

How to know the Will of God For your Life

James 4:13–15

James 4:13–15 (NKJV)

¹³ Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit”; ¹⁴ whereas you do not know what *will happen* tomorrow. For what *is* your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. ¹⁵ Instead you *ought* to say, “If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.”

Introduction:

This passage that we looked at last week taught us the sinfulness of presuming on God’s will. A sin of pride and arrogance that would cause a person to think or believe that they had control over the length or direction of their life. It was not a prohibition of planning or seeking direction in life, but rather a disregard for the Sovereign nature of God’s rule in your life through providence and His word and the leading of the Spirit.

So James concludes that the way we should approach all of our life concerning our plans and

purpose is to be willing to submit to the potential change God's will may bring. So not your will, but Your will be done, Father.

James says in verse 15,

“ Instead you *ought* to say, “If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.”

So we should be ready and willing to submit all of your desires, plans and ambitions to the Will of God.

So what is that Will?

What is it that God would have us do?

This is one of the most common questions raise among believers. What is the will of God for my life?

What job to I pursue?

What career should I get an education for?

What school do I go to?

Who do I marry?

How many children to we have?

Where do we live?

What kind of home to we live in?

What ministry to I get involved with?

How much money do I give to the ministry?

The questions are endless.

And it needs to be understood, that these are important questions. Especially for a Christian who desires to be obedient to God and a follower of Jesus Christ.

Sadly, some have taken a more mystical, existential, experiential and frankly, non-biblical approach to finding God's Will for there life.

They range from randomly opening your bible and letting the first verse that you put your finger on to determine the will of God, to placing a fleece before the Lord, saying, 'Lord, if you do this, then I know I'm supposed to do that.'

Or even waiting on a voice from God or a dream or a vision or even the Satanic Horoscope.

For some of us, we would wish is was as simple as "if we could just flip a coin, draw straws, or roll dice and do whatever the object indicated. Didn't people in the Bible do something like that sometimes? But before we cast off all responsibility for making reasoned decisions, we should try to understand lot casting in Scripture and determine whether it serves as a pattern for our decision-making today. If it doesn't, is there a better way?

The Question of Casting Lots

In Israel's early years, God taught His people that "the lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord" ([Prov. 16:33](#)). He also equipped the high priest with instruments known as the Urim and Thummim ([Ex. 28:30](#); [1 Sam. 14:41](#); [28:6](#); [Ezra 2:63](#)), something like two stones which were placed in a bag and, as one or the other was drawn out, answered simple "yes" or "no" questions. The casting of lots identified the sacrificial scapegoat ([Lev. 16:8](#)), the divisions of the land of Canaan ([Josh. 18:6–8](#)), and the tasks of the Levites and musicians ([1 Chron. 24:31](#); [25:8](#)). The practice carried over into the New Testament among both the Jewish religious leaders ([Luke 1:9](#)) and Christian disciples; Matthias was chosen by lot to replace the Apostle Judas ([Acts 1:26](#)). Conscientious lot casting was an appropriate way of discerning the Lord's will in unique situations in which existing revelation provided insufficient insight.

So should such methods be used today? There are good reasons why John Piper says, "I think it's a bad idea, almost always."¹

Lot Casting Has Always Been Unusual

The eighty Old Testament references to the lot represent just a tiny fraction of the decisions Scripture records. The overwhelming majority of decisions have always been made by the practice of wisdom. Godly people never cast lots to make decisions on the many matters about which God had already clearly revealed His will.

Lot Casting Preceded God’s Complete Revelation
With one scriptural exception ([Acts 1:26](#)), lot casting was one of the many ways by which God spoke to His people in time past before speaking through His Son ([Heb. 1:1–2](#)). And the example of replacing Judas was special—Apostles had to be chosen directly by Jesus.² Later, God gave the church clear instructions for identifying ([1 Tim. 3:1–13](#); [Titus 1:5–9](#)) and appointing leaders ([Acts 6:1–7](#)). R.C. Sproul argues that by casting lots, “We’re asking God to give us direct, immediate revelation which He gave in sacred Scripture. But when the canon of Scripture was closed we don’t get that kind of supernatural revelation afforded to us today. . . . We’re called to live our lives and to make our decisions on the basis of the teaching of Scripture.”³

Lot Casting Was a Pre-Pentecost Phenomenon

In the Old Testament, the Spirit occasionally helped people fulfill hard callings ([Ex. 28:30](#)), make tough decisions, and see beyond their contemporaries ([Dan. 5:11, 14](#)). Isaiah prophesied of Christ that “the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord” ([Isa. 11:2](#)). When Christ ascended into heaven, He poured out “the Spirit of wisdom” ([Eph. 1:17](#)) on all believers. Paul can say of Christians, “You yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge” ([Rom. 15:14](#)). Those with the mind of Christ ([1 Cor. 2:16](#)) can know the things of God ([1 Cor. 2:11](#)) in a way superior to Old Testament believers ([2 Peter 1:19](#)). <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/know-god-will>

So what is the Will of God for my life and How can I know the will of God for the many decisions I must make?

There are 3 types of Will when we are talking about God’s will.

[1.The Will of God’s Decree.](#)

This is that absolute, immutably decreed will of God that will happen no matter what. It is determined and decreed. It is planned and executed. It is sometimes secret and sometimes it is not. Some of it is revealed and some of it is not.

Jeremiah 51:29 (NKJV)

29.....For every purpose of the Lord shall be performed

Like the Crucifixion

Acts 2:23–27 (NKJV)

²³ Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death;
²⁴ whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it. ²⁵ For David says concerning Him:

*'I foresaw the Lord always before my face,
For He is at my right hand, that I may not be
shaken.*

²⁶ *Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was
glad;*

Moreover my flesh also will rest in hope.

²⁷ *For You will not leave my soul in Hades,*

Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.

Your Salvation

Ephesians 1:4–12 (NKJV)

⁴ just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, ⁵ having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, ⁶ to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.

⁷ In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace ⁸ which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, ⁹ having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, ¹⁰ that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him. ¹¹ In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, ¹² that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

Acts 13:44–48 (NKJV)

⁴⁴ On the next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God.……

⁴⁸ Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.

2 Peter 3:8–9 (NKJV)

⁸ But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day *is* as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. ⁹ The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

[You being conformed to Christ.](#)

Romans 8:28–30 (NKJV)

²⁸ And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose. ²⁹ For whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to be* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn

among many brethren. ³⁰ Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

2. Will of God's Desire.

1 Timothy 2:3–4 (NKJV)

³ For this *is* good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴ who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Ezekiel 18:23 (NKJV)

²³ Do I have any pleasure at all that the wicked should die?" says the Lord God, "*and* not that he should turn from his ways and live?"

Isaiah 46:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ Declaring the end from the beginning,
And from ancient times *things* that are not *yet*
done,
Saying, 'My counsel shall stand,
And I will do all My pleasure,'

Yet many end up in hell Because God's will of decree trumped his will of Desire. His will for the

Glory of God is the supreme determiner of how God's will of desire is fleshed out.

Romans 9:17–23 (NKJV)

¹⁷ For the Scripture says to the Pharaoh, *“For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth.”* ¹⁸ Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens.

¹⁹ You will say to me then, “Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?” ²⁰ But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed *it*, “Why have you made me like this?” ²¹ Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor?

²² What if God, wanting to show *His* wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, ²³ and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory,

3. Will of God's Demand—Command

1. God's Will is that you be Saved.

2 Peter 3:8–9 (NKJV)

⁸ But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day *is* as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. ⁹ The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

2. God's Will is that you be Filled with the Spirit.

Ephesians 5:17–18 (NKJV)

¹⁷ Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord *is*. ¹⁸ And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,

filled is not static. but referring to a dominate or total control

John 16:6 (NKJV)

⁶ **But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart.**

Luke 6:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ But they were filled with rage, and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus.

Luke 4:28 (NKJV)

²⁸ So all those in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath,

Luke 5:26 NKJV)

²⁶ And they were all amazed, and they glorified God and were filled with fear, saying, “We have seen strange things today!”

Acts 5:3 (NKJV)

³ But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back *part* of the price of the land for yourself?

Not existential, ecstatic, not a feeling.

Colossians 3:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

Colossians 1:9–12 (NKJV)

⁹ For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; ¹⁰ that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing *Him*, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; ¹¹ strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; ¹² giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.

3. God's Will is that you be Sanctified.

1 Thessalonians 4:3–8 (NKJV)

³ For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; ⁴ that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, ⁵ not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; ⁶ that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord *is* the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified. ⁷ For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness. ⁸ Therefore he who rejects *this* does

not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit.

1 Peter 4:1–3 (NKJV)

Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, ² that he no longer should live the rest of *his* time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. ³ For we *have spent* enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles—when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries.

4. God's Will is that you be Submissive

1 Peter 2:13–17 (NKJV)

¹³ Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, ¹⁴ or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and *for the* praise of those who do good. ¹⁵ For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men—¹⁶ as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants

of God. ¹⁷ Honor all *people*. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.

5. God's Will is that you be Suffering

1 Peter 3:15–17 (NKJV)

¹⁵ But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always *be* ready to *give* a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; ¹⁶ having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. ¹⁷ For *it is* better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.

1 Peter 4:15–19 (NKJV)

¹⁵ But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters. ¹⁶ Yet if *anyone suffers* as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.

¹⁷ For the time *has come* for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if *it begins* with us first, what

will *be* the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? ¹⁸ Now

*“If the righteous one is scarcely saved,
Where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?”*

¹⁹ Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls *to Him* in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.

6. God’s Will is that you Say Thanks

1 Thessalonians 5:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸ in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

1 Thessalonians 5:12–22 (NKJV)

¹² And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, ¹³ and to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake. Be at peace among yourselves.

¹⁴ Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all. ¹⁵ See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all.

¹⁶ Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray without ceasing, ¹⁸ in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

¹⁹ Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰ Do not despise prophecies. ²¹ Test all things; hold fast what is good. ²² Abstain from every form of evil.

Once you are
Saved
Spirit Filled
Sanctified
Submissive
Suffering
Saying Thanks

You can do what ever you want to
Your wants with be led by the dominating will of
the Spirit and Word.

Psalm 37:4–5 (NKJV)

⁴ Delight yourself also in the Lord,
And He shall give you the desires of your heart.

⁵ Commit your way to the Lord,
Trust also in Him,
And He shall bring *it* to pass.

Some things to consider as you seek the will of God for your life.

Assuming that our are the first 6

Saved

Spirit Filled

Sanctified

Submissive

Suffering

Saying Thanks

1. Search the Word of God regarding the topic.
2. Seek the wise counsel of many
3. Pray without ceasing.
4. Trust the Lord to Lead you.

Proverbs 3:5–6 (NKJV)

- ⁵ Trust in the Lord with all your heart,
And lean not on your own understanding;
- ⁶ In all your ways acknowledge Him,
And He shall direct your paths.

Revelation 5:12–14 (NKJV)

¹² saying with a loud voice:

“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain
To receive power and riches and wisdom,
And strength and honor and glory and blessing!”

¹³ And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying:

“Blessing and honor and glory and power
Be to Him who sits on the throne,
And to the Lamb, forever and ever!”

¹⁴ Then the four living creatures said, “Amen!”
And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever.

Luke 2:1–14 (NKJV)

2 And it came to pass in those days *that* a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ² This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. ³ So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city.

⁴ Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, ⁵ to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. ⁶ So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. ⁷ And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

⁸ Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. ¹⁰ Then the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. ¹¹ For there is born

to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² And this *will be* the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.”

¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying:

¹⁴“Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!”

Hebrews 13:20–21 (NKJV)

²⁰ Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, ²¹ make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom *be* glory forever and ever. Amen.