

Thoughts on Doing The Will of God

Jan.27, 2003

Introduction

Much has been written about - and many a conference devoted to - urging us to submit to God's Will, to walk in God's Will, and, in more recent years, teachings that we can actually talk to God and come to know His Will for ourselves and other's firsthand through a "Living, 'Now' Word".



Yet, despite the proliferation of available materials, most of us are still left wondering if we really are living a life totally submitted to God's Will, and facing the inevitable question: "Am I really hearing God or is it merely my imagination?" Why must that be the case? Well, firstly few - if any - really talk face to face with God. What we "talk to" is our mental idea or concepts of God, and it is done largely through our inner "self-talk", that is, that inner dialogue that is constantly playing within the mind. Secondly, how we translate God's written Word (Scripture) into Will for our live and finally into daily lifestyle has more to do with the tenets of faith as practiced by whatever particular denomination we adhere to.

...despite the proliferation of available materials, most of us are still left wondering if we really are living a life totally submitted to God's Will, and [we are faced daily with] the inevitable question : "Am I really hearing God or is it merely my imagination?"

Sadly, there is often a negative side affect as those who diligently seek to hear God fail in their attempts to do so, in so far as they fail to attain or reach their expectations of what God should sound like or be like. Often, there is an accompanying failure to have the deeply moving spiritual experiences claimed by the Christian writers and pastors. Such failed pursuits of God come to cause us to eventually either doubt God, or, cause us to doubt the depth of our faith. Sadder still, are those who claim to hear God, sincerely think they do hear God, but in reality they lay hold to odd, bizarre believes and engage in eccentric behavior.



What really then is the truth of the matter?

What It Really Means To Do God's Will: A Short Synopsis -

Doing "God's Will" means fundamentally, living life in accordance to the teachings of God, as you believe them to be. It is best summed up in the word "Integrity". Hence, if I profess to be Christian, it is incumbent on me to act in ways that reflect Christian morals and values, and be consistent in doing so.

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Christ stated this most emphatically in the following passage:

MAT 7:21 ¶ "Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, 'will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

MAT 7:22 Many will say to me on that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?'

MAT 7:23 Then I will tell them plainly, I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'

*MAT 7:24 ¶ **"Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.***

[Emphasis mine]

MAT 7:25 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.

MAT 7:26 But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand.

MAT 7:27 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash. "



*MAT 7:24 ¶ **"Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. [Emphasis mine]***

The Apostle Paul expanded on this principle further when he wrote:

2CO 10:5 We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

[Emphasis mine]

What are those moral obligations and moral traits that best define God's Will, and hence the qualities of a Christian? Well Christ said that our first duty is:

LUK 10:27 ¶ "...Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind ';and, Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

Further traits of a Christian are recorded for us in the Sermon on The Mount :

MAT 5:1 ¶ Now when he saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him,

MAT 5:2 and he began to teach them, saying:

MAT 5:3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

MAT 5:4 Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

MAT 5:5 Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

MAT 5:6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

MAT 5:7 Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

MAT 5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

MAT 5:9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.

MAT 5:10 Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

MAT 5:11 ¶ "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.

MAT 5:12 Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.



MAT 5:13 ¶ "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men.

MAT 5:14 ¶ "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden.

MAT 5:15 Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house.

MAT 5:16 In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

Then there are the Prophet Micah's words as recorded in the Old Testament, regarding God's specific guidance on what is His Will :

MIC 6:8 He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

Lastly, we again come back to the Apostle Paul who delineated the difference in moral qualities of those who do (that is follow) according to God's Will and those who choose another moral direction for their life.

GAL 5:19 ¶ The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; GAL 5:20 idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions

GAL 5:21 and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

GAL 5:22 ¶ But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, GAL 5:23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

GAL 5:24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.

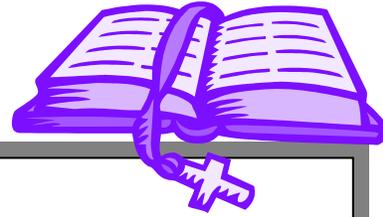
GAL 5:25 Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God . (Micah 6:8)

So we see four aspects to doing the Will of God :

- A Conscious election to do so; and

- A conscious, deliberate setting aside of things that are of our more base and brutish nature (sic. Worldly , of the flesh, basic animal instinct) in exchange for things of a more Godly and refined nature (sic. Of the Spirit; rising above our basic animal instincts).
- A pursuit of the things of God;
- a conscious effort to seek out a knowledge of God



There are 4 aspects to doing God's Will :

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Over and over, Paul stressed this as being one of the yardsticks or criteria by which to judge whether or not a person had an honest Godly conviction and was intent on change. In Philippians, he wrote :

PHI 4:8 ¶ Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable-- if anything is excellent or praiseworthy-- think about such things.

Now , when we speak about God's Will in a more philosophical and theological sense, one can get quite technical for there are – in theory – several aspects to what we term God's Will. These aspects we will explore next.

What We Mean by God's Will

God's Absolute Will - This is the unfolding of History according to God's plan. It ends with the banishment of all things evil, and the establishment of an entire Universe – all of creation - in submission to God, and glorifying God as Lord.

The Absolute Will of God will be accomplished regardless of your actions or mine. If one of us fail in achieving, or finding, our ultimate “destiny” or in doing what God asks of us, He will simply find someone else who will.

The 4 Forms of God's Will

- **God's Absolute Will**
- **God's Perfect Will**
- **God's Permissive Will**
- **Our Free Will**

God's Perfect Will – God's Perfect Will for our life is intertwined with our personal “destiny” and the concept of “submission” and “obedience” as well as being “attuned” to God's leading.

God's Perfect or "ideal" Will for our life is that we acknowledge Him as God and be obedient to His Word. Secondly, Scripture teaches that there is a "Work", a "Purpose" for us to do. Paul wrote :

EPH 1:11 ¶ In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will,



It is at this juncture where differences emerge within the Christian faith, for concept of "Obedience to God's Word" has two school's of thought ; namely:

- (1) Those who hold the theory that this means being obedient to the Written, Recorded Word of God (The Logos Word) as given in the Bible; versus
- (2) Those who teach that, in addition to the Bible, we must also obey the "Living Word of God" (Rhema Word) as it comes to us either personally through Prayer and Vision as well as through modern day Prophets. The premise for this is that the Gifts of the Spirit , such as Prophecy, Wisdom, and spiritual Discernment, are still given to believers today and did not end with the last of the Apostles. Hence, Christians can have a personal intimate relationship with God that involves receiving daily direction through conversations every bit as real as you and I sitting down and talking.

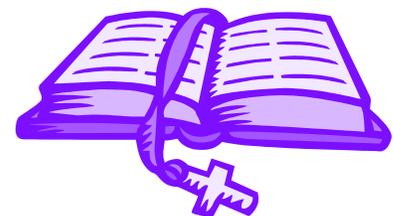
It is the latter that can cause us much grief and confusion if taken too literally and too much to the extreme. As I stated in the Introduction – few of us know for certain that we are hearing God in a personal, intimate manner. And most of us have seen the tragedies that can come into people's lives by claiming to hear God and then acting on that belief (ergo The WTC tragedy of Sept.11, 2001; The Jim Jones, Jonestown cult outcome in 1978, and the list can go on).

God's Permissive Will ... God's Permissive Will is that aspect of God's nature that allows us our Free Will and is integral with its functioning. There are two sides to God's Permissive Will:

1. ***He will not prevent us from doing what we ultimately set our minds to doing.***
...God will not normally intervene to keep us from our own choices be they for better or for worse. But, in the same vein
2. ***He will not prevent us from suffering the consequences of those choices.***
... God will allow both the good and the bad to happen as a result of decisions to exercise our free will. In fact, God will often allow "adversity" to come as a way of teaching us to hear Him more clearly and to work naivete out of our nature. We may be called to believe as children (Mark 10:14-15) but we are expected to grow into spiritual maturity. This concept –or aspect of God – is best captured in the work by Charles Stanley , titled : "*Advancing Through Adversity*" (Thomas Nelson, 1996)

Stanley writes that when adversity strikes, or if one of our life choices goes wrong, we should approach God with one question : "*Why this at this time ?* "

Our Free Will ... God's Permissive Will allows our Free Will. This is our basic right to make choices in life, to make decisions about what we will do for a career, about where we will live, about who we will – or will not – marry, and so on. It is a great privilege and also a great responsibility. As a people of faith, be we Christian, Jewish or Muslim, we are expected to involve God in that decision making process. This latter part brings us back full circle ; namely, I must some how allow



God to have input in my life and know that it is God.

How We Know God's Will for Our Life

The Most Basic – You Must First Believe There Is A God and That You Can Have a Personal Relationship With God

We must have a relationship with God before we can expect to Him to be a factor in our life. This requires having a believe system that is open to the concept that (a) There is A God, a Higher Power that resides in authority over the Universe and keeps the Universe in order; (b) That such a Divine Being desires a relationship with every living soul in His Universe., and (c) That such a relationship makes us an integral part of something bigger than ourselves.

Secondly: We Must Accept That There is a Purpose to All Things In The Universe

All Life has purpose. We are here for a purpose and one reason for desiring to know and do God's Will is to find our purpose for it is our "destiny".

Thirdly, We Must Embrace and Immerse Ourselves In The Recorded Word of God.

Dr. James Boice writes in his book, *The Sermon on The Mount'* (Zondervan Books, 1972)

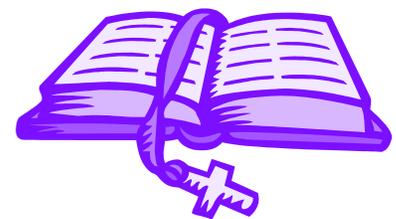
" 'How can I, a sinful person, know what a holy and righteous God requires?' There is only one answer : We may know the will of God by coming to know the Word of God, and we know the Word of God only as we study it and the Holy Spirit throws His divine light upon its pages." (Boice,p.215)

We may know the will of God by coming to know the Word of God only as we study it ...

But the essential ingredient in all of this is our relationship to God. But, how We Relate To God is Premised On How We Conceive of God

Our concepts of God, and our relationship with Him, is shaped by a number of factors, foremost of which are

- What we have been taught
- How we interpret life experiences
- Our tendency to hear what we want to hear
- Our feelings on authority figures, in particular, the way we relate to our biological father and parents.



How We Relate To God Is Largely Shaped By :

- **What We Have Been Taught**
- **What We Read Into Personal Life Experiences**
- **What We Want To Hear**
- **What We Bring From Our Relationships With Authority Figures in Life**

Rev. Ed Piorek, Pastor at the Anaheim Vineyard Church, CA identified four earthly father role models that shape our relationship with our Heavenly Father. These are :

- **The Performance Oriented Father** ... this father gives love as a reward for performance in areas such as doing household chores, excelling at education, and doing well in sports. In fact this is endemic to our culture, with performance leading to promotion, reward, scholarships and so on. Yet, it leads to God concept – or a belief system – premised off performance in exchange for love and acceptance.
- **The Passive Father** ... is a father who does not take an active role in parenting. He may travel a lot, work excessively, or may have died or divorced. Whatever the reason, the result is an Absentee Father. The concept of God that develops from this type of parenting, is view of God as distant, non-caring and non-involved. We may believe that there is a God, but He is a distant entity with little or no involvement in our life and little or no personality or character. He is an abstract concept that we only read – or hear - about.
- **The Punitive Father**... this type of father punishes instead of showing love. Such a father may be a harsh disciplinarian, or he may actually be abusive – physically, verbally or sexually. The outcome is often a concept of God who is stern, harsh, punitive and angry. Fear and suppressed anger often blocks the Father's love in Christians from such backgrounds.
- **The Permissive Father**... is the polar opposite of the punitive father. However, as pleasant as that may seem, such fathers are not able to express their love emotionally or verbally, and so lavish gifts, trips, holidays, expensive sporting event outings (the best seats etc.), and the giving of expensive material things, as well as money, as ways to compensate for the emotional distancing. Unfortunately, as Christians, we may well expect God to do likewise, and hence feel disappointed and rejected when God doesn't deliver.

Knowing God's Will Through Circumstance

Character building and growth toward spiritual maturity are lifelong processes (Stanley, *Advancing Through Adversity*, p.39) . Circumstance, the flow of people into and out of our life, new opportunities, and lost opportunities are frequently the processes by which God works His Will.

The following is an extract from an earlier piece that I wrote dealing with this aspect of God's nature.



EXPERIENCING & GROWING IN GOD SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS FROM VARIOUS WORKS

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Prepared by Insights Counseling - October 2002

EXPERIENCING GOD (Blackaby & King; 1994)

God Is The Initiator (from p.65 thru 72)

0 We must be in a "love" relationship with God.

0 It is out of this love relationship that God prepares us to be involved in His work.

0 It should not be 'our work' - our 'initiative', which we then ask God to bless, but rather a work God asks us to undertake on His behalf. [*This assumes that we can hear God with clarity and know it is God, which means we must have a personal relationship with God to begin with*]

0 The pattern we observe in Scripture is that we submit ourselves to God and wait until God shows us what He is about to do, or we watch to see what God is doing around us and then join Him.

0 God Himself is the One who initiates your / our involvement in His Work.

Editor's Note: I have found that there is really room for both -that is, waiting on God, and taking initiative. God frequently blesses both endeavors so long as our motivation is rightly founded. What we have a passion to do often has its roots in God.

To sit and do nothing, while waiting for divine inspiration accomplishes nothing and benefits no one. God cannot steer a parked car is a frequently used saying that has great merit.

KNOWING HOW & WHEN GOD SPEAKS (p.83 - 96)

0 He who belongs to God hears what God says. (John 8:47)

0 God speaks through the Holy Spirit ... often through our thoughts and inner self-talk

0 Knowing God's voice is not based on any formula or ritual; it comes from an intimate love relationship.

0 God frequently gives direction at the front end; He will tell you what you need to know to make necessary adjustments and

to take the first step of obedience.

0 God speaks -and acts - at the right time : that is when the time is right. When God speaks, He has a purpose in mind.

0 The Holy Spirit will use the Bible, prayer, circumstances, and other Christians to speak to you.

Editor's Note: There are times when God is silent. As C.S.Lewis writes in " A Grief Observed" :

...Go to Him when your need is desperate, when all other help is vain, and what do you find? A door slammed in your face, and a sound of bolting and double bolting on the inside. After that silence. (Lewis, 1961)

In His infinite wisdom, there is a reason for the silence which we will explore in a later section of this summary.

0 Character Adjustments May Be Necessary: God may want you to adjust your life and your character in small assignments before giving you a big assignment. God will always develop character to match His assignment.

Editor's Note: Character is personality combined with morality and ethics in action. It is what you hold to be fundamental truths about moral and ethical rights and wrongs; about integrity, personal standards of conduct and how best to translate those things into a behavior that conveys your core beliefs to the world around you. I may be the most upright citizen on earth, but I also may be the most uptight one as well, lording "my standards" over others and promoting "my rights" at the expense of everyone else. This will not win people over to God's Kingdom. Humility (a willingness to admit to being less than perfect and even wrong on occasion), meekness (a strength that is under control, that knows to be angry at the right time at the right thing, that uses anger constructively, and that is willing to hear other's perspectives

and weigh the facts), commitment, integrity, consistency, and a love for others are the character traits that win hearts and makes for great leaders.

0 When we do hear that inner voice, there are three possibilities: (1) It's our own mind; (2) It's the Devil; (3) It's God.

0 Only by having a daily, committed time with God, in a love-based relationship, can we discern which of the three it is.

Editor's Note: We will come back to this triadic dilemma later in another section of this summary.



0 The Bible & Prayer- Essential To Hearing God / Experiencing God.

> The Bible :

1. As we read the Bible , we are reading God's Word; we are literally taking it in to our inner most thoughts.

2. The Holy Spirit reveals the Truth to us through a process of enlightenment in which our mind and our spirit are transformed leading to a greater sensitivity to spiritual insights regarding the meanings and nuances of God's Word.



>Prayer:

1. Prayer is a relationship; it is not just a religious activity. It is a two-way communication.

2. In prayer, the Holy Spirit reveals the Will of God to you.

3. In the Spirit you pray in agreement with the Will of God.

Editor's Note: The late Dr. R.A.Torrey (1924, The Power of Prayer) noted that there are many things that can hinder our prayer, the three principle ones that I find the most frequent are -

- (1) Wrong motives ...we pray for selfish reasons
- (2) Sin in our life... we engage in habits or harbor thoughts that act has a barrier to God presence in our life.
- (3) Harboring bitterness, jealousy, entertaining revenge on others. (While falling under the general category of "sin", Dr.Torrey saw unforgiveness as warranting a special category, because it infiltrates so much of our interactions with others.)

Dr.Torrey emphasized the importance of praying in faith, because whatsoever we ask for in faith, we will be given it. But, like Blackaby and King, Torrey stresses being in the Word of God - and in God's presence - daily so that we will know the Will of God, and so build our prayers on God's foundation. Otherwise, it is possible to pray with absolute conviction and die-hard faith, about something totally at odds with God's Will and purpose for your life.

0 Responding To Difficult Situations

1. Remember that God's love and concern for you is unending.
2. Ask God for insight , discernment and perspective.
3. Adjust your life in whatever way and whatever area you sense an urging or a conviction.
4. Clarify what God said by testing it through other believers, by carefully examining the word to make sure you haven't made your own "additions" or "faulty interpretations" in order to fit a pet theory or project.
5. Let God work out the timing.
6. Do what you can do. Leave the rest for God.



When circumstances do not align with what you think God is saying to do, it may not be God's timing.

When God is Silent or "Doing Nothing":

0 Dr. Larry Crabb (2001 : "Shattered Dreams") posits the position that God allows our dreams to come to naught, while seeming distant and unconcerned, because it is essential to our spiritual growth. It is Dr.Crabb's theory that in those silent times, God is actually doing His most important work for us (p.159). Feeling good is not - should not be - the goal. It is when we feel bad that we actually work harder at coming into the presence of God; knowing God more intimately becomes a passion and we grow accordingly (p.161).

0 Dr.James Dobson (1993 : "When God Doesn't Make Sense")points out that God is the Sovereign God of the universe and does not -will not - perform on cue to impress us. (p.102)

0 Dobson goes on to stress that we must be careful not to make God out to be some errand boy, or subservient magician who we can manipulate by just saying the right words (p.107).

0 When God appears to not hear us or to be ignoring us, we typically gravitate to one of four explanations - all of which are false (Dobson p.110):

- (1) God is dead
- (2) God is angry with me
- (3) God is whimsical
- (4) God is ignoring me because I am not religious or spiritual enough. I must show (demonstrate & work at) more faith.

All such possible explanations are wrong; they are false. If we have accepted Christ as our Lord, and we are making every reasonable effort live out our faith, then God is on our side and His apparent silence is not a sign of neglect.

Editor's Note:

At the times when God seems silent, He really is at work, behind the scenes, like a stage manager or director, orchestrating the next act in our life's play. We just have to wait to see what unfolds, while doing what we can - as best we can - to keep things together and moving forward.



This means:

- 0 Don't stop planning and setting Goals
- 0 Focus on what you believe to be the right direction to go and do what you can to move toward that end goal.
- 0 Clarify the nature of your problem;
- 0 Determine what would help solve your problem;
- 0 Define the resources you need;
- 0 Get professional help and advice if appropriate.
- 0 Consult trusted friends and fellow believers

0 As strange as it seems, habitual well-being is not advantageous to a species. An existence without challenge takes its toll on virtually every living thing (Dobson p.147) (Editor's Note: If not challenged we stagnate; get lethargic; fail to develop mentally and intellectually; and fail to develop a strong faith that withstands the test of time. As one ancient proverb puts it: "Constant sunshine makes a desert")

0 Philip Yancey (1988: "Disappointment With God") makes these points concerning God's times of silence:

(1) p. 245

> As young Christians we have a childlike faith that believes in doing the impossible and that all things are possible.

> However, childlike faith may well fail us - or not survive- when the miracles don't come.

> Hence we need to develop "Fidelity" faith; This is a "hang-in-there- at- any- cost" kind of faith.

> Fidelity faith is a deep faith born out of "Job-Like" experiences.

(2) Yancey p.248

Referencing the life and writings of C.S.Lewis, Yancey notes that as the Christian life proceeds from young Christian to older, more mature Christian, striking answers to prayers are less frequent, while outright refusals become more frequent, unmistakable, and more emphatic.



(3) Yancey p.294- Yancey makes this poignant statement observation:

If we insist on visible proofs from God, we may as well prepare the way for a permanent state of disappointment. True faith does not so much attempt to manipulate God to do our will as it does to position us to do His will.

This may mean - and will likely mean- that at some point we will have a test of faith where, like the Apostle Paul, we will have to remind ourselves:

"...what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal." (2 Cor.4:18)

0 Larry Crabb (1993 : "Finding God") posits that one of our basic problems as humans is that deep inside we hold to a central lie: God cannot be trusted with the things that matter most. (p.95)

Hence, God will not listen to us if we approach with a wrong attitude. He will not listen if I require that he prove Himself to me. (p.96)

Dr. Crabb states : "You know you're finding God when you believe that God is good no matter what happens." (p.103) As such, he holds that we have a truly Godly foundation when:

- > We no longer doubt God's goodness, but believe in it.
- > We no longer feel terror, but rather calm when we read the words " I will never leave you."
- > We no longer feel rage toward God or others, but rather we want to worship God as being the only one worthy of worship.

0 Charles Stanley (1996: "Advancing Through Adversity") holds to a similar view of life's struggles and God's silence. He maintains that too often, at such times of trial, we ask God the wrong questions in prayer, and ask Him to relieve us of our affliction or struggles, when God is really trying to teach us something. He proposes that the best prayer to approach God with is : "Why This God At This Time?; What Are You Trying To Teach Me ?" (pages 8 -9)

Stanley sees God allowing adversity for three reasons:

- (1) To get our attention
- (2) To lead us to self-examination
- (3) To bring us to a place where we will change our belief or our behavior.



Self-examination forces us to look seriously at five aspects of the ourselves and our beliefs (p.57):

- 0 Our view of God
- 0 Our faith in God
- 0 The place of material possessions in our lives
- 0 Our strengths and weaknesses
- 0 A possible unwillingness to forgive others

In Closing:

I have attempted in these brief 7 pages to summarize some current views on (a) how to hear God, and (b) What to do when God seems silent. The entire seven pages can probably be summed up in four points, which I have seen to be true in my counseling; these are:

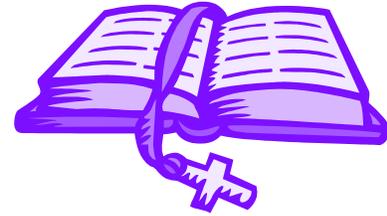
- (1) God is at work in all things, even when it is not apparent or obvious;
- (2) His knowledge of what is best for us is based on knowing our beginning and our ending; He is concerned for our well-being, even when we are suffering.
- (3) Suffering is not necessarily of God, but it is often used of God to form character within us. If you accept the reality of God, and Goodness, then you must also accept that there is Evil, and the not-so-good. While evil does not originate in God, but in the evil hearts of men, it has been used by God throughout history to bring about change in His selected peoples. The Church had to be persecuted and Jerusalem had to fall at the hands of its enemies- the Romans in order that the Gospel be spread. Paul had to be taken captive and bound-up in prison, in order for the Epistles to be written.

God takes that which is meant to destroy us, and turns it around for victory, IF we will let him.

Also, we must not forget that nature both creates and destroys. Death and disease are part of the cycle of life, are indiscriminate, and befall all of us at some point.

While not a cheerful note to end on, it is also a great equalizing truth - as Solomon observed (Eccles.3:20). What we must focus on, and take great joy and comfort in is the next

point. The truly marvelous truth and reality is that we HAVE ETERNAL LIFE. Death IS NOT the end for the Christian, but the beginning of an eternity with its endless, thousands of unknowns that we be able to explore free of pain, suffering, broken promises and whatever else have befallen us in this life. This is the crux of the Gospel message and The Truth that motivated the Apostles. (John 3:16; 11:25-26)



(4) We are here for a purpose; to serve God - not the other way around; But God will give you a passion and love for that purpose. His purpose becomes your purpose- a motivation that gives considerable meaning to life and an identity of self. God has a work for all of us to do, and He imparts a love for the task.

Hearing God Speak

We have already covered material about how God communicates with His people and His creation, ,but , at the risk of being repetitive, here is some further perspective on this important aspect of God since it is an essential part of knowing we are doing God's Will . While some of it may seem very basic, it is nonetheless essential if we are to know God and do His Will.

O The Nature and Attributes (Character Traits) of God

God is Spirit

JOH 4:24 God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth. "

God is Eternal

PSA 90:2 Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

God is Just and Good

PSA 11:7 For the LORD is righteous, he loves justice; upright men will see his face.
God is the only Pure, Holy and Righteous Being in existence

God is All Knowing

IJO 3:20 whenever our hearts condemn us. For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.

God is All Powerful

MAT 19:26 ¶ Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

God is All Present

JER 23:23-24 "Am I only a God nearby," declares the LORD, "and not a God far away? Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him? "declares the LORD." Do not I fill heaven and earth? "declares the LORD.

God is All Loving

IJO 4:8 Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

God is Faithful

DEU 7:9 Know therefore that the LORD your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commands.

God is the "Three in One" (1 John 5:7-8)

O The Nature of God's Voice..

Is Sometimes Gentle

1KI 19:11 ¶ The LORD said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by." ¶ Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake.



1KI 19:12 After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. ... [which, as the story goes, was GOD]

And Sometimes Not

JOB 40:9 Do you have an arm like God's, and can your voice thunder like his?
JOB 37:4 After that comes the sound of his roar; he thunders with his majestic voice. When his voice resounds, he holds nothing back.
JOB 37:5 God's voice thunders in marvelous ways; he does great things beyond our understanding.
PSA 18:13 The LORD thundered from heaven; the voice of the Most High resounded.
PSA 29:3 The voice of the LORD is over the waters; the God of glory thunders, the LORD thunders over the mighty waters.
PSA 68:33 to him who rides the ancient skies above, who thunders with mighty voice.

O More About His Voice..

Is Unique .. You will Know It is Supernatural

The Burning Bush
The Shepherds of Bethlehem
On The Damascus Road

Is Unique To Each Individual

Abraham
Joseph
Moses
Mary -the Mother of Christ
Paul

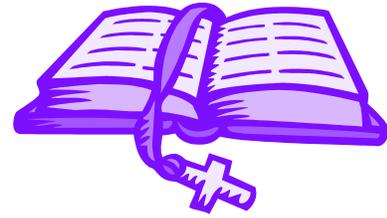
Is Unique to each situation

Nathan's call to confront David
Solomon's Gift of Wisdom
The Angel's visit to the Virgin Mary
Paul's Damascus Road experience

If we are His we will know His Voice ...

JOH 10:27 My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.

Now Let's Look At How God Speaks



Through Prayer

JAM 4:2 You do not have, because you do not ask God.
MAT 6:6 But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Through the Spoken Word

JOB 40:6 ¶ Then the LORD spoke to Job out of the storm:
MAT 4:4 ¶ Jesus answered, "It is written: Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God. '{Deut. 8:3}'"
MAT 8:16 ¶ When evening came, many who were demon-possessed were brought to him, and he drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick.

Through the Written Word

PSA 119:18 Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law.
2TI 3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,

Through Visions

NUM 12:6 he said, "Listen to my words:" When a prophet of the LORD is among you, I reveal myself to him in visions, I speak to him in dreams.

EZE 1:1 ¶ In the thirtieth year, in the fourth month on the fifth day, while I was among the exiles by the Kebar River, the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God.

Through Dreams

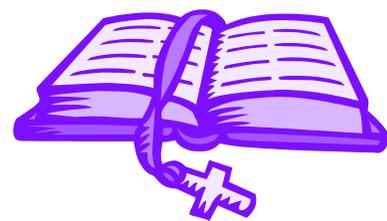
GEN 41:25 ¶ Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, "The dreams of Pharaoh are one and the same. God has revealed to Pharaoh what he is about to do.
MAT 1:20 ¶ But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.
MAT 2:12 And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

Through Direct Visitation

EXO 3:2 There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up.
EXO 3:4 ¶ When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, "Moses! Moses!" ¶ And Moses said, "Here I am."
ACT 9:3 As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him.
ACT 9:4 He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"
ACT 9:5 ¶ "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. ¶ "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied.

And God Speaks via the Holy Spirit ...

2PE 1:20 Above all, you must understand that no



prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation.
2PE 1:21 For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Testing To See If It is The Word of God

>Does what I hear line up with the Bible? God will not go outside His Word or contradict His Word. This is especially true in issues of moral and ethical consequence.

>Is the Word I'm hearing confirming what others, who I know hear from God, have said to me?

>Is this consistent with prophetic words that have been given me in the past?

>Do I have the resources - or ready access - to the resources to make this come about?
Are doors of opportunity opening consistent with the Word?

In Closing

This has been somewhat of a lengthy treatise of materials that I – and others- have covered in other works at one time or another. Yet it is worth the effort to periodically revisit such basics and to dissect those fundamentals that are foundational to our beliefs. We all desire, as believers, to walk in the Will of God and to do the Will of God. To think that we are outside the will of God would be to have lost direction in our life.

We – as Christians – should have a Respectful "Fear" of God which is the beginning of "Wisdom". (Prov.1:7). But "Fear" in this sense does not mean "being afraid". It means having a "respect" for God's power and position as the Creator of all that exists.

And "Wisdom" is the ability to skillfully apply what one knows; It is the conversion of "head-knowledge" into "actions" befitting the situation. It means turning "head-knowledge" into "heart-knowledge".

So with that, I hope this undertaking assists you in making God even all the more a reality.

(Rev.) Ron Howard Ph.D.
Insights Counseling
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