

life groups' sermon guide

understanding and knowing God's will



Small groups exist at Kingsway to provide authentic relationships for the life application of the CORE 4 elements of Worship, Grow, Serve, and Share

How many times have you heard from someone, "I just don't know what the will of God is?" There are times in life when we all struggle to understand and know God's will with clarity, but I want to make it clear that we can know God's will for our lives.

Mary Had a Little Lamb

*Mary had a little lamb, little lamb, little lamb, Mary had a little lamb, whose fleece was white as snow.
And everywhere that Mary went, Mary went, Mary went, and everywhere that Mary went,
the lamb was sure to go.*

*It followed her to school one day school one day, school one day, it followed her to school one day,
which was against the rules. It made the children laugh and play, laugh and play, laugh and play, it
made the children laugh and play to see a lamb at school.*

*And so the teacher turned it out, turned it out, turned it out, And so the teacher turned it out, but still it
lingered near, And waited patiently about, patiently about, patiently about, And waited patiently about
till Mary did appear.*

*"Why does the lamb love Mary so?" Love Mary so? Love Mary so? "Why does the lamb love Mary so,"
the eager children cry. "Why, Mary loves the lamb, you know." The lamb, you know, the lamb, you
know, "Why, Mary loves the lamb, you know," the teacher did reply.*

Q: Isn't it funny that Christ calls us sheep? He had compassion on us because we were without a shepherd (Mark 6:33-34). How is Mary's lamb a picture of being God's will?

Q: Who would Mary represent? Why does the lamb love Mary?

Q: Does your love for God causes you to follow Christ like the lamb followed Mary? Why or why not?

Bumper Bowling and God's Will

I love to bowl. Believe it or not, I was even in a church bowling league some twenty years ago. Oh, the memories. Three friends and I attended a Foursquare Gospel church in New Castle, Indiana. We joined a church league at the Rose Bowl. Our team was named the "Foursquare Men." You have got to laugh at that one.

Understanding God's will is a lot like bowling.

In bowling the goal is to roll your ball down the lane and hit a mark consistently that will produce a strike. The problem lies in that on either side of the lane there lays a gutter just ready to swallow your ball. The challenge is to avoid these gutters. If you can't, well, so much for any score of significance.

The same holds true for understanding and knowing God's will. We travel down our lane called life wanting to know and live out God's will so we might experience His blessing. On either side of this straight and narrow lie all kinds of troubles that lend themselves to sucking the life out of us and swallowing us whole.

So what are we to do?

Bowling changed with the invention of bumpers. To help the beginning and young bowlers, establishments begin putting bumpers in the gutters to push the balls back out onto the lane and toward the pins. The bumpers ensured pins being knocked down every time and more fun and confidence for the bowler.

The same is true for knowing God's will.

God has placed bumpers on either side of this road we travel. On the right lies the bumper of His moral law. This bumper is the "do's and don'ts" of life – the Ten Commandments and such. The left bumper is his general will in regard to work, relationships, and a sundry of other things. These bumpers aid us in keeping our lives on the road and on target to God's will, where we can experience safety, blessing and significance.

For instance, what if I want to know God's will about a dating relationship? God's general will would include only dating believers (2 Corinthians 6:14) and remaining sexually pure (1 Thessalonians 4:3-5). God's moral will in this matter would include the commandment not to commit adultery (Exodus 20). These and other Scripture begin to paint a clear picture of what God's will is for dating. The bumpers are God's general and moral law summed up in His Word, the Bible for my good and His glory.

Beyond Bumpers

Q: We live in the heart of corn country. What is the outcome of a farmer who fails to properly cultivate his land before he plants his seed?

The same holds true for us. Luke 8 tells us there is seed that falls on thorny and rocky soil that cannot produce a crop, yet seed that falls on good soil produces a great crop. John 15 speaks of this as fruit of the vine, which Christ. Our hearts must be cultivated to produce fruit in keeping with God's will.

Q: Read Galatians 5:16-26, The Spirit is the wonderful and mysterious presence that resides in the live of the believer. How is the Spirit connected to God's will? Is it possible to walk, be led by, and stay in step with the Spirit without cultivating our hearts?

Q: Read Proverbs 15:21-23, What is the role of godly counsel in understanding and knowing God's will? What are the benefits? When and with whom have you sought counsel in times of uncertainty?

Let's Bowl – Application

Below are three scenarios in which their characters need to seek God's will. Discuss in your group how you would use God's general and moral law (use your Bible's concordance and word study aids to help you) and godly counsel to determine what you should do?

Bob has a decent job. It supports his family modestly. His current situation allows him some flexibility to leave work early to watch his daughter play volleyball. Yesterday, Bob got a call from a headhunter with an offer of a position at a rival company. The compensation would allow them to move into a nicer house. Bob is excited about providing more for his wife and daughter. He would be able to buy the new fishing boat he has always wanted like his neighbor Jim has. There is some overnight travel required for the new job?

Mary has been a single parent for the last five years since the death of her husband, Mike. Mary and her two sons have started going to church after Mike's death. Mary loves the church. It has provided so much love, healing, and support for her and the kids. Mary has recently gotten involved in a singles' small group. After her first visit, Tom, a handsome divorcee, asked her to lunch. Tom's presence, words of affirmation, and affection have been exciting and healing for Mary. Tom also shows an interest in the boys, much to Mary's delight. Two months into the relationship Tom asked Mary to marry him. Mary is excited, but desires to be cautious. Tom seems to be such a godly man, but he doesn't talk much about his past or previous marriage?

Mark and Jane work hard to make ends meet, but each summer they have been able to save enough to take a weekend vacation with their son and daughter. This year Mark's brother has invited them to go to Disney World over Christmas with him, his wife and two boys. Before he had time to discuss the opportunity with Jane, Mark let their sons know about the plans. Mark's and Jane's boys were so excited. Mark looked over the budget that evening. The cost of the Disney trip would be about \$3000 beyond their budget. He could charge the trip to his credit card and make payments by cutting back in other areas,

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror...

James 1:22-23

For merely listening to the law doesn't make us right with God. It is obeying the law that makes us right in his sight.

Romans 2:13