

The Will of God

Leslie D. Weatherhead

Discussion Guide

The Will of God, by Leslie D. Weatherhead (Abingdon Press, copyright © 1972), takes an in depth look at God's will for us and provides insights to better understand it. We often use the phrase, "the will of God," to explain or attach meaning to tragic events. But how do we reconcile such events as having been willed by a God of love? Weatherhead suggests new ways to think about what "the will of God" means and how we can discern what God's will is for our lives.

Permission is granted to reproduce this discussion guide.

Chapter 1

God's Intentional Will

This chapter looks at the plan God has for each of us and at how God works in people's lives.

1. Discuss your interest in reading this book and what you hope to learn.
2. Why is the phrase "will of God" mostly associated with tragedy and loss?
3. Share a time when you or someone you know used the phrase "the will of God."
4. Give an example of confused thinking about the will of God.
5. Explain in your own words the meaning of God's intentional will.
6. Why is it important to separate the intentional, circumstantial, and ultimate will of God?
7. Explain how and why the intentional will of God can be temporarily defeated.
8. What events or circumstances are not the intentional will of God?
9. Why do we so often attribute things that happen, especially bad things, to God's will? What difficulties arise from that thinking?

10. Why should you be very careful when you use the phrase, “the will of God?”
 11. At what times do people say that God’s will has been done when actually the opposite of his will has been done?
 12. What new insights about God’s will did you receive from reading this chapter?
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Chapter 2

God’s Circumstantial Will

This chapter looks at God’s plan for us within certain situations.

1. Explain your understanding of the circumstantial will of God and give an example.
 2. What stories in the Bible illustrate the circumstantial will of God?
 3. Share your thoughts about the natural realm of the circumstantial will of God.
 4. Share your thoughts about the spiritual realm of the circumstantial will of God.
 5. Explain “sublimation” and the three conditions that cause it to be effectively realized.
 6. Why are the ways of God often a mystery?
 7. Discuss the role that trust in God plays in knowing God’s will.
 8. What does it mean for us that God is love?
 9. Discuss the mystery of why God can allow things to happen that are not God’s intention.
 10. What confuses you most about circumstantial will?
 11. What new insights did you receive about God’s will from reading this chapter?
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Chapter 3

God’s Ultimate Will

This chapter explores God’s final realization of his purposes.

1. In your own words, explain what God’s ultimate will is and what it means to you.
2. What new insights about God’s ultimate will did you receive from this chapter?
3. Using the cross as an example, what’s the connection between circumstantial and ultimate will?
4. Discuss what is meant by the omnipotence of God.
5. Discuss how God can use both good and evil to achieve God’s will.

6. Why is it wrong to think that nothing we do, good or bad, matters?
 7. How can you learn the ultimate will of God for your life?
 8. What confuses you the most about God's ultimate will?
 9. Give an example of what you believe is God's ultimate will for you.
 10. What does it mean to you that the last word is God's and that God has the final say?
 11. Explain how our freedom of choice affects God's ultimate will.
 12. How has this discussion helped you?
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Chapter 4

Discerning the Will of God

This chapter offers insights and advice on how to learn what God wants for your life.

1. What new insights about discerning God's will did you receive from this chapter?
2. Why is friendship with God important in discerning his will?
3. List some reasons why people want to discern the will of God.
4. Share a time when it was important for you to discern God's will.
5. What things often prevent people from learning God's will for them?
6. Discuss the pros and cons of using conscience as an indicator of God's will.
7. How can using common sense or the advice of a friend be helpful?
8. List and discuss other methods of discerning the will of God.
9. How do you know whether you are trying to know God's will or just trying to get God's approval for your own will?
10. What's the importance of courage once you know God's will?
11. What's the most difficult thing for you about learning God's will?
12. How has this discussion helped you?

Chapter 5

“In His Will is Our Peace”

This chapter illustrates the connection between God’s will and our own peace of mind.

1. What new insights about peace and God’s will did you receive from this chapter?
2. In your own words, explain what the title of this chapter means to you.
3. List and discuss reasons that people lack peace in their lives.
4. Share a time when you experienced peace from God.
5. Where and why do people look for peace in the wrong places?
6. List and discuss the three reasons that being in God’s will means peace.
7. Why is sometimes difficult to find peace in times of loss or tragedy?
8. Share a time when you felt lost and lacked peace.
9. Discuss the wisdom of the Proverbs verse: “In all thy ways acknowledge him and he will direct thy paths.”
10. What promises in the Bible offer us God’s peace?
11. List and discuss some reasons people hang on to their burdens rather than giving them to God.
12. How has this book helped you learn more about the will of God?