



WHAT IS
GOD'S
WILL
FOR
MY LIFE?

JOHN ORTBERG

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FINDING GOD'S WILL FOR YOUR LIFE

THIS BOOK IS FOR YOU—the one who decides.

Whether your decisions look large or small. Whether you are running a large company or are all by yourself. Our decisions are our lives.

If you have ever been uncertain about what to do.

If you've ever prayed for wisdom but still didn't know which road to choose.

If you've ever been awake late at night because a past decision haunted you and you wished you could take it back.

If you've ever been so frustrated that you were tempted to flip a coin just to get the decision behind you.

WHAT IS GOD'S WILL FOR MY LIFE?

If you've ever made a rash decision in a short time and lived to regret it for a long time.

If you've ever procrastinated on a decision and lost an opportunity.

If you've ever come to doubt your ability to choose wisely at all.

If you've ever wondered where God is in all this; if you've ever been afraid you were missing signals from heaven; if you've ever wondered whether you're proceeding from fleshly presumption or divine guidance; if you've ever felt the pressure that you might be choosing less than God's best for your life—

This book is for you.

WHAT IS GOD'S WILL FOR MY LIFE?

“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).

What an amazing thought. Those words first came to the people of Israel through the prophet Jeremiah when they were suffering in exile and all their plans had gone unfulfilled and it seemed as though they had no hope at all.

But that promise doesn't only relate to them. For thousands of years millions of people have been encouraged by the thought that the God of the universe cares about

them. And the writers of Scripture say not only that God has a plan or a “will” for us, but that we can come to know it. The apostle Paul wrote, “Do not conform 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).

So God has a will for your life, it’s good (and pleasing and perfect!), and you can come to know it.

And yet for many people the thought of God’s will raises troubling questions even as it provides encouragement.

If God has a will for my life, why does it often seem so difficult to discover? How specific is it? Does God have one person for me to marry, or one job for me to take, or one place for me to live? What happens if I choose something that wasn’t God’s will for my life—am I stuck with less than God’s best

for my future? Why is it that some people seem to have so much more clarity than I do about God's will? How do I know for sure whether a choice is really God's will for me or just something I want to do?

This is not simply an abstract question that theologians wrestle over. If I get details about the end times wrong, I can still lead the right life. But one of the weightiest aspects of human life is *I must choose*. And my choices create my life. My choices create my destiny. I don't want to miss that!

Maybe you're facing graduation. More than anything else, young adults want to work at a job that inspires them, that has meaning. Maybe your prayer is *God, I don't want to choose mostly based on money or security or reputation. Help me find a calling that is worth my life.*

Maybe you're in a relationship, and you're confused about the next step. You always thought that when you found your soul mate,

you would “just know.” Yet now you just *don't* know. What if you marry this person and then meet your *real* soul mate at the reception?

Maybe you're in transition. People are changing jobs, companies, and whole careers more often than ever before. Career specialist Andy Chan notes that young adults will hold on average twenty-nine jobs over the course of their lives. Oxford researchers predict that over the next two decades about half the jobs that exist today will be replaced by technology.¹ How do you adapt to a changing environment? How do you weigh the options well?

Maybe you're in a rut. Your life is safe, but it's not fulfilling. There is something gnawing inside of you, the call of the open door.

Maybe you're facing an empty nest. You have freedom and time and possibilities that have not been available for decades, but you're not sure what to do with them.

Maybe you're retiring, but you know the

word *retire* is not in the Bible, and you're not ready for death or shuffleboard. What might God have for you next?

Maybe you have a great passion for a cause. You've seen a great need that just gnaws at you, or you studied a problem and want to make a difference. What's the next step? Whom do you talk to?

Maybe you're a student trying to decide which school to go to or which major to choose.

Maybe you're on the brink of an exciting adventure. Maybe you've been frustrated by a lost opportunity, and you wonder, *Does God still have another one for me?*

Your life is about more than safety. It's about more than security. It's about more than manageability. If you're looking for that stuff, you were born into the wrong species.

God has a plan for you. But that doesn't mean God wants to make all your decisions for you. This leads to one of the most gnawing questions about the will of God.