

A LIFE of
VICTORY
SERIES

How to Know God's Will

SIX BIBLE STUDY LESSONS
FOR GROUP DISCIPLESHIP



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FOR GROUP DISCIPLESHIP



EVERY NATION
P R O D U C T I O N S

HOW TO KNOW GOD'S WILL

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How to Use this Material

In Victory, the primary venue for discipleship happens in a small group. It is called a Victory group. We strongly encourage everyone to be involved since these groups are specifically designed to help disciples grow spiritually.

A Victory group meeting has three sections: **Connect**, **Word**, and **Prayer**, and ideally lasts from forty to sixty minutes.

CONNECT (5-10 minutes)

Victory group meetings begin with a time to relate with one another. Depending on the people who comprise the group, this can be done through a variety of ways:

- Fun—such as an icebreaker activity
- Answered prayers—sharing of testimonies and updates
- Questions—such as those provided in the material, learning each other's personal stories, and sharing feedback from the weekly message

Effective Questions During the Connect Portion:

- Are deliberately friendly to first-timers
- Ask for opinion or experiences
- Require no Bible knowledge
- Have no right or wrong answer
- Are not controversial
- Are preferably connected to the meeting's topic

WORD (20-30 minutes)

Teach the truth and relevance of God's Word for life application. The Victory group meeting is not primarily a Bible study. Although teaching and explanation of Scripture is involved, the goal is to minister, not finish a material.

There is no need teach all the points in a material.

Within this section, we look at what the Bible says, its relevance to us today, and its application in our lives.

What: *What does the Bible say?*

Communicate and impart biblical truth clearly and concisely

¹⁶All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2 TIMOTHY 3:16,17

Tips for Sharing the Word Effectively

- Let the Bible speak for itself.
- Use illustrations and tell stories to explain Bible verses.
- When entertaining clarifications, be watchful not to allow the discussion to go off-tangent.
- The primary goal is to minister to the needs of the people, not to finish a Bible lesson.
- Be led by the Spirit when using the material.

So What: *What is the relevance of the Word to my life?*

Give participants the opportunity to discuss how the Word impacts the way they live.

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

ROMANS 12:2

Now What: *How do I apply the Word to my life?*

Our primary reason for sharing the Bible is so that people will know who God is and what He has done. In doing so, the participants will begin to discover who they are and what they should do.

If it is a promise, teach them to claim it. If it is a command or a principle, encourage them to put it to action by God's grace. If it is a truth, let them embrace it willingly and not under compulsion. Allow God's grace and love to win them by the way you teach God's Word.

Encourage specific, measurable action steps that are consistent with the life change that the Scripture is bringing about. We do not command people, but we spur them on toward love and good deeds.

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves.

Do what it says. JAMES 1:22

Tips for Life-Changing Application

- You may choose one of the "So What" and "Now What" questions or you may add your own.
- An effective standby application question is: "What one action step are you going to take as a result of what you heard today?"
- Designate who will be the first to answer the question asked.
- Do not allow someone to argue or be critical of others.
- Remind everyone to apply the lesson to their own lives, not to someone else's.
- Ask God for wisdom to know when to balance or correct strange or unbiblical applications. Insensitive correction or criticism can kill the group, as can unchecked heresy.
- Remind everyone that transformation is God's work, not ours, and our obedience is a response to who He is and His love for us. It is God's grace that enables us to apply and obey His Word.

PRAY (15-20 minutes)

Prayer is the most important part of the Victory group meeting. Make sure you have plenty of time left so your prayer time is not rushed. This is not a "closing prayer," but a time for everyone in the group to take specific requests to God. This is where the action is. The goal is to create a venue where people will see God move on their behalf.

"Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven." MATTHEW 18:19

Tips for Powerful Prayer

- Listen to the Holy Spirit carefully during the Connect and Word sections for things that may need prayer.
- Spend your time praying for one another, not sharing and discussing prayer requests.
- Keep your prayers simple, sincere, and short. Most non-believers have never heard an ordinary Christian just talk to God and will be touched by the sincerity and simplicity of the prayer.
- Pray, don't preach. Pray in simple and short sentences, not long "sermon prayers."
- Use conversational prayer, not complicated or profound, intercessory prayer.
- Expect God to answer your prayers.

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1

The Nature of God's Will

CONNECT

- What is your idea of a perfect day? Tell us what you would do.
- Are you an organizer and a planner, or do you function better being totally spontaneous? Explain.
- Tell about a time when you really did not want to do something, but you did it anyway. Why did you do it? What happened?

Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails. PROVERBS 19:21

(SEE ALSO ISAIAH 46:10 AND EPHESIANS 1:5.)

WHAT

Because God is God, His will, His plan, and His purpose will prevail. He has the right and authority to invoke His will here on earth. Because we are not God, we do not have the right or authority to demand our will be done. We are here to pray and work so that His will is established on earth as in heaven. What else does the Bible say about God's will, His purpose, and His plan for our lives?

1 **God's will is good, pleasing, and perfect.**

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. ROMANS 12:2

Many are afraid of submitting to God's will. If they really understood the nature of His will, they would not fear. What does Paul mean when he describes God's will as "good, pleasing, and perfect"?

What are some ways you have experienced that God's will is good, pleasing, and perfect?

2 **God's plan includes prosperity, protection, and hope.**

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." JEREMIAH 29:11

Does God's plan include harming us, or providing for us? How has God provided for you and protected you as you have obeyed His will?

How has your commitment to God's will given you positive hope for your future?

3 God's purpose is unchanging.

Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath. HEBREWS 6:17

If the nature of God's purpose is unchanging, does God have to switch to "plan B" when we sin or mess up? Or does He hold to His original purpose for our lives?

Can we, through prayer, change God's purpose or plan for our lives?

4 God's purpose can be served or rejected.

For when David had served God's purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep; he was buried with his fathers and his body decayed. ACTS 13:36

But the Pharisees and experts in the law rejected God's purpose for themselves, because they had not been baptized by John. LUKE 7:30

How did David serve God's purpose in his generation? How did the Pharisees reject God's purpose?

Do you think they realized they were rejecting God's purpose?

SO WHAT

- How does man's will differ from God's will? How have you seen this in your own life?
- How do you feel about God's promise for you in Jeremiah 29:11? Do you believe He has plans to prosper you, and to give you a hope and a future? Why or why not?
- How can we serve or reject God's purpose in our generation? What do you think it would look like if you served God's purpose in your generation?

NOW WHAT

- Do you ever fear God's will or plan for your life? Why?
- Do you really believe His will for your life is good and perfect? What can you do to hold on to God's promises for your life every day?
- Is there anything that keeps you from fully giving yourself to God's plan and purpose for your life? What will you do about it? How can you choose to serve God's purpose in your life starting this week?
- What can you do to serve God's purpose in your generation?

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- Thank God for His good, pleasing, and perfect will for your life.
 - Pray for God's unchanging purpose to prevail on your life, family, and work. Hold on to His Word as you wait for His promises to be fulfilled (e.g. healing, provision, salvation of family and friends).
 - Commit to serve His purpose in your generation.

2

How to Test and Approve God's Will

CONNECT

- What part of school did/do you like? What part did/do you dislike? Why?
- Growing up, tell us about something you were not allowed to do. Why do you think your parents or guardians mandated this?
- Name one friend or family member you go to first when something major happens in your life. Why do you think you go to him/her?

¹Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. ²Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. ROMANS 12:1,2

WHAT

God has a wonderful plan for our lives and He desires to reveal it to us. Why then are so many Christians ignorant of God's will? Why are so many out of God's will? Why are so many confused about God's will? In this lesson, we will look further into this passage and see what we need to do to know God's will.

1

Consecration: Offer our bodies as living sacrifices to God.

¹Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God . . . ²Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

ROMANS 12:1,2 (SEE ALSO ROMANS 6:13.)

What is a sacrifice? What is a living sacrifice?

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What does it mean to offer our bodies to God?

2

Separation: Do not conform to the pattern of this world.

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world. . . . Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. ROMANS 12:2

(SEE ALSO 2 CORINTHIANS 6:14-17.)

In order to know God's will, we must separate ourselves from the pattern of the world. We must live a different lifestyle. What does it mean to be conformed to the world?

What does Paul mean when he says to "come out" and "be separate"?

3

Transformation: Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

. . . be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. ROMANS 12:2

(SEE ALSO ROMANS 8:5-7.)

We can only know God's will if we renew our minds and begin to think according to God's Word. What is the difference between the mind of a sinful man and the mind of a spiritual man?

What does it mean to be "transformed"?

SO WHAT

- Why do we need to consecrate ourselves to God? What does this look like in our lives?
- How does the pattern of the world differ from God's pattern according to His Word? How can we not conform to the world's pattern?
- Why do our minds need to be renewed? What kind of transformation takes place as we renew our minds through reading God's Word?

NOW WHAT

- Are you seeking to know God's will for your life? Have you offered your body as a living sacrifice to Him? How can you apply this Word in your life this week?
 - In what areas is your lifestyle conformed to the pattern of the world? What can you do to change that this week?
 - In what areas of your life does your mind need to be renewed? How can you allow God's Word to renew your mind? What can you do to prioritize His Word every day?
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- Declare that you belong to God and that you will consecrate your life to Him as a living sacrifice.
 - Pray that you would not conform to the pattern of this world. Instead, ask God to transform you and to be more like Christ every day.
 - Pray that as you read and meditate on God's Word, your mind would be renewed every day. Ask God to fill you with His Word and guide you always.

3

The Importance of Obedience

CONNECT

- What were the consequences for disobeying your parents when you were a kid? Were you ever rewarded for your obedience? How?
- As a child, how did you respond to correction or when you were caught disobeying? Give an example.
- Who was one of your favorite teachers in school? Why?

³⁹He fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will." . . . ⁴²He went away a second time and prayed, "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done." MATTHEW 26:39,42

WHAT

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus was facing the toughest decision of His life. He knew a slow and painfully cruel death was waiting for Him. He did not want to suffer the torture and humiliation of the cross. But, His response to the Father's will serves as an example for us to follow: "Not as I will, but as you will." Despite the pain, Jesus chose to reject His own will and accept God's will. He expects His followers to do the same.

1

Obedience brings blessing. Disobedience brings a curse.

²⁶See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse—²⁷the blessing if you obey the commands of the LORD your God that I am giving you today; ²⁸the curse if you disobey the commands of the LORD your God.

DEUTERONOMY 11:26-28 (SEE ALSO DEUTERONOMY 28.)

In the first fourteen verses of Deuteronomy 28, what are some of the blessings of obedience? In the succeeding verses, what are some of the curses that come with disobedience? What are some curses that you have personally experienced because of your own disobedience?

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What are some of the blessings that have resulted from your obedience?

2 Obedience precedes prosperity and success.

⁷“Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. ⁸Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.”

JOSHUA 1:7,8 (SEE ALSO DEUTERONOMY 28:11-13.)

Does God desire His people to be prosperous and successful? How does the Bible describe prosperity?

What is the relationship between the Word of God and success?

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3 Obedience must be taught.

¹⁹“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations . . .

²⁰teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.” MATTHEW 28:19,20

How are we to make disciples? What are we to teach disciples?

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4 Obedience is a sign that we really love God.

¹⁵“If you love me, you will obey what I command . . .

²⁴He who does not love me will not obey my teaching.”

JOHN 14:15,24 (SEE ALSO LUKE 6:46-49.)

What is the relationship between love and obedience?

What did Jesus say about the person who claims to know Him, but refuses to obey?

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SO WHAT

- How do you think Jesus felt in the Garden of Gethsemane? Why did He choose to do the Father's will anyway? Why is obedience important? As a Christian, what does obedience look like in your life?
- Why does disobedience bring a curse? Why does obedience bring a blessing?
- How can we teach disciples to obey Jesus' commands? Is it possible to make disciples without teaching obedience?

NOW WHAT

- Are you willing to do God's will no matter what the cost? When your will conflicts with God's will, what do you think you should do? How will you do this?
- Are you walking in obedience to God's will concerning your finances, relationships, tongue, career, family, and morality? What can you do to walk in His will this week?
- Are you teaching others to obey Jesus' commands? How can you obey Jesus' command to "go and make disciples"?

-
- Ask God to help you choose His will above yours. Pray that you would walk in obedience to His will in every area of your life.
 - Speak God's blessings over your life as you obey Him.
 - Pray for those you know who are not walking in obedience to God. Ask God for opportunities to share the gospel to them.

4

How God Reveals His Will

(Part 1)

CONNECT

- What is one of the best decisions you have ever made? How did you decide what to do?
- Name three people you look for or talk to before making a major decision. Why do you go to them first?
- Do you like making decisions or do you shy away from them? Why?

Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. EPHESIANS 5:17

WHAT

It is possible to understand God's will. Let us look at four ways the Bible says God reveals His will.

1 The Bible

¹⁶All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2 TIMOTHY 3:16,17

The Bible is the ultimate judge of whether something is God's will or not. If a prophecy, a dream, or a vision contradicts the Bible, then it is not from God. The Bible is our final and absolute authority.

How can we be thoroughly equipped for every good work? What is the Bible useful for?

2 The Holy Spirit

While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."

ACTS 13:2 (SEE ALSO ACTS 16:7.)

Who called Barnabas and Saul into mission work? Who stopped Paul from ministering in Bithynia?

How does the Holy Spirit speak God's will to us?

3 Godly Counsel

The way of a fool seems right to him, but a wise man listens to advice. PROVERBS 12:15

(SEE ALSO PROVERBS 15:22 AND PSALM 1:1.)

Why is it important to receive counsel before making major decisions?

Who should we never receive counsel from?

4 Dreams and Visions

During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." ACTS 16:9 (SEE ALSO ACTS 2:17 AND ACTS 10:9-16.)

How did Paul know God wanted him to minister in Macedonia? How did Peter know God wanted him to minister to Gentiles?

Has God ever communicated to you through a dream or a vision?

SO WHAT

- Since God's Word is the standard and authority for the way we live and how we know God's will, how should we prioritize reading, studying, and meditating on it?
- Why is godly counsel important in knowing God's will? How can lack of godly counsel be harmful?
- Who are those who go to you for counsel? How have you helped them? How has God's Word enabled you to give godly counsel?

NOW WHAT

- Are you at a crossroads in your life, and you are seeking to know God's will? How will you seek to know His will in your life this week?
- When you need to make major decisions concerning God's will for your life, who will you go to for godly counsel?
- Do you think you are in the center of God's will for your life? If so, how do you know? If not, do you want to be in His will? What will you do about it?

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- Pray for God to reveal His will to you. Make a commitment to follow and obey Him even when it is difficult or inconvenient.
 - Ask the Holy Spirit to fill you and lead you in God's plans for your life. Pray that you would always hold up the Bible as the final and absolute authority for your life.
 - Ask God for wisdom so you can be a source of godly counsel for others.

5

How God Reveals His Will

(Part 2)

CONNECT

- Tell us about one of your talents, skills, or hobbies. How did you come to excel in it?
- If you could do anything, go anywhere, what would you want to do? Where would you want to go? Why?
- What's one of the toughest decisions you've ever made? What did you decide to do?

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. ROMANS 12:2

WHAT

God reveals His will for us in many ways—through the Bible, the Holy Spirit, godly counsel, and dreams and visions. In this lesson, we will look at four more ways the Bible says God reveals His good, pleasing, and perfect will.

1 Spiritual Leaders

Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.

HEBREWS 13:17 (SEE ALSO 1 THESSALONIANS 5:12,13.)

God's will is often revealed through human authorities. Children learn God's will through their parents. Church members must sometimes accept God's will through their pastors.

What attitude should we have toward our spiritual leaders?

2 Our Gifts and Talents

Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. 1 PETER 4:10

(SEE ALSO 1 CORINTHIANS 12:28-30 AND ROMANS 12:6-8.)

God has given everyone unique gifts and talents that are an indication of His purpose for our lives. Why does God give different gifts to different people?

What are the purposes of these gifts and talents? What are some of the gifts the Bible mentions?

3 Prophetic Words

Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you. 1 TIMOTHY 4:14 (SEE ALSO ACTS 11:27-29.)

How did Timothy receive his spiritual gifts?

How does prophetic ministry and the impartation of spiritual gifts help us know God's will?

4 Circumstances and Common Sense

⁸But I will stay on at Ephesus until Pentecost, ⁹because a great door for effective work has opened to me.

1 CORINTHIANS 16:8,9

Because a door for the gospel had opened for Paul in Ephesus, all it took was a little common sense to realize that it was God's will for him to stay for a while. He did not need a dream, a vision, or an angelic messenger. He needed common sense.

When have you discerned God's will through common sense and circumstances?

SO WHAT

- What is the role of spiritual leaders in our lives?
- How can we neglect our gifts? How does the Bible say we should use our gifts?
- How do circumstances and common sense show us what we need to do? What would happen if we neglected or overlooked circumstances and common sense?

NOW WHAT

- Who are your spiritual leaders? Who will you go to if you need help to know God's will?
- What are some of the talents and gifts God has given you? Have these been an indication of God's will for your life? How can you use these for God's honor?
- Have you ever received prophetic words? Have they helped you discern God's will? Tell us how you are holding on for God's promises for your life to come to pass.

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- Pray for God's good, pleasing, and perfect will for your life. Believe that God will reveal His will to you as you continue to walk with Him.
 - Ask God to surround you with leaders and those who can help you know His will. Thank God for your spiritual leaders.
 - Thank God for common sense and for the practicalities of walking in His will. Thank God for the prophetic words you have received and for His faithfulness in your life.

6

Walking in God's Will

CONNECT

- Describe the most difficult job, class, or chore you ever had.
- Do you like it when people come to you for advice? Why or why not?
- Tell us about one of your greatest dreams in life. What are you hoping will happen one day?

The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.

1 JOHN 2:17

WHAT

Knowing God's will is the starting line, not the finish line. Once we know His will, we must walk in it day by day. The Bible promises that the one who does the will of God lives forever. If walking in God's will was easy, then everyone would do it. What does it take to walk in God's will?

1 Put away immorality.

³It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; ⁴that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, ⁵not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God . . . 1 THESSALONIANS 4:3-5

God's will is for us to be sanctified. Self-control and holiness are not optional.

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According to these verses, what is the difference between God's people and the heathen?

2 Persevere in God's will.

You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.

HEBREWS 10:36

Is it easy to
persevere?

What is perseverance? Why do we need to persevere?

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3 Pursue God's will.

As a result, he does not live the rest of his earthly life for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God. 1 PETER 4:2

God's will does not just happen. We must take action and pursue it. We must make a decision not to pursue self-will but to pursue God's will. What human desires have you decided not to live for?

Have you
decided to live
for God's will?

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SO WHAT

- What are God's standards for morality, purity, and holiness? How does this differ from the standards in our culture and world?
- How does perseverance feel? How can we persevere in God's will?
- How can we live for God's will? What does this look like in our everyday lives?

NOW WHAT

- Are you walking in God's will? Is there a difference in how you live your life and how others do? Are there any realignments that need to be made to His will for your life?
- Are you pursuing things that matter for all eternity? If not, what can you do to pursue God's will and purpose above your own this week?
- Are you persevering in God's will? When you encounter difficult circumstances and seasons, how can you persevere?

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- Ask God for his grace and strength to help you live a holy and self-controlled life.
 - Pray that you would persevere in and pursue God's will in your life, no matter what happens. Believe that His promises will come to pass in your family, work, and every area.
 - Pray for those who are not yet walking in God's will. Believe God for their salvation. Ask God for opportunities to share the gospel to them.

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

ROMANS 12:2

How to Know God's Will is a series of six materials for group discipleship designed to help disciples know and stay in God's will.

TOPICS INCLUDE:

- The Nature of God's Will
- How to Test and Approve God's Will
- The Importance of Obedience
- How God Reveals His Will (Parts 1 & 2)
- Walking in God's Will



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