently the fish would be forced all out to the top, and would die out of water and there would be no fish. But no, God has planned a new law here which supersedes the general law. For water, when it freezes, expands and becomes lighter. This is God's wisdom of course. And it is God's forethought for His creatures.

● Do you really doubt the story of God's planning? If you would examine a butterfly's wings or watch the gyrations of a humming bird,⁴ or note how wonderfully the fish⁵ fits into his watery environment, or look at your own hand and see the most amazing and versatile tool in all the universe you should be convinced.

● Now if God who plans for these the least things of His creations, does it not stand to reason that concerning you and I who are the highest of his creations and those who are destined to live eternally with Him that God would meticulously and affectionately plan our life? Of course, it does, . . . and He does.⁶

¹ Genesis 2:7

³ Genesis 1:21, 22

⁵ Job 12:8

² Job 5:10

⁴ Matthew 10:29

⁶ John 17:20, 21

God has a plan for you too . . .

- How do I know? Well, let's think for a minute. Man is the highest of God's creation. It was intended that man should have dominion¹ over all the rest of God's creatures. As far as the creative hand of God is concerned, man is God's masterpiece. Does it not seem logical that God having so carefully made man would have a wise and detailed purpose for man's life?²
- Consider the amazing body God has provided. It is the seat of a million marvels. There are trillions and trillions of individual cells each working together harmoniously in the body. Man is intelligent—he is efficient—he is self-reproducing. Were there no other marks of God's design in all the world, the human body would be overwhelmingly sufficient. Now, why would God create such a body if not to fulfill a purpose which He had intended?
- Or ponder man's environment. The body which God has given us fits perfectly into the environment which God has provided. We have eyes and there is so much to see—flowers and sunsets, mountains and people. We have ears, and the air waves are full of sounds and melody, too. We have feet and there are many places to go. We have mouths and there is food to eat and water to drink. But all these things are not an end in themselves. The end is to find and fulfill³ the will of God.
- Then remember the lives of those, God's former worthies. We have Noah and Moses. There are Joshua⁴ and David,⁵ Paul and Peter. These men knew positively the direct leading of God. Or, come a little nearer and consider David Livingstone for instance. He started out for China, but God turned him about and headed him for Africa where he became God's fearless Evangel of light to that dark continent. Adoniram Judson was God's man for Burma, and William Carey was God's man for India. Hudson Taylor was God's man for China. It isn't possible to know of these giants of the gospel and not be tremendously impressed by the fact that their lives were outstanding because they found and fulfilled the will of God!
- Or, talk with your Christian friends today. Inquire from them about God's present willingness to lead. You will find

¹ Genesis 1:26

³ I John 2:17

⁵ II Samuel 7:8-15

² Ephesians 1:9-12

⁴ Joshua 1:5

definite proof that God is the same, He plans for His children⁶ the same as He always did, today, . . . now, . . .

- Yet the greatest proof of God's desire to guide your life is to be found in the living and powerful Word of God, the Scriptures themselves. Over and over it is directly stated, and everywhere it is implied that God has a purpose, a plan for a will the lives of His children. Constantly on the pages of the Bible you are earnestly besought to surrender your will to the omniscient will of God.
- Our greatest Example is the Lord Jesus. He testified:
"I came down from heaven not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me" (John 6:38). *"My meat is to do the will of him that sent me"* (John 4:34). *"Not my will but thine be done"* (Luke 22:42).
- The great Apostle Paul testifies similarly:
"Paul, called to be an apostle by the will of God" (I Cor. 1:1). *"Brother Saul . . . the God of thy Fathers hath chosen thee that thou shouldst know his will"* (Acts 22:14). *"Assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us"* (Acts 16:10).
- Many Bible verses call this truth to our attention:
"Teach me to do thy will for thou art my God" (Ps. 143:10). *"I beseech you . . . that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable and perfect will of God"* (Rom. 12:1,2). *"Wherefore be ye not unwise but understanding what the will of the Lord is"* (Eph. 5:17). *"We . . . desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will"* (Colo. 1:19). *"That ye may stand perfect and complete in the will of God"* (Colo. 4:12). *"For ye have need of patience that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise"* (Heb. 10:36). *"For this is the will of God that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men"* (I Pet. 2:15). *"For it is better if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing than for evil doing"* (I Pet. 3:17).
- And here is the mighty promise to those who do the will of God.
"And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever" (I John 2:17).
- Can you doubt this truth? These words are written to you. The same God who guided the mighty men of old desires to guide you. His plan for you is the very highest, the most noble. If you follow it completely, your life will be worthy of God's commendation.

⁶ Romans 8:14

The First Prerequisite . . .

- You must be saved. I mean, genuinely saved.¹ I'm going to be perfectly honest with you when I say that God makes plans *only* for His children. If you have never received the Lord Jesus Christ as your own personal Saviour, then you're not God's child and I question very seriously whether God has a plan for you.
- You know how it would be in your own case. Parents who have children carefully and lovingly plan for their children's future, and while they may be mildly interested in the neighbor's children, they would never think of planning their lives. The person who is outside of Christ has scorned the thing which God holds dearest, which is the death of His well-beloved Son. So, before such an one can come into the plan of God and know His will, this one must deal with the Son² question which includes the sin question.
- And how can one do that? Ah, my dear friend, this is the oldest story in the world. It started way back in the Garden of Eden when the Adamases chose to hate and disobey³ a loving God. The result was that all the world became sinners⁴ before God. Of humanity's millions both then and now, there is none righteous,⁵ no not one. They have all sinned⁶ and come short of the glory of God. And it is not a question of being condemned at the end of time, for sinners are condemned already.⁷
- But here's where the good news of the gospel comes in. Long centuries ago our loving God sent into the world His only Son. Born as a little Babe of a virgin mother, Jesus of Nazareth for thirty-three wonderful years lived a beautiful and sinless life before all. His words were incomparably excellent, His deeds were absolutely unique. Never was there any sin in Him. He was the spotless Lamb⁸ of God.
- But He had not come to live. Rather He had come to be a slain Lamb . . . the offering for sin . . . the Saviour of the world. And one tragic day He allowed Himself to be nailed to a cross of shame between heaven and earth, and gave His life willingly for the sins of an entire world . . . and for your sins. This is God's way of salvation.⁹ This is the answer to your soul's need. This is the most important thing in life . . . your life.

¹ Acts 16:30, 31

⁴ Romans 5:12

⁷ John 3:18

² Matthew 27:22

⁵ Romans 3:10

⁸ John 1:29

³ Genesis 3:6

⁶ Romans 3:23

⁹ Acts 4:12

● Nor does the story stop there. For after three days in the tomb, He arose,¹ a glorious, victorious Conqueror over sin, death, and the grave. Today He sits at God's right hand interceding² for all who are His, and awaiting the day of His return to earth to be crowned as king of Kings.³

● Have you understood this love story? It's the greatest story of the ages. It's the story for you, individually, personally. I know that Christ died for the sins of an entire world. But please understand that He died for you, too. And when you, realizing your utter helplessness and hopelessness, look into the face of God and by faith receive His Son, God will bring to pass the miracle of the new birth⁴ in your heart. You will become a new creature. Old things will pass away . . . your old desires, your old habits, your old ambitions . . . all things⁵ will become new. You'll receive new life, new aims, new power, new enemies, new friends, and a new Heavenly Father.

● Some have wrongly thought and falsely taught that salvation is by the way of good works or a good life. The Bible solemnly warns against⁶ this. No amount of good works will ever open Heaven's gates. And a good life, even the very best life falls far short of God's absolute standard of perfection. The truth is that salvation is just simply not obtained that way.

● Nor does salvation come by attempts at denying evil or closing one's eyes to manifest unrighteousness. These by-paths are the Devil's traps pure and simple. Or, if you are tempted to put your trust in baptisms, church attendance, burning of candles, prayers to saints, contributions to worthy causes, be assured that God simply does not save anyone by this means. Salvation is by grace⁷ through faith in Christ alone.

● Have you ever received Christ . . . this way? Have you known the miracle of redemption . . . God's way? If not will you pause right now, slip to your knees, look up into God's face and tell Him that you are here and now taking Jesus Christ, the Lamb⁸ of God, as your own personal Saviour? If you'll do that, and mean it, you'll find true every thing I have said.

● Then, my dear friend, God will have a plan for you. For now, you're His Child. And He's your Heavenly Father. You're the object of His great, efficacious, eternal love: And His heart of love earnestly desires the very best . . . in the light of eternity's ages . . . for you.

¹ Matthew 28:6

⁴ John 3:3

⁷ Ephesians 2:8, 9

² Hebrews 12:2

⁵ II Cor. 5:17

⁸ John 1:29

³ Rev. 19:11-16

⁶ Titus 3:5

⁹ Romans 8:32

Our New Heart Quest . . .

- Did you know the moment you received the Lord Jesus Christ as your own personal Saviour, your heart received a new guest? Yes, that's right. In the temple of the heart of every truly born again Christian lives One who is none other than the Holy Spirit¹ of God, the blessed Third Person of the Trinity. More than that, He has come to abide² forever, and will never leave the Christian's breast until we stand in God's presence.
- The last night before the Lord's crucifixion was a very sorrowful one. The Lord's heart was exceedingly heavy and the disciples seemed to have sensed the impending tragedy that was to befall on the morrow. What could the Lord say to them that would comfort their sorrowing hearts? They were to be as sheep without a shepherd. They were to be at the mercy of the Evil One. Yes, but there was some precious news, even in the midst of their sorrow. For there was Someone³ coming who was to live in their hearts and be to their lives a Companion exactly like the Lord Jesus Himself had been!
- Christ told them that this Person was to be another Comforter, that is, another One just like He had been. And when you understand the exact word which the Lord used for "comforter" you'll know that the Holy Spirit of God is not Someone merely to help in times of sorrow. Rather He is to be a constant Companion, a loving Friend, a faithful Guide. His ministry will be to take of the things⁴ of Christ and make them real and precious to the born again heart of every believer.
- Please, I beg of you, do not think of the Holy Spirit as an "it." This is a sorry translation which inadvertently crept into the King James version. You're quite right in correctly translating the passage⁵ the "Holy Spirit Himself." The Lord Jesus seemed to particularly emphasize the Spirit's personality as He speaks⁶ of Him.
- Now on the day of Pentecost⁷ the Holy Spirit did come to dwell as Christ had promised and from that day to this He has been present and ministering in the world. There are seven great ministries which the Holy Spirit performs. Two of these ministries are to the world at large. He restrains⁸ evil and convicts⁹ of sin. No one ever comes to Christ but by Him.

¹ I Cor. 6:19, 20

² John 14:16

³ John 16:7

⁴ John 16:15

⁵ Romans 8:16

⁶ John 16:13

⁷ Acts 2:4

⁸ II Thess. 2:7

⁹ John 16:8

● Four other ministries of the Spirit are accomplished in the believer the exact instant he believes and is born again. They are, first, the regeneration¹ or the new birth by which we're born again, this time into God's great family. Then the baptism² of the Spirit which is a heavenly operation and by which Christians are united vitally to Christ and to one another in one body.

● The third ministry is the sealing³ by the Spirit, He, Himself being the sovereign mark of God's ownership. And the fourth is the indwelling⁴ of the Spirit in the heart of the blood-washed sinner, now made Saint. None of these ministries need be asked for. None need be implored. God graciously and freely bestows all upon His newly born Child. Moreover, this is the unmistakable sign of salvation. If any have not the Spirit⁵ of Christ he is not of God.

● Now the foregoing four ministries are what we might call "once for all" operations of the Spirit. They occur only one time and that at the beginning of the Christian life. But there is another ministry which may and ought to occur many times, yes, constantly in the Christian's life. It is this ministry which is inseparably bound up with the ability to know and do the will of God.

● The ministry of the Spirit is His filling.⁶ Those believers who want to be filled, and who will pay the price of emptying themselves of sin and self may know the joy and thrill of the Spirit's filling. Not once⁷ only, but as many⁸ times as there is need and there is opportunity.⁹ But the Christian who is filled will be filled with Christ. Everyone who is filled will love the Lord Jesus exceedingly, and will show Him forth constantly.

● Bound up in this filling ministry is the difference between defeat and victory. Here is the difference between being led and not being led. Here is the key to true success. Here is the path of God's guidance and blessing.

● That it is impossible to be a Christian without Christ everyone knows. For a Christian is one in whom the risen Christ dwells. But some perhaps have not understood that it is just as impossible to be in the center of God's will without yielding to the blessed ministries of the Spirit. For He is God's answer to the believer's every need. He is the Master Guide on life's pathway. He is the Architect of the Christian life.

¹ John 3:5, 6

² I Cor. 12:13

³ Ephesians 4:30

⁴ John 16:17

⁵ Romans 8:9

⁶ Ephesians 5:18

⁷ Acts 2:4

⁸ Acts 4:31

⁹ Acts 4:8

The Second Prerequisite . . .

- After you have been genuinely saved there is a further step to be taken in order to insure the right understanding, and the full application of the will of God. This step is that of complete yieldedness or surrender¹ to the will of your Heavenly Father. One of the greatest tragedies in the Christian life is a Christian who either through ignorance or through unwillingness fails to turn over the complete guidance of His pathway to an all-wise Father.
- You can easily understand how impossible it would be for God to direct a life that did not want to be directed. For here is one thing God simply will not do. He will not come in and ruthlessly seize the reins of direction over your will. Rather, He waits until you, of your own free will, turn² over the leadership to Him.
- Surely you do not question His ability to lead. Nor can we question His purpose in leading. How utterly foolish for any Christian to endeavor to guide his life over life's uncharted seas. We know next to nothing. God not only knows all, but controls all.
- Now, if I had never yet seen this truth and had not yet yielded my life to God, this is what I would do. After meditation upon God's invitations³ in the Bible, and after careful examination of the sincerity of my own heart, I would tell my Heavenly Father that I wanted Him to fully and completely direct my life from now on. I would (if my heart really meant this) further tell Him that in view of His love and His omniscience, I was willing to go where He wanted me to go, and be what He wanted me to be. I would make this a definite step⁴ in my Christian career, and I would note down this decision in some safe place, perhaps on the fly leaf of my Bible.
- But that's not all. The very next morning after this complete surrender I would again pour into the ears of my Heavenly Father the same confession reminding Him that I still meant with all my heart what I had previously said. The next day I would repeat the same and the next day and the next. Why? Will God forget? No, God will never forget, but you may. After this daily commitment is a splendid way to remain yielded to God's will.

¹ Romans 12:1
² Romans 6:13

³ Colossians 3:1-4

⁴ Hebrews 12:1, 2

God's Master Plan . . .

- What's the reason behind the world? What's God's purpose in the creation of this vast universe? Is humanity just to go on and on with war after war and disappointment after disappointment? Oh no! my friend, God has a master, over-all, irresistible plan!
- Let us go back a bit. In the beginning God created¹ the heavens and the earth. Everything was beautiful and everything was perfect, as is always the way with the handiwork of God. Then something sinister and mysterious happened.² Many Bible students believe that the beautiful and bountiful earth became a wilderness of waste and desolation because of God's judgment³ upon the sin of a certain high-ranking angel named Lucifer. How many centuries rolled by until God restored⁴ the earth and placed Adam and Eve in the world we do not know. But we do know that human tenure on the earth has been comparatively recent.
- The story of our first parents is a sad one. With God doing almost everything to make them want to choose the right and turn from the wrong, we find them disobeying God and choosing the way of selfishness and sin. At this juncture the virus of sin entered into the life blood of the race and every person born into the human family since that day has been born⁵ a sinner.
- You can read the story. Cain slew his brother, Lamech committed murder. At the time of the flood the earth was just filled⁶ with violence. At the Tower of Babel man was still choosing his own will in place of God's, and so the story continues. It is a picture of failure and ever-gathering darkness and despair. But there is one ray of light for in the center of time, God did something. He sent⁷ His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, into the world to bring forgiveness and pardon and new hope to the sons of men. Yes, all the damage that has been wrought because of sin can be forgiven, for man may have a new start by the simple appropriation of Christ's sacrifice into his heart.
- But do not think that all these events have taken God un-awares, for we learn that the death of His son was purposed⁸ from before the creation of the world. And God's Master Plan

¹ Genesis 1:1

² Ezekiel 28:12-19

³ Isaiah 14:12-17

⁴ Genesis 1:2

⁵ Romans 5:12

⁶ Genesis 6:5

⁷ John 3:17

⁸ I Peter 1:19, 20

includes that men and women should be redeemed and fashioned after the pattern of the God-Man through the power and wisdom of God.

● To put it into a nut shell, God's plan and purpose for today is, by the preaching¹ of the gospel to all men, to call out a people² for His name. The Church is to be composed of men and women from all races. But all are alike in this one particular, they have been washed in the precious blood of Christ.

● Understand then that God's purpose is not the reclamation of a doomed world. It is not the cleaning up of vice conditions. It is not the furtherance of the invention of labor-saving devices. All these are commendable and bring their reward. Rather, God's plan is the eternal salvation of lost souls. This is the task which is the commission³ of the Church, and this is the ministry into which God's children must fit.

● Things will not always be disappointing. Evil will not always be on the throne. There will come a day when sin⁴ shall be no more, and this day is to be inaugurated by the personal appearance of God's own dear Son. Do not look for Him, however, to come again as a helpless Babe born in a ragged manger. This time He comes as a conquering, resistless⁵ King. And every eye shall see Him and every knee⁶ shall bow before Him.

● His first coming will be to receive His Bride, which is composed of believers of all ages, unto Himself. Then with Christians in His retinue, He will return to be crowned King and to set up a world government of peace, righteousness and justice that shall never be thrown down.

● Christ comes as well to bring blessing and honor to God's ancient chosen people, the Jews. These poor folk that have known twenty long centuries of the bitterest despair will at that time come into immeasurable blessing⁷ under the benign reign of the King of the Jews, Satan the arch enemy⁸ of God is to be bound and cast into the abyss, and to tempt the nations no more. And all these nations⁹ who are deemed worthy will be invited to share the blessings of this age of righteousness.

● This then is God's plan. Nothing can deter it. Nothing can hinder it. It has been decreed by the almighty Sovereign of the universe. Part of this plan is to be carried out by redeemed men and women such as you and I.

¹ Matt. 28:19, 20

² Acts 15:14

³ Acts 1:8

⁴ Isaiah 11:9

⁵ Rev. 19:11-16

⁶ Philippians 2:10

⁷ Deut. 30:3-10

⁸ Revelation 20:2

⁹ Zech. 14:16-19

Every Christian Has a Part . . .

● Now, it is true that God has a master plan for the world. It is also true that God's plan includes every child of His. But the problem will always be . . . where do I, individually, fit into this plan? What is God's *specific* purpose for me? Where is the place of the "center of His will" for my life? Does God want me to be a foreign missionary? Is it His will for me to enter the business world? To know the answer is to attain the pathway which leads on to the highest goal in life.

● Let us be assured first that you do not need to implore or plead with God to guide you. He wants to. Over and over in Scripture¹ He expresses not only His willingness but His earnest desire² to have you trust³ Him. It is therefore a wrong attitude to think that we must persuade God to lead us. On the other hand, there is a very definite problem resident in our own human hearts. We must *want* to be led.

● How does God make known His will? Will He talk through a burning bush as He did to Moses? Will He send an angel down from heaven as He did to Gideon? Will He speak in the night hours as He did to Samuel? Will He appear personally with a great light as He did for Paul? The answer is, that God could speak in any of these ways . . . if He chose to do so.

● Yet it is also true, that the experience of many of God's saints leads us to believe that God speaks today in different ways. You see, we have in our hands a great Book which men of other ages did not possess. This book is truly the living⁴ Word of God. Also, in our hearts dwells none other than the Spirit⁵ of God which the saints of others ages never possessed in abiding presence. It has pleased God to speak to His children today by these. Yet God's voice is just as real as if He spoke audibly.

● Of this one thing you may be positive. By one way or another God will make known His plan for you. God will faithfully fulfill⁶ all He has promised to you. He will never be behind time. He will never forget. If there is a failure to ascertain God's will, or a failure to follow that will, the failure will always be a human failure. It will be your failure. But there does not ever have to be any failure . . . if you want to know your part in God's plan . . . if you want to know it more than all else in life . . . if you want to know it with all your heart.

¹ Proverbs 3:5, 6

² II Timothy 1:12

³ John 15:4

⁴ II Timothy 3:16

⁵ I Cor. 3:16

⁶ Psalm 121:3

Your Part In God's Plan . . .

- It is to be assumed that God could have carried out His plan without calling on us for our feeble aid. There isn't any reasonable doubt but that God is able through His own omnipotence to bring to pass the things which He has Himself decreed. And yet God has not chosen this way. Rather, He has planned that His children,¹ redeemed by His Son and empowered by His Spirit, should bring to pass² the purposes of His heart.
- However, we should have this clearly in our minds. Don't think that God's plan includes only ministers, Christian leaders, missionaries, Sunday-school teachers, and lay workers. Rather, God invites every³ Christian from the least to the greatest to be a co-partner with Him in the accomplishment of this great task. God wants your help. You may have thought that God worked only through specially called people. The truth is that God calls everyone. The great commission⁴ is to all Christians. You're a missionary the moment you become a Christian.
- Do not misunderstand me, however, I am not implying that every Christian ought to seek to be a minister, foreign missionary, or actively engaged in some kind of full-time Christian work. It is not safe for you to be in China if God wants you to serve Him in America. Nor is it right for you to endeavor to be a preacher if God wants you to be a Christian businessman. God must have His representatives as workers in all walks of life. And every Christian is needed whether He be a storekeeper, a student, a soldier, a housewife, or a street sweeper. Do not be misled into a false differentiation by dividing those who are in full-time Christian service and those who are in full-time secular service. All are important⁵, and God uses everyone. God just as definitely calls a Christian doctor or a Christian school teacher as He calls evangelists.
- A word of warning. God's plan will most certainly be hindered⁶ if you fail in the spot where God has placed you. Don't consider yourself unimportant. Someone may never hear the glad tidings unless you are faithful.
- How important it is then that everyone should definitely seek to know just the place that God has marked out for him. This is the greatest quest of life. Are you seeking?

¹ Acts 2:41-47
² John 21:15-17

³ Mark 16:15-20
⁴ Matt. 28:19, 20

⁵ II Timothy 4:2
⁶ I Cor. 15:58

There Are Certain "General Rules" . . .

- There's no use asking God for special guidance on problems whose answers are clearly taught in Scripture. These ought to be understood as a matter of course, and observed on general principles. These truths are God's will in every Christian life . . . every day.
- For instance, everyone knows the Bible forbids shady dealings in business. We must provide things honest¹ in the sight of all men. We must not steal.² We are to avoid every appearance³ of evil. What would be the value of asking God for His guidance concerning a business venture which was slightly off color? His will would always be "No"!
- Or, suppose a Christian was in love with one who was not a Christian. There would just be no answer from God to the petition as to whether or not this marriage should take place. God has sternly and specifically forbidden⁴ this. Christians are to marry only⁵ Christians. Only confusion, heart sorrow and bitter disappointment follows the disregard of this principle.
- Others might pray to God about whether or not to join a church. But there is no need of hesitation here. The Church is God's divinely appointed⁶ institution in the world today, and God's provision for the believer's need of comfort, fellowship, sustenance, and place of service. There might be a question about *which* church to join, and this, too, may be settled on revealed truths.
- Personal advancement might raise some questions. Should the Christian follow this business venture to certain riches? Does God desire this child of His to become rich, to have more than abundance, or should money be used as made, of course, for the glory of God? Again the Scriptures are not silent. There are serious warnings⁷ about riches, and wise admonitions⁸ to lay up treasures in heaven.
- Now, it is true that a knowledge of these principles comes only from an intimate acquaintance with Scripture. But God purposes that His children shall both know these truths and guide their lives accordingly. Happy is that Christian who has been steeped in Bible truth from childhood. For others, there is no short cut. Learn them. (

¹ Romans 12:17
² Ephesians 4:28
³ I Thess. 5:22

⁴ II Cor. 6:14
⁵ I Cor. 7:39
⁶ Matthew 16:18

⁷ I Tim. 6:17-19
⁸ Matt. 6:19, 20

Your First Responsibility . . .

● Those who would know the will of God must be "dead in earnest." No one may ever take the attitude "let God show me His will, and I'll consider it" and then hope to hear God speak. Understand that the plan of God is the superlative¹ of all plans. It is complete, incomparable, perfect. But God will simply not reveal His will until your heart is ready to receive it in 24-karat earnestness.

● It is always a good exercise to examine your inner attitude carefully. Go some place where you may be quiet and alone, and microscopically scrutinize the relationship of your life to God's hidden will. Look relentlessly into all the nooks and crannies. Do you see things hidden there of which He would not approve . . . even little things? Are you endeavoring to hide anything² from His eyes? Have you committed everything (and I do mean everything) into His loving hands?

● For instance . . . your loved ones. Do you place your affection³ for them above your love for Christ? Why remember this, that God cares for dear ones a thousand times more than you can ever hope to. Or, your business?⁴ Is it committed wholly to God, or are you running it as a side line for your own profit?

● Or your estimation of yourself. Perhaps secretly you think you're not so bad, and God is rather lucky that you decided to become a Christian and help Him. Oh, my friend, you must realize that you were nothing but a poor, lost, bankrupt, condemned sinner⁵ until Christ came your way and rescued you from the miry clay⁶ of certain death.

● Beloved . . . be honest with God. Let your heart be crystal clear in His sight. Know this, that God could pick up a stick or a stone and make it a thousand times better representative than the most talented of us if He wanted to. It is only because of His grace that He uses us at all.

● Tell Him that of yourself you're nothing, absolutely nothing.⁷ Then pray that He will take the nothing that is you, and make something out of it by His power and for His glory. God can and will use human vessels that are clean and empty. He will use you too if you're clean and empty. Clean of all pride, and empty of all self. That's our first responsibility.

¹ Colossians 2:4

⁴ Matthew 6:33

⁶ Psalm 40:2

² Psalm 94:7-9

⁵ Romans 3:10-18

⁷ I Timothy 1:15

³ Matthew 10:37

Have an Active Trust . . .

● Here is a real secret for those who would truly know the will of God for their lives. They should exercise an *active* trust. Don't sit down and fold your hands and expect the Lord to drop a package of sealed orders in your lap. But lend your hand to the immediate tasks of the Christian life which are near by. Keep busy in the opportunities for service right where you are . . . now!

● There is an Old Testament story about a trusted servant of a great man who was given a very important mission¹ to accomplish. A phrase² out of that story is illustrative here as the servant said, "I being in the way, the Lord led me." He really didn't know where he was going, but he trusted God and started out. The lesson from that is to put ourselves in God's way by earnestly endeavoring³ to do the tasks which fall to our hands.

● A principle of the will of God seems to be to promote to higher tasks those of His children who are faithful in the smaller things. Very often God calls to important positions those men and women who have faithfully fulfilled the smaller jobs, and the number of these smaller jobs (yet no job is small if it is for Christ) is legion. One can teach a Sunday School class, or be an usher in a church, or go to a rescue mission, or sing in the choir, or arrange the chairs, or mow the church lawn . . . and on and on.

● But there is another side to this matter of keeping active while seeking God's will. It has a tremendous teaching value to our experience. Everyone knows that we learn by doing, and very often God withholds His further guidance until we have attained the place of more definite experience. So an active trust may hasten the fuller revelation of God's will.

● Let us have done with the attitude that by and by, after so long a course of education or training, then I shall serve Christ. Do not misunderstand us—we believe in training. But God is not limited to the use of those who are trained. He can use here and now everyone whose trust is an active trust, and whose faith is a working faith. Nor will God fail to render full rewards for every last piece of service done now, even to the giving of a cup of cold⁴ water in His name.

¹ Genesis 24:1-4

³ Galatians 6:9

⁴ Matthew 10:42

² Genesis 24:27

Begin Preparation Immediately . . .

- Those who would be used by God should begin their preparation for service at once. Every means to increase one's knowledge of the vast amount of the truth of God should be seized upon. As you enter upon a program of study¹ you'll be surprised and delighted as to how your spiritual knowledge will increase.
- For instance, one should regularly attend Sunday School classes where the Word of God is taught. This should be supplemented by a regular place in the church worship² service. It is surprising how much one may learn by fastening one's mind upon the Sunday School lesson or upon the sermon. Too many listeners allow their minds to wander. Of course, everyone should have his own Bible, preferably a Bible with a large margin, where notes can be entered and succinct sayings worth remembering can be written down.
- Many Christians find it profitable to keep a notebook carefully recording the illustrative material and the outlines which are heard from time to time. Such material becomes almost invaluable as one later assumes a place of responsibility where he must give out constantly, and where he finds very little opportunity to take in. Read good books³ regularly. There's a wealth of them available.
- And then when summer comes, there can be those grand times when physical recreation is combined in a delightful way with spiritual inspiration. The Christian should seek out some Bible Conference where unhampered and unhindered⁴ by the ordinary demands of life, for a week or two he may give his entire attention to the drinking in of precious spiritual truths.
- Some Christians find themselves living in rural areas and unable to take advantage of the teaching in churches and Bible classes. Such folks should begin to prepare by use of correspondence courses. Or better still, every Christian ought to take aside a little⁵ time—at least a year—and attend a good Bible Institute where the curriculum is made up largely of Biblical subjects. Even those who plan on specialized education should undergird⁶ their Christian life by a year or more of definite study in the greatest of all books, the Bible.

¹ II Tim. 2:15
² Hebrews 10:25

³ I Tim. 4:13
⁴ Mark 6:31

⁵ Matthew 6:33
⁶ II Tim. 3:14-16

What Constitutes a Missionary Call?

- There is no doubt this is a vastly important step. A vital question is how should I know if God wants me in full-time service either in missionary service or service in the home land? How can I be sure that it is just not my emotions or sympathy for less fortunate people that is prompting me to think along these lines?
- One of the last things the Lord did before He went back to glory was to commission¹ His followers to cover the earth with the gospel story. There is no doubt as to God's concern over this desperate need. Coupled with that we have the knowledge of the degradation and superstition which enslaves² the people of pagan lands. Religion they have, but not Christ. Worship they carry on, but not the worship which alone is acceptable to God. This knowledge is . . . in a very real sense a definite challenge³ which comes to every Christian.
- Yet, some have felt the need of a specific call, and in case after case God has graciously⁴ met that need. If one's heart is concerned regarding the lost millions, it is quite right that he should go to God asking for definite confirmation.
- Now how does God call? Oft times God speaks through a missionary convention. Sometimes by missionary speakers in your own church, and very often by the reading of great missionary biographies. Sometimes He calls through missionary movies or pictures, or God may just impress the heart. But those who have been called are sure, they have no doubt as to whose voice it was that did the calling.
- But God is greatly desirous that all Christians should be *willing*⁵ for missionary service. God does not call every one but God wants every child of His to be willing⁶ to be called. It is a very splendid plan to go forward in a public meeting when the opportunity is given, openly recording your yieldedness to the will of God.
- What constitutes a missionary call? It just isn't possible to answer that in a sentence. Some calls are general, yet it is God who calls. Some calls are so specific and so definite they leave absolutely no room for doubt. Perhaps the answer might be that every Christian ought to willingly offer himself and leave the confirmation to the great Lord of the harvest.

¹ Matt. 28:18-20
² Romans 1:28-32

³ Romans 10:14, 15
⁴ Acts 16:9

⁵ Romans 12:1, 2
⁶ Romans 6:13

What About Education? . . .

● Is it necessary that one who wants to be used of God should spend years in preparation for that service? Or, if one commits himself unreservedly to God's will, is not God able to use him just as he is? Should one adopt the principles of the early disciples who were unlearned¹ and ignorant men and yet whom God used in a mighty way? This is a question indeed.

● Let it be said, first of all, that education is not the principal necessity. God is not bound to use men who are educated. It is quite possible for Him to speak through the stones of the road or through the voice of a donkey if it is His will. The principal requisite is that the Christian's heart should be humble and his spirit teachable.

● But on the other hand there seems to be no doubt as to the large usefulness of prepared men and women. This is demonstrated every day. And those that have both studied the Word, and have come into contact with the need of today are unanimous in their opinion that the candidate for Christian service should be adequately prepared.

● It seems almost a necessity in today's world that young people procure as much of the right kind of education as possible. Yet remembering always that the fear² of the Lord is the beginning³ of knowledge. The schools to which Christians should go ought to be those with real regard for the truth of God. Yet if this cannot be, the properly grounded Christian may add to his education even in our non-Christian universities.

● Denominational committees and mission boards are almost unanimous in suggesting that their candidates for Christian service have a thorough education including Bible school and college. Possibly this is the will of God for the present day. Certainly there is nothing in Scripture which would exclude the idea of a complete training.

● The man who by the grace of God became the great Apostle⁴ to the Gentiles, and who was led of God to write fourteen out of our twenty-seven New Testament books was educated according to the highest standards⁵ of his day. God mightily used this man and three⁶ times⁷ he suggests⁸ that we follow him as he followed Christ.

¹ Acts 4:13

² Proverbs 1:7

³ Psalm 111:10

⁴ II Timothy 4:17

⁵ Acts 22:3

⁶ I Cor. 4:16

⁷ I Cor. 11:1

⁸ Philippians 3:17

Shall I Marry? . . .

● It's quite right that you should be concerned about this matter. Next to the decision to receive the Lord Jesus, and next to the determination to make Him Master of your life, this is the most important step of life. The right life partner can be the greatest inspiration to real accomplishments for God, and the wrong partner can absolutely wreck your Christian life.

● But a Christian may marry. Some have called attention to Paul's advice¹ seemingly directed against marriage. But this was in view of the dire and ever-increasing persecution² of that day. Paul was teaching that a more efficient work for God might be carried on under persecution if one were single, and unencumbered with the responsibilities of a family. It might be that there are places in today's world . . . out-of-the-way places . . . difficult places and dangerous where one might do a better job for our Lord single. That is, if you love Christ enough. Christ said something³ about this too.

● But for those who will marry surely this is a matter in which to exercise the most prayerful caution. First, Christians must marry⁴ only Christians. It isn't really safe to become even a good friend of someone who doesn't love Jesus Christ sincerely.

● But there's more than that. How can two walk together unless they be agreed? If God is leading you into a specific field of Christian service, then the one in whom you are interested ought to be concerned about that field too. This would be one of the marks of the Lord's approval.

● Let's be practical too. Don't fail to take this matter to God in definite prayer.⁵ Don't think that this is one problem you can settle by yourself. Believe me, your efficiency in the Christian life could be permanently impaired by a wrong decision here. And don't think God is uninterested. There isn't the slightest doubt but that He has this part of your life planned too.

● Look for "Mr. Right" or "Mrs. Right" where truly consecrated Christians gather. Church is a good place, or a summer Bible Conference, or a Bible School. Look for the kind that live the life and testify with the lip. Don't be hasty. Measure this step by the same measurements you use in determining⁶ other steps in the will of God for you. God will not fail you here.

¹ I Cor. 7: 26-40

² I Cor. 7:26

³ Matt. 19:10-12

⁴ II Cor. 6:12

⁵ Philippians 4:6

⁶ Philippians 4:8

Pray Without Ceasing . . .

- Prayer is a most amazing thing. It's almost unbelievable. Think now. At any time we desire¹ . . . for as long as we choose² . . . and from any place³ we happen to be, we may look up into the face of our Father (who also happens to be the God of the universe) and pour our petition into His waiting ears.
- We know this is true. For it has been proved by multitudes of God's saints times without number. There is a tendency, however, because prayer is so easy, and God is so available, to forget the possibilities⁴ of prayer. What absolutely unheard-of results may be accomplished by a Christian who knows how⁵ to pray and so becomes able to move the arm of God in his behalf.
- But prayer is more than that. Prayer becomes a two-way line of communication between a Christian who desires to know the will of God, and a God who desires that His children shall know and fulfill His will. This is one indispensable factor in ascertaining the plan and purpose of God for our lives. We should learn to pray without ceasing.² Day after day, hour after hour, moment after moment, the Christian should have his prayer line open.
- Nor need you be always on your knees before God. This is a good exercise without doubt, but prayer is something that should be engaged in constantly all day long. God is not too busy with what He is doing to talk with you continually.
- The Christian who desires to know the will of God should learn the fine art of uninterrupted prayer. As soon as he arises in the morning he should commit the day to God. Every time the thought crosses his mind throughout the day he should lift his heart in praise or petition. The number of prayers each day may mount into the scores. But this is exactly God's will for us. It is just as if the Lord Jesus were walking⁶ by our side hour after hour⁷ and we kept up a continual (though, of course, reverential) conversation with Him.
- Thus will God's leadership be almost without our conscious cognizance, and dangers, failures and pitfalls will be avoided before they occur. Because by unceasing prayer we constantly understand His will for us.

¹ Colossians 1:3

⁴ John 14:13

⁶ Philippians 1:21

² I Thess. 5:17

⁵ John 15:7

⁷ Galatians 2:20

³ I Thess. 5:17

Search The Scriptures . . .

- It's just impossible to overemphasize this point if you want to really know the will of God for your life. How marvelous it is to have a Book from God. A Book which is an inerrant¹ Book, an infallible² Book, and eternal³ Book! A Book which is complete—lacking nothing. A Book which contains the answer to every problem in human life. No one can know all the will of God today without a knowledge of the Book.
- When one is fully acquainted with the truths of Scripture, it seems that he, to a large degree, will just automatically understand the will of God. God has set forth in His Book great facts which are in themselves a revelation of His character.
- Nor can we point to any one particular portion of Scripture and say this is less important. The Books of Law, for instance, carry amazingly accurate and up-to-date advice for today's problems. The Books of History show in minute detail what the plan of God was with the people of ancient times. The Books of Wisdom and the Prophets offer exceedingly valuable information as to how to meet the perplexing questions of our lives. On the other hand, the New Testament with its biographies, history, letters, and prophecy becomes an indispensable commentary on divine guidance.
- We cannot be too emphatic here. The child of God should be absolutely saturated in Biblical truth. He should read and reread, study and meditate, compare and contrast. The sayings of the Bible should be constantly at his finger tips, and on his tongue's end. He should live with the Book, eat it, chew it, memorize it, use it, love it.
- Every crack of extra time can be profitably placed in reading and study. So the Bible becomes a lamp⁴ to one's feet and a light to one's pathway. It is a deterrent⁵ to sin. It is food⁶ . . . it is a sword⁷ . . . it is a pillow . . . it is balm . . . it is everything the Christian needs.
- Fully well I know that such an acquaintanceship with the Book of Books is not made over-night. Yet, because it takes much time is no reason to defer the start of such an acquaintanceship. Begin now. Make the Book your constant companion. Know it better than you know anything else in life.

¹ II Timothy 3:15

⁴ Psalm 119:105

⁶ Jeremiah 15:16

² II Timothy 3:16

⁵ Psalm 119:11

⁷ Hebrews 4:12

³ Mark 13:31

Directive or Permissive Will? . . .

- You may not have known it but God has two wills for His children. One is His first will, which is His best, and His primary choice for us based upon infinite wisdom. The other is His second will which He permits or allows to those who refuse His first will. This second will never brings the happiness, joy, peace, and contentment that God's directive will carries. It is only for those who through ignorance or stubbornness fail to realize the superiority of God's best will.
- An Old Testament illustration helps here. There was a very good King¹ whose life was filled with noble deeds for God. After a long time God sent word that He was going to take His servant home, but the King protested bitterly. So God granted an extension of fifteen years to his life. This was God's permissive will. But the story proceeds sadly from that point. During the fifteen years this King made some serious blunders.² Also there was born to him a son³ who later mounted the throne to become one of the most idolatrous, wicked and blasphemous kings the Children of Israel had ever known.
- This choice of God's wills occurs constantly. A letter received signed "Heartbroken" further illustrates the point. In the writer's early life there had been an unmistakable call from God to the foreign mission field. The call was accepted and preparation was undertaken. But during the preparation the young lady became interested in a boy friend who, although he was a Christian, was not at all interested in foreign missions. The unfolding of subsequent years brought the marriage and a settling down in business and a somewhat mildly active Christian life. Yet gnawing at the heart of the lady was always the feeling that she had failed in her duty to God and had accepted less than His highest.
- How may one then be sure of realizing the first will of God in his life? The answer is exceedingly simple. The first will is always God's will. It is God's will, undiluted and unencumbered with any suggestions on our part. The first will becomes the second when we start meddling with it. To be sure which will we're following there should be a thorough examination of the sincerity of one's motives. Are they to the glory of God? This examination should be repeated at regular intervals.

¹ II Kings 20:1-11

² 11 Kings 20:12-19

³ II Kings 21:1-9

Put Out The Fleece . . .

- Some of you won't understand that phrase until I tell you the Bible story. It was at the time¹ of the Judges, and God had called a young man for a piece of special service. He was rather reluctant to accept the assignment and asked God for definite marks of His leadership and approval. The young man suggested to God that he would put a piece of fleece² (wool) on the ground and leave it there over-night. And in the morning it was to be dry all around, but the fleece was to be wet. The marvel was that God graciously answered, and in the morning a full bowl of water was wrung out of the fleece, yet the surrounding ground was bone dry.
- But the young man in order to be doubly sure that God had called, besought Him to reassure him once more through the fleece, and asked that this time the ground be wet but the fleece be dry. In the morning it was so. The story goes on from there to show how God's mighty power rested upon this youth who wrought a real victory for the people of God. Read it, it's thrilling.
- But what are we to learn from this and like incidents? Evidently this is a scriptural principle of God's dealings with His people of all ages. There is no doubt as to God's ability to speak. The question has been . . . will God answer us in this way? The fleece in our case might be almost anything. The particular fleece is immaterial. Just that God and you agree on how the answer is to come.
- The thing, however, which must be held clearly in mind, is the *necessity* of the decision. The matter to be decided ought to be important. We are not to put out the fleece merely for our own amusement. We should not attempt to trifle with God merely to see Him work. And deeply in our hearts there should be a complete sincerity and willingness to accept whatever consequence the answer of putting out the fleece might bring.
- Yet putting out the fleece is a legitimate expression of our desire to know the will of God. If, when we have done everything we know how, and if, when our hearts are positively true before God we put out the fleece then it is God's responsibility, and we say it reverently but emphatically—it is God's responsibility to answer. Don't fear, He will.

¹ Judges 6:11-40

² Judges 6:37-40

Read God's Dealings With Others

- There's such a wealth of excellent reading material in books by the score which have always been, and will continue to be a source, of inspiration and illumination. Literally thousands of young people have been challenged into Christian service and directed into paths of real usefulness by good books.
- For instance, if in your heart there is a mild interest in missions and missionaries, why not read *Borden of Yale*, or *Mary Slessor of Calabar*, or *Thinking Black*, or *C. T. Studd*? You will find great benefit in studying the life of *Hudson Taylor*, or *John G. Paton* or *Adoniram Judson* and his wife *Ann of Ava*. You won't help but be thrilled with *Pandita Ramabi*, *Mackay of Yuganda*, or *Robert Moffat* of China.
- On the other hand, you may be interested in how great preachers got that way. Read, if you will, the *Life of Charles G. Finney*, or the different biography of *Moody*, *Bush Aglow*, or *Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, of London, England, who was a great silver-tongued preacher for God. And, of course, you will thrill to the depth by the story of the trials and victories of the Reformation in the lives of *Martin Luther*, *John Huss*, *Savonarola*, *John Calvin*. The journals of *Charles Wesley* are more interesting than fiction. You'll love the self-effacing, God-given brilliance of *Robert Murray McChayne*.
- Then there are books which every child of God should know well. There is one that almost stands alone, being the immortal *Pilgrim's Progress*. There is the *Imitation of Christ* by *Thomas A. Kempis*, the *Confession of Augustine*, *In the School of Prayer* by *Andrew Murray*, and real meat, of course in *The Institutes of Calvin*. And this list is but the smallest of a huge list that could be compiled.
- Now, what is the value of this reading? Well, for one who wants to know the will of God, there is great value in seeing how God has dealt with His saints in other ages. We can learn the things of which God has approved and the things of which He has disapproved. Also we can note the pitfalls and dangers, so that we will not stumble into them.
- It is also a splendid idea to consult with your friends of today. Talk with your pastor, or corral some missionary friends who are home on furlough. Get to know these men and women of God who have tested and found out God's faithfulness. Very often valuable and sage advice comes as a result.

Make a Balance Sheet . . .

- One of the outstanding spiritual giants of the past century was *George Mueller* of *Bristol, England*. The modern prophet of God demonstrated over a period of more than three score years the willingness of God to lead His children even in the smallest details. During this time, *Mr. Mueller* established and maintained orphanages for thousands of children at a total expenditure in his life time of $7\frac{1}{2}$ million dollars (which at today's scale would equal 25 million). All this money plus God's careful and detailed guidance came in direct answer to prayer.
- It is interesting to note that way in which this saint ascertained the will of God. He writes in his journals that on many occasions, when a real decision was facing him, he shut himself in his room before God, examining his own heart and calling on God for His wisdom. Then he calmly and deliberately took a sheet of paper and drew a line in the center. On one side he listed the factors which were in favor of the proposition. On the other side he listed the factors which opposed.
- On this balance sheet he meditated several days, meanwhile adding contributing or opposing factors as they came to his mind. The result was that sooner or later there was borne upon his heart a conviction concerning which was the proper thing to do, or course to follow. And if this conviction continued and became stronger, after further definite committal to God, he proceeded along the line which he felt God had indicated.
- Our questions might be solved in this manner, for it is true that many perplexed children of God have come to know the will of God in this manner. The necessary requisite, however, must be absolute honesty in your thinking. There is no use to tell God you're willing to follow His leading if you're not willing.
- And if in making your balance sheet you do not have the complete information on all points, it is quite all right to tell God about that, too. Remember all the while that God who examines the hearts knows all these facts already and in some cases He has withheld His answer in order that there might be swept from our hearts all extraneous and all irrelevant material.
- It is to be further noted that as *Mr. Mueller* practiced the balance sheet method never once did he find God's leading to be in error.

Deal With That Sin . . .

- If there is one matter which has prevented the acceptance and the accomplishment of the will of God in the life of Christian people more than anything else, it has been the Christian's proneness to condone or lightly consider the sin in his life. We are not now talking about the sin of the sinner, or the sin which condemns to perdition. We are talking about the sin of the saint, which sin mars the fellowship that should always exist between the Heavenly Father and His child.
- Look at Eden's story¹ for a moment. Before sin entered there was beautiful fellowship between God's creatures and the creatures' God. In the cool of the day God walked with our first parents. They could easily know His will by just talking with Him. But this was all changed when they sinned grievously against Him. Now, because of sin the fellowship was broken, and they could not learn the will of God.
- Or, remember the story² of the prodigal son? While in his father's house there was no difficulty in knowing his father's will, but when he had sinned and gone to the far country there was no fellowship, no companionship, no mutual help at all. And fellowship could not be restored until the son had confessed his sin.
- The same thing is true in the life of every Christian. While, if a Christian sins, his salvation is not in jeopardy, there is no question but that his fellowship is impaired. God, who delights to use the Christian as a channel of blessing, finds this impossible because the channel is choked because sin is allowed or excused.
- What should one do in regard to sin? There need be no question here, for the divine formula is given as a sufficient remedy. We are to confess³ our sin in God's ears and know the joy of the restoration of sweet communion. However, confession in this case is a deep heart exercise. The root meaning is to take your stand with God and look on your sin as He looks on it—to hate it, to abhor it, to turn from it, in deep contrition. Nor need we wait for stated intervals to confess and be cleansed. We should confess as often as we sin, and as often as the Holy Spirit brings this to our mind.
- Then and only then, can we have clear sailing to know the full will of God for our lives. Is there sin in your life?

¹ Genesis 3

² Luke 15:11-32

³ I John 1:9

Closed Doors Also Indicate . . .

- The will of God may not always be indicated by doors that are open. Sometimes God's guidance is shown by closed doors. There is a scripture which reveals "the steps¹ of a good man are ordered by the Lord" which has had a second verse added the stops of a good man are also ordered by the Lord.
- Look at this New Testament incident²: The Apostle Paul was on his second missionary journey and planned to go south in Asia Minor to preach in new territory. But the Spirit of God closed the door. So Paul about-faced and endeavored to go north along the shores of the Black Sea. Again the door was closed. Now, unless he wanted to backtrack, there was no place to go but straight ahead to Troas and eventually Europe. But God was in this as subsequent events proved.
- David Livingstone was on his way to become a missionary in China but closed doors forced him to turn aside and enter the vast dark continent of Africa. Yet this was God's leading. Adoniram Judson was headed for India but doors closed upon him and he turned to Burma where God mightily used him.
- Natural gifts may play a part too. It's quite possible that if the Lord has endowed you with a beautiful singing voice He may call you to serve Him in a melody ministry. Or, if you have the artistic ability to draw or paint, God may use these enablements for His glory. But natural gifts are not always conclusive evidence. God called Billy Sunday away from playing baseball to preaching the gospel. He called Dwight Moody from selling shoes for a multitude of other various tasks.
- Circumstances too may indicate the path which God intends for you. If you're the sole support of invalid parents it could be that God doesn't intend for you to leave them and become a foreign missionary in Timbuctu. Or, if you're a natural in business and a failure as a speaker it may be that God simply is not calling you to accept the pastorate of a large church. But again circumstances do not always indicate. Phillip³ was called to leave a great revival to minister to one soul on a desert road.
- Deferment does not mean denial. Sometimes the leading is just a step at a time. Remember, the Christian life is part of your training. And an important lesson everyone needs to learn is patience. God is oftentimes the Professor of that course.

¹ Psalm 37:23

² Acts 16:6-11

³ Acts 8:5 and 26

God Loves You . . . Exceedingly . . .

- We must always bear this in mind, no matter what comes. If we're children of God by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, then we are the eternal objects of the incomparable love of God. "We're near, so very near to God, nearer we could not be. For in the person of His Son, we're just as near as He. And dear, so very dear to God, dearer we could not be. For in the person of His Son, we're just as dear as He." It's true . . . gloriously true.
- We don't have to guess about the Love of God for us. He has demonstrated His love universally, conclusively. Not only does God care¹ for a world lost in degradation and sin but He has done something about it. He gave² His Son, His well beloved Son, to pay the terrible price of sin, and to procure complete pardon for the sinner. The price was unbelievably³ great, but God paid it to prove that He loves us.
- Nor does the love of God stop with the attainment of salvation. Those whom God loves, He keeps.⁴ When one is saved, he is given an honored⁵ place in the family of God. Provision⁶ is made for our needs. Protection is afforded by the power of God. Employment⁷ is given so that the Christian may earn imperishable rewards. An eternal⁸ home is being prepared. The sting is removed⁹ from death. The future is as bright as heaven's morning. No, there is no doubt that God loves us.
- But some may worry . . . can God who is so pure and holy really love one such as I am, . . . so unlovely, so weak, so great a failure? The answer is yes. God quite knows all about us and loves us too. For He sees us not as we are today with all our deficiencies and faults, but as we will be when the process of preparation is completed. For someday we shall be like Christ. He is the great Pattern of eternity. And we are to be fashioned like Him . . . by the power of God.
- You can safely trust a God who loves you like that. His love will foresee and provide. His love will care for your scores of insufficiencies. His love will not allow you to hurt yourself, even though you should blindly bend on doing so. His love unselfishly desires your best. His love wants you . . . not your service . . . not your possessions . . . just you. Who can measure the love

¹ Galatians 4:4

⁴ I Peter 1:5

⁷ II Cor. 5:20

² John 3:16

⁵ Romans 8:16

⁸ John 14:2

³ I Peter 1:18, 19

⁶ Philippians 4:19

⁹ I Cor. 15:54-57

To Sum It All Up . . .

- Let us look again at the whole matter. If God had a plan it would certainly be a greatly superior plan, because God's wisdom is boundless and His power is unlimited. But God does have a plan. And how do we know? First of all, we know because He plans all His works, and man is the highest of His handiwork. Our bodies show planning and our environment confirms this. Then the Scriptures plainly teach His plan for us and we may safely believe them.
- There is a very necessary requisite, however. God plans only for His children and we must be a real Christian before He can plan for us. But everyone may be a Christian, for Christ died for all. Then the second necessary step is our surrender. We must yield to Christ and keep yielded. This is very important, for our new heart Guest, the Holy Spirit, cannot lead us unless we allow ourselves to be led.
- God has a great master plan. And He is working out everything according to this gigantic blue-print. Yet all of God's children may have a part in that plan. And it is very vital that every Christian know his part and fulfill it. How can we know our part?
- There are certain general rules which the Scriptures plainly teach, but there are personal decisions as well. Our trust should be an active trust. We should seek to prepare ourselves for any eventuality. The matter of prayer is vastly important, and every Christian should be saturated with the truths of the Word of God. All these things aid in the accomplishment of God's plan for us individually.
- It is quite all right for us to put out the fleece if a decision is to be made, and we can learn a great deal from reading God's dealings with other Christians. Sometimes when one is apparently up against a stone wall, a spiritual balance sheet will decide. We must not despise closed doors, for they also indicate the will of God. Our hearts as well must be free and clear of sin, or else the Lord cannot hear us.
- The fulfillment of the plan and purpose of God brings eternal and imperishable rewards. To those who have lived in the center of the will someday our precious Lord will say, "Well done, good and faithful servant." That will make life's trials and hardships worthwhile, and will be the most thrilling moment of all eternity.

His Will Brings Rewards . . .

● There's tremendous satisfaction in knowing that you're in the center of God's will. There's peace and joy beyond comparison when you realize that your life is being put to the highest possible advantage. There's a satisfaction beyond comparison to realize that you are a partner with God in the greatest enterprise the world has ever known—even the proclamation of the eternal truth of God. But, my dear friend, there is more than all this for you, if your life is in the center of God's will.

● The Scriptures tell very clearly that salvation is a free gift¹ of God, and is not obtained² by living a good life, and is not purchased by good works even in prodigious amounts. When we say that "Jesus paid it all," we mean absolutely that. On the other hand, there is a glorious truth shining out of the pages of the New Testament, which reveals that for every piece of true service lovingly done for the sake of Christ, there will be eternal⁴ and incomparable rewards! Our Lord Himself will take note of our every good work, even to the giving of a cup of cold water⁵ in His Name.

● When life's time shall have merged into eternity's ages, one of the first events that will take place will be the Judgment⁶ Seat of Christ. There all of God's children from every age will stand⁷ before God's Son. Their works and their service will be minutely examined. Some of God's children, having served supposedly for Christ but in reality for self, will find their works burned⁸ away and nothing but ashes left. Others of God's children who have served in the center of God's will and self-sacrificingly and faithfully will find themselves richly rewarded and they will be praised by the lips of the Son of God Himself who will say, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

● Were all the thrills of this world rolled into one great thrill this would not even begin to compare with the thrill that will be ours someday when before God and the Holy Angels, our blessed Saviour mentions our name and says, "Well done."⁹ Yet that will be the reward of those who have found and have stayed in the center of God's will.

¹ Romans 6:23

² Titus 3:5

³ Ephesians 2:8, 9

⁴ Rev. 22:12

⁵ Mark 9:41

⁶ II Cor. 5:10

⁷ Romans 14:10-12

⁸ I Cor. 3:11-16

⁹ Matthew 25:21

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