

Romans 11:36

Workbook



“For from Him and through Him and to Him
are all things. To Him be the glory forever.
Amen.” **Romans 11:36**

Introduction

Dear Reader,

As you embark on the journey to know more about your Creator, who He is, how He works, and what your responsibility is, I pray that you will come to see glimpses of the greater manifestations of God.

When studying the Scripture, your goal should be to learn more about the character of God (who He is), the nature of God (how He works), and what your response should be (His will and your responsibility). May this assist you in a life-long journey of knowing and doing the will of God.

We will start focusing on the state of your heart toward the Lord and His will, and then move into how to prove His will by examining if it is “From Him,” “For Him,” and “Through Him.”

Doing God’s will is like driving on the road. You have to first desire to drive and then follow the rules of driving; this would be compared to **seeking** the will of God. The **stated** will of God is like the laws of the road; street signs, traffic lights, road maps, and police officers. The **principles** of the will of God are the general principles of driving. You need to keep to the right, allow others to merge, and let people enter in front of you. **Proving** the will of God is the personal choices you make in areas that have no direct commands and using more than just the general principles to get to your destination; for instance, when to merge, how fast you merge, or when to turn.

So, jump in and let’s get started on the journey that should change the course of your life and align you with the Creator of the Universe.

Section 1

Preparing to Seek and Do God's Will

Where is your heart at?

Let us begin this journey with the question of "why." Why should you want to prove God's will?

Write down your thoughts. _____

As we find with most things, without the proper motivation to seek and do God's will, you can find yourself waning in your determination when times get tough. As a Christian, this is a life-long journey, and we should not have a "New Year's resolution" mentality that doing God's will is going to be cool this year and we want to give it a try. You must desire it with all your heart and allow that deep desire to know God to change your heart and the direction of your life.

Why should we want to prove God's will?

Take a look at Romans 12:1-2

"Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is* your spiritual service of worship.² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."

In verse two, we see that God's will has some attributes: good, acceptable, and perfect. These attributes are the focus of why we want to prove God's will. Let us start with what they mean. Look each word up in the dictionary and find a definition that matches.

- Good _____
- Acceptable _____
- Perfect _____

Now that you have defined the words, try drawing some conclusions from them. I will give you a few examples to get you started.

1. If God’s will is good, acceptable, and perfect I should... desire to figure it out.
2. If God’s will is good, acceptable, and perfect I should... dedicate myself to doing the best thing; which is God’s will.

Now you give it a try. Here are a few verses to help you (Ephesians 5:15-17; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Isaiah 55:8-9; Proverbs 9:10).

1. If God’s will is good, acceptable, and perfect I should _____

2. If God’s will is good, acceptable, and perfect I should _____

3. If God’s will is good, acceptable, and perfect I should _____

4. If God’s will is good, acceptable, and perfect I should _____

To answer the “why” question of doing God’s will you need to have a solid motivation to do His will and a firm grasp that His plans are the best for you. First, let’s talk about your motivation for doing God’s will. It must be linked to the fact that God deserves to be listened to and His way will be the one that succeeds in the end. If you believe that God’s will is good, acceptable, and perfect, then the conclusion is that you should follow it. The Bible makes it clear that the only guarantee of success in life is to follow God’s will and His plans because they are the ones that will come to pass. As Proverbs 19:21 says, “Many plans are in a man’s heart, but the counsel of the LORD will stand.” Or as Isaiah 55:11 says, “So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.”

Second, you must also accept that His plans are the best for you. A familiar verse is Romans 8:28. "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose." This is more than just a statement; it needs to be a belief. You must believe that no matter what happens to you (good, bad, pain, suffering, joy, or happiness) that all is a result of God's hand and that it is good for you. Our ideas of good tend to be things that make us happy and bring comfort to our lives, but that is the wisdom of the world talking. When you believe that God is working out all things for good, you can go through the worst suffering and still see the goodness of God through it. This is the motivation that helps the persecuted Christian preach Christ while at a work camp, in prison, being beaten or killed because of their faith. God's path is often the more difficult path but it is also the more rewarding path.

Do you believe that God's plan is good, acceptable, and perfect and should be followed no matter what the cost to you personally? YES NO MAYBE

When we purpose to do God's will He sometimes asks us to sacrifice things or to reprioritize them. For example, let's say you usually work long hours and work Sundays. God might have you tell your boss that Sundays just won't work because you feel God is changing your priorities to focus on being at church more. This could potentially cause you to lose your job. Would you still think God's will is good if He made you depend on Him to find a new job or live on less money? Doing God's will seems to inevitably shove you out of your comfort zone and into dependence on God. Are you willing to sacrifice for Him? Here are some areas you might have to sacrifice. Which ones do you think would be the hardest to sacrifice to follow God's will?

- Job
- Relationships
- Money
- Priorities
- Habits

Do you believe that God causes all things for your good, even if they are hard?
Yes No, but I want to work at it No, I don't think it's worth it

Are you ready to take the more difficult path and unlock the best possible life? _____

Review your original thoughts on why you should want to prove God's will; have they changed? _____

What steps can you make today from the things you have learned? _____

Now that we have covered “why” we should prove His will, we need to think of “how” we prepare to hear and understand His will. As you continue on this journey, your perspective will slowly be changed from a worldly view to a godly one to prepare your heart to determine God’s will and be willing to follow it.

How do you prepare to prove God’s will?

Let’s look back at Romans 12:1-2 and continue to dig into all that it has to offer about a life that is ready to do God’s will.

“Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is* your spiritual service of worship.² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”

These two verses cover three mindsets that will drive you toward proving God’s will.

1. A Mercy Mentality (verse 1)
2. A Life of Sacrifice and Service (verse 1)
3. Not Conformed but Transformed (verse 2)

Living with a Mercy Mentality

A mercy mentality is the first of three mindsets and is necessary for proving and doing the will of God. This is both a way of life and an additional motivator for continuing to do His will. You are probably wondering what is a mercy mentality and how do I live that way?

To live with a mercy mentality, you will need to address your sense of entitlement. Yes, we all feel entitled in some way and often we don’t even realize it.

Do you think God should help you because you deserve it?

Yes No Both Explain your answer. _____

If you look at life with the idea that you deserve salvation because you aren’t that bad or that God must answer your prayers the way you want, you have a full-blown case of the

entitlement mentality. As Christians, we must remember that mercy is not the state we deserve but judgment. There is a great misconception that as humans we start on neutral ground and then we just happen to tip the scales to negative and now deserve judgment. The truth is we started in a state of judgment, and God has rescued us from it and has shown us great mercy by giving us a place in His kingdom. In no way did we deserve mercy or do we currently deserve it, even if we do good things.

What do these verses have to say about mercy: the source of it, how it works, and what our response should be?

Romans 9:23-24 _____

Romans 2:4 _____

Romans 11:33-36 _____

The three practical ways to live with a mercy mentality are to think sensibly, live by allotment, and live as a member of the body.

First, let's look at thinking sensibly. Sensible thinking sets aside a prideful attitude and cultivates a humble view of ourselves.

Look up the definition of pride _____

Look up the definition of humble _____

How do these verses depict the prideful attitude versus the humble attitude?

Proverbs 16:18-19 _____

Proverbs 26:12 _____

1 Corinthians 4:7 _____

Galatians 6:2-4 _____

2 Timothy 1:7 _____

Where do you think you fall on the pride versus humble scale? _____

The second aspect of a "mercy mentality" mindset is living by allotment. What has God allotted to you? How are you responsible to live within it? Living by your allotment is not just about your spiritual gift, but also about living your life in general. Your allotment is about the sphere in which you are able to work within. Let's look up the verses, and then discuss it further.

Look up the definition of allotment.

What allotments have you been given?

Romans 12:3b _____

Ephesians 4:7 _____

2 Corinthians 10:13-15 _____

Living by allotment involves a “measure of faith,” as seen in Romans 12:3. In Ephesians 4:7, we have a “measure of grace,” and in 2 Corinthians 10:13-15, we have a “sphere of influence.” Part of determining God’s will for your life involves making sure you are living within each of these. Here are some examples to further clarify what they look like.

Measure of faith:

The measure of faith is referring to using your spiritual gift and the power that comes from the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:7, 11). Working within that measure of faith occurs when you are using your gift, through the power of the Holy Spirit. Let’s say you have the gift of evangelism. After a little thought, you book a flight to somewhere in SE Asia because you love evangelizing and you conclude that being a missionary is a worthy endeavor (which it is, but that’s not the point). Without taking time to prove God’s will, you might be jumping into something larger than God has given you the faith for. Faith is gained as you walk through trials; God tends to build on your faith by slowly increasing the difficulty of your trials. You might think the example is a little extreme but I have known people who did this. We are often taught “God has big plans for us;” though it is true, they might not always be glorious. When we live within our measure of faith, we submit ourselves to do the tasks God wants with the gifts He has given us. Your gift of evangelism might be used to reach the people on your block or your coworkers. Being sensitive to living in the will of God helps you realize that you can’t do it all and that you might not be called to mission work. Every need that pops up is not a leading from God to accept it. Knowing what God has allotted you is important.

Measure of grace:

When you aren’t determining God’s will for your life, you can easily fill your days with things that you shouldn’t be doing. You have an allotment of grace, and you can use it up doing things that aren’t God’s will. For example, there is a need in the church bulletin for a committee leader to beautify the church building. You jump on it because, well, a need opened, and it’s for church so it must be spiritual (God’s will) and someone should fill it. A few months later, after you have run out of your enthusiasm, you might be upset or are overwhelmed with the project, and no one is listening to you. In the end you quit. You failed to prove God’s will and you weren’t

allotted the grace needed. On a positive note, have you ever seen a Pastor who has preached for over 20 years and you have no idea how he could sustain it? It's called an allotment of grace.

Sphere of influence:

You are called to be a Sunday school teacher but you decide that what you want to be is the leader of a ministry. You have stepped outside of the sphere God has given you because you think the other one is better than what God has called you to. A leader is more prestigious whereas a Sunday school teacher might feel "below you." A Biblical example of this is, King David. He was anointed King when he was young and had to wait years before He became King (1 Sam. 16:1-13; 2 Sam 2:4, 5:3). He had an opportunity or two to take the Kingship from Saul but He waited patiently for the Lord's timing. He stated in 1 Samuel 24:6, "Far be it from me because of the LORD that I should do this thing to my lord, the LORD'S anointed, to stretch out my hand against him, since he is the LORD'S anointed." He worked within his sphere of influence at the time. God eventually extended his sphere to leading a nation and then to affect thousands of people over time through the Scriptures.

Evaluate your life. Do you think you are living within your allotment or extending beyond what God wants you to do? _____

The third aspect of a "mercy mentality" mindset is living as a member of the body. You are probably wondering how this fits in. Check out Romans 12:4.

"For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, ⁵so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another."

When we have a mercy mentality, we realize that we are a part of a bigger story. The way we play our part affects more than just our life. What do these verses say about how your choices affect others in your local body?

1. How does not attending to your own responsibilities affect your function in the body (1 Thessalonians 4:11-12)? _____

2. How do these verses illustrate a selfish mentality rather than a giving one (1 Corinthians 11:20-22)? _____

3. If your life is undisciplined, how could it affect your ability to be involved in body life (2 Thessalonians 3:11)? _____

4. What is your part in your local body of believers (1 Corinthians 12:1-12)? _____

When evaluating your place in the body, it is essential that you identify where God has placed you. Then work at being active and fully engaged in that area. It is possible to poorly carry out your membership by being half-hearted, exhausted, and give only “left over” energy to your serving. You must be aware that some parts require more study and more preparation in order to offer the body what would be considered “quality involvement.” Your personal life has to be arranged to deliver this on a consistent basis. This might mean not staying up late on Saturday nights or setting aside time to get in enough daily time of study and prayer. For some, it could mean taking the extra time to plan crafts or songs or illustrations. It is your job, as a member, to take full responsibility for making the right choices to prepare yourself to be involved at church. Sleeping in on Sunday and not coming to church shows that your mindset is off and that God’s desire for you to participate in the body isn’t that important. Ever tried using your hand when it’s asleep? The rest of the body will have to compensate for your absence when you are gone, they might have to limp through church life or risk becoming discouraged because a member of the body doesn’t seem to want to do their part. The take home is your choices affect others, especially at church. This doesn’t mean you can’t ever take a break from your church responsibilities or go on vacation, but consistent neglect of your gift does affect your fellow church members. Your mindset should include being concerned and aware about how your choices affect others.

Evaluate how well you think you are doing at fulfilling your part in the body. On a scale of 1 to 10, how are you doing?

Not										Actively
Participating				Somewhat						Participating
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

How can you improve your participating? Have you been waning in your desire to participate (we all do from time to time)? _____

What steps this week can you make to move forward with participating? _____

Living a Life of Sacrifice and Service

Why should we live a life of sacrifice and service? The answer connects back to the mercy mentality that we just talked about. You have got to come to the foot of the cross in utter humility before Christ. When you have the proper mentality, you see the cross for the great and glorious sacrifice it was and still is. This will cause you to lay your life before Christ and present it as a sacrifice to Him to do as He pleases. This is what the Apostle Paul alludes to in Romans 12:1.

“Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to **present** your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is* your spiritual service of worship.”

How do you worship God according to this verse? _____

Why do you do it (it's underlined)? _____

What exactly are you supposed to do? _____

Does God find it acceptable or unacceptable? _____

You may be wondering what a life of sacrifice and service looks like. Let's look at a few verses and see if you can get a clearer understanding.

What is the contrast in the two different ways of living?

1 Peter 4:2-3 _____

Ephesians 5:15-19 _____

Ephesians 5:5-12 _____

2 Corinthians 5:9-10 _____

Being a Christian is more than just saying a prayer; it is a way of life that is working toward aligning oneself with what God wants. This usually includes sacrificing your own desires, even if they may be okay for you to do. This is brought up in 1 Corinthians 10:23. "All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful, but not all things edify." The question you need to ask yourself is...

Are you willing and ready to go above and beyond what is "okay" for the sake of living Christ-like? YES or NO, why or why not? _____

Let's discuss some of these "gray areas" of the Christian walk. Your choices in these areas can make a big difference in your direction as a Christian. They could very well hinder your ability to live a life of sacrifice and service. Try to think of an example for each set of topics. One example will be provided for you to help you get started.

- **Edification Over Gratification (vs 23)**

- **Ex:** You love to stay up late and watch TV, but tomorrow is church. You have a choice. Gratify the desire to stay up late and watch your favorite shows or go to sleep earlier to be able to be awake and focused at church. Edification over gratification is predominately focused on YOU, not others.

- **Ex:** _____

- **Others Over Self (vs24)**

- **Ex:** A ministry opportunity comes up that you are qualified to lead but someone else is given the position. Since you know God has called you to do this, you serve underneath that person. You support them in the ministry even if you think you could do it better or are more qualified.

- **Ex:** _____

- **Liberty Over Legalism (vs 25-27)**

- **Ex:** I knew a guy who would not mow his lawn on Sunday. He said because it was the Lord's Day, he couldn't do any work or he would be sinning. This would be choosing legalism over liberty. You have the liberty to mow your lawn on Sunday. Legalism would tell you that it would be a sin or that it needs to be restricted.

- **Ex:** _____

- **Conscience Over Continuing (vs28-30)**

- **Ex:** Your brother in Christ has struggled with drinking since becoming saved. When you have him over for a BBQ, you think of his conscience and decide against serving him alcohol. Sometimes God will specifically lay it on your heart to give up drinking completely for the sake of serving Him in a greater capacity, even if drinking without becoming drunk is okay to do.

- **Ex:** _____

- **Glorifying Over Offending (vs 31)**

- **Ex:** There might be a place or circumstance where drinking wine is expected. You could choose to not drink, therefore causing an offense in order to glorify God. Maybe it is because you know a brother would struggle or you just want to set a certain example that is separate from your old life. So, you choose God's glory over the offense you will cause to your host by not drinking.

- **Ex:** _____

- **Pleasing Over Personal Profit (vs 32-33)**

- **Ex:** In a business setting, this could be who you do business with or how you run your business; for instance, choosing to not do business with strip clubs even though you could make a lot of money selling to them, let’s say, food or doors. On the personal side, this might be things like eating pork if you live in a predominantly Muslim country or eating fish on Fridays in a Catholic country.
- **Ex:** _____

As is with grey areas, it isn’t cut and dry. God gives each of us a different leading. A pastor might be called to remove drinking completely from his life; whereas, a member might not. This could include anything from music you listen to, TV shows you watch, where you hang out, or what you do on vacation. You must be willing to remove something for the sake of others. This does not mean that just because someone tells you that chewing gum offends him or her that you have to stop. You must be open and willing to sacrifice anything in your life for the sake of Christ and yet be listening to see what God wants you to do specifically. People can get offended easily at all sorts of things but God will lead you and show you the things in your life that He wants removed. If you aren’t listening and sensitive to the Spirit, you could fall into disobedience because you expect God to always override your choices. You must depend on Him to lead you, even in this area.

Living a Life that is not Conformed but Transformed

The last part of Romans 12:1-2 that we are going to dig into is the part that says, “do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” First, we need to simply define what conformed and transformed mean.

Look up the definition of conformed: _____

Look up the definition of transformed: _____

The heart of the matter is making sure that our inside beliefs reflect on the outside. We shouldn't hide our faith. We shouldn't try our best to fit in with the world. The beliefs we hold about God should be real and cause transformation. The "renewing of our mind" comes from time in the Scriptures and prayer. We have to take an active role in removing the old worldly things and replacing them with God's things. This includes attitudes, reactions, and activities. They will include sacrifice but also great reward, some rewards here and others in the world to come.

Look up the following verses. How should someone who is transformed act versus someone who is conformed?

- Romans 1:16 _____
- 1 John 2:15-17 _____
- Romans 8:18 _____
- 1 Cor 3:9-15 _____
- 1 Cor 6:9-11 _____
- 2 Peter 1:5-9 _____

God's word should change you.

"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;¹⁷ so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work." 2 Tim 3:16-17

"But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit." 2 Cor. 3:18

How has God's word changed you since becoming a Christian?

How have these topics from Romans 12:1-4 changed you?

Now that you have seen why you should want to do God's will, found out where your heart is at, and then how to prepare for doing His will; it is time to move forward and pursue how to determine God's will for yourself. Take time to pray that you will wholeheartedly submit to what God shows you His will is for your life.

Section 2

Determining the Source (From Him)

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! ³⁴ For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, OR WHO BECAME HIS COUNSELOR? ³⁵ Or WHO HAS FIRST GIVEN TO HIM THAT IT MIGHT BE PAID BACK TO HIM AGAIN? ³⁶ For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.

Romans 11:33-36

Have you ever heard something, and it seemed to open your eyes to a whole new world? You suddenly see things and make connections that you never noticed before? This happened after an in-depth study of Romans 11:36. Through the study, a theme emerged that we found littered throughout the whole of Scripture. It weaves its way through many of the familiar stories in the Bible, some of which we will cover. “For **from Him** and **through Him** and **to Him** are all things,” we see this holds the key to determining and doing God’s will.

Determining God’s will starts with determining the Source, the “from Him” in Romans 11:36. The main question is how do we find out if it is “from Him”? First, we will look at the different sources, differentiate between leading and feeling, match it up to Scripture, help you check your motives, and finally, figure out the right answer.

Sources

Based on these verses, what are some different sources?

Isaiah 55:8-9 _____

Isaiah 30:1 _____

1 John 4:1 _____

In the grand scheme of things, there are three main sources: God, man, or Satan. Just because something makes sense to you does not mean it is from God. God often works in ways that are different from the world. For instance, In Matt 5:43-46, Jesus contrasts the worldly way, which is to hate your enemy, with His way, which is to love and pray for them. Also, in James 3:13-18, it contrasts the outcomes of God being the source and us or Satan

being the source. When you determine the source, don't always just go with what makes sense. It might seem a little overwhelming to figure out if something is truly "from Him" but just go through each set of questions and keep praying for wisdom. God desires you to know His will, remember that.

Leading vs Feeling

It is easy to just give up at this point and decide what to do based on feeling. It pains me to ask people about how they figured out the answer and it goes something like this, "Well, it just felt right" or "God will stop me if I'm wrong and I feel this is the right thing for me" (See 2 Chron 32:31). Though there is a part where our desires come into play, we cannot solely base God's will on our hearts' desires. Why? Because Jeremiah 17:9 says, "The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" (NKJV) If our desire and feelings cannot fully be trusted, how do we sift through true God-given desires and our fleshly desires? Look at these Scriptures and ask yourself these questions. Your goal is to dig into where this desire came from.

"Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, **is not from the Father**, but is from the world. ¹⁷The world is passing away, and *also* its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever." 1 John 2:15-17 (emphasis added)

What three things are "not from the Father"?

- _____
- _____
- _____

In your current situation, what are the different options or available choices? _____

Do you remember when this became a desire, was there a certain moment or did it just slowly grow? _____

Was it connected to a time of study, prayer, or maybe a Bible verse you were looking at?

Why do you think this is more of a leading than just a good idea? _____

Did you find any sources of the lust of the flesh (self-satisfaction), the lust of the eyes (I see it, I want it), or the pride of life (desire to impress others)? _____

These questions should not automatically dissuade you from moving forward; instead, they should help you to figure out the origin of the idea. Something can be both a good idea and a leading. Usually, the more you search for the source the clearer it becomes if it is from God. The concept of figuring out the source takes practice, so don't get discouraged if it is harder to find than you think it should be. You also can have your sinful desires mixed in with the godly ones. Your job is to sift out the sinful ones and remove them. Let's start working through an example.

Example: John has a degree in Marketing. He is currently working at a small print shop making flyers, signs, and marketing the company's services on social media. He has a desire to work for a bigger company and feels he could make better money with the skills he has; which would make it easier for him to take care of his family. Should he start looking for a new job?

What options does John have? He can keep working at his current job, start putting out a résumé, or quit his job and then start looking. Since we aren't John, we wouldn't know exactly when the desire started to grow but we see that on a general scale this is a good idea. It would mean more money to stabilize his family and make it less stressful with finances. This is the part where people might stop and go "This is a great idea, check, it must be God's will." That is not always the case. Let us check out if there is any lust of the flesh or eyes or the pride of life stuck in there. With the information given, you wouldn't be able to determine that. But let's say John thinks he deserves a better job because he is so much better at marketing than his current position shows. He says that they don't realize what they have and don't pay him what they should. His attitude would conclude that he has a prideful bent for wanting to get a new job. He thinks he deserves it. God might be trying to teach him contentment or he could also just be dealing with pride and the origin is still a desire from God. If John realizes at this point that he is prideful and confesses it, he is still on the path to proving God's will. We will continue to build on John's story in the next section.

Does It Fit With Scripture?

Depending on your level of Biblical understanding, this could be either hard or somewhat easy. Throughout the Scriptures, there are many concepts taught beyond just the basic rules that are given. Although the Bible does not directly talk about changing jobs, like in our example, it does give many concepts for biblical choices. It is important when searching for topics in the Scripture not to ignore the context of the passage, so take time to search and understand. Because of the vast array of topics that we have to determine God's will in, we will give you some guidelines as we walk through the example of John and his choice to change jobs. You will need to try your best to apply this to your situation and find verses for your own decision.

Are there any Scriptures that specifically address this area, for it or against it? In John's case, there are not direct verses about job changing in the Bible but there are about different jobs that might not be appropriate for a Christian. For example, let's say, John, applied at a Strip Club for a marketing position or to work at an abortion clinic. God will never lead you to go against His Word.

- (Kind of Job) Ephesians 4:11-12 "Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. ¹² For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret."
- (Heart Attitude) 1 Timothy 6:6-10 "But godliness with contentment is great gain, ⁷ for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. ⁸ But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. ⁹ But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs."
- (God's Blessing) Proverbs 10:4 "A slack hand causes poverty, but the hand of the diligent makes rich."

You will need to find verses for your own decision; this might take a few days of study. If you are married, discuss it with your wife or husband. After you have found some verses, it wouldn't hurt to discuss it with your Pastor or a spiritually mature friend. Others can often see a different side of things, and also make sure you aren't taking Scripture out of context to fit your wants. Make sure to bathe this in much prayer. God leads often with a mixture of prayer, study, and other people helping to confirm what He desires.

To help you, here are a few topics and verses to go with them to get you started. What is God saying about His stated will in these verses?

Jobs

Colo 3:23 _____

Proverbs 10:4 _____

Relationships

1 Thess 4:3-4 _____

Romans 12:9-18 _____

Money

Proverbs 23:4-5 _____

1 Tim 6:17 _____

Priorities

1 Peter 4:10 _____

Matt 6:33 _____

Habits

1 Thess 5:16-18 _____

Eph 5:17-18 _____

These are only a start. It is still important for you to study on your own and find the verses God will lead you to. Personally, with most major decisions, God seems to impress a certain theme verse in my life that pops up all over the place. For example, before we were told my daughter was going to need heart surgery, she memorized John 16:33 at camp. "I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world, you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world." This popped up in messages at church, in my study, and on Facebook posts. Another instance was when I was struggling with intense anxiety. God brought up Isaiah 41:10 "Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand." What I guess I am trying to tell you is that God desires you to know His will and will lead you through His written word, so be watching because He may already be communicating with you. Look for themes or verses that keep coming up in your study or at church.

Now it is your turn.

- What Scriptures did you find for either John’s marketing question or your own choice? _____

- Does it go against Scripture? YES or NO or MAYBE
- Does Scripture directly confirm it? YES or NO
- Is it only covered in concepts? YES or NO

Motives

Now that you have cleared the idea with Scripture, it is time to delve into your motives a little more. It is easy to have hidden motives that we don’t even realize are there. Learning to self-examine will greatly enhance your ability to weed out wrong motives. Start by asking yourself a few questions.

- Do you have any fears regarding your choice? List them.

- Do you feel trapped where you currently are? Explain. _____

- Are there any selfish motives you feel are hiding under the surface? _____

- Is there something you want to accomplish or any agendas that are rolling around in the back of your head? Be honest with yourself about this, it sometimes is difficult to voice these if you have any. _____

Fear can be a big motivator and can easily cause you to make bad or rash choices. When we feel trapped in a spot and see no way out, we sometimes will do anything to relieve the pressure. We are warned against this in Proverbs 21:5, "The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance, but everyone who is **hasty** comes only to poverty." We want to think through our choices even if we feel pressure to make a choice right away. Proverbs 14:15b says, "the prudent gives thought to his steps." The feeling of pressure can be a powerful motivator. If you have ever had someone quote you to do some work on your house, they often tell you if you make the choice in the next 24-48 hours, you will get a deal but after that, it is done. They are playing on your fear and mixing it with pressure because they know that if they can get someone to make a choice quickly, they more likely to buy things they don't need. I almost bought a very expensive basement waterproofing system because of the pressure. After thinking about it, we went with a plumber who found mud in our drains, and it cost us \$450 instead of \$10,000. When you feel that kind of pressure, you must work at removing the pressure or fear from your decision-making process. Take a step back or give yourself a week to think it over. As the pressure and fear decrease, your mind will start to clear and you will be able to focus on God's answer to your problem or choice.

What did you find about your motives? Are they right, wrong or a mix? Explain.

Congratulations! You should now have a good idea where the source of your desires comes from. Is it from God, man or Satan? If not, keep studying and praying. This is only meant to be a guide and there are so many different choices that we must make. At this point, if you feel you have a clear answer, don't stop here. If the source is from God, it is a leading not just a feeling, it fits with Scripture, and your motives are right, then it is time to move onto the next step. Who are you doing it for, or as Romans 11:33 puts it, is it "for Him"?

Section 3

Determining the End Goal (For Him)

Romans 11:36 for the next step: “For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.”

In the last section, we determined if something is “from Him.” You might be wondering why we are skipping straight to “for Him” instead of going on to “through Him.” Well, think of the “from Him and through Him and to Him” as a sandwich. If we don’t make sure we have both pieces of bread, our sandwich is going to fall apart. If it is “from Him” but not “to Him,” you won’t be able to get the “through Him” right. We will be using 1 Corinthians 10 to guide us as we explore what our end goal is and if that end goal is for the glory of God.

Since the ultimate goal of determining His will must focus on God and His glory, we will need to dig deeper into your motives for accomplishing His will. You might be wondering if this is that important since we already determined that your choice is “from Him.” This is when the flesh wants us to accomplish God’s will in our own way instead of following God’s leading. The way we do it (through Him) and why we do it (to Him) is as important as it being “from Him.” If you fail to determine why you are doing it and who your focus is on, you might come to the end of your goal and find out you did it for your own glory. It could turn out to be “wood, hay [and] straw” and be burned up as stated in 1 Corinthians 3:12-15.

“Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— ¹³ each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. ¹⁴ If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵ If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.”

Don’t worry, the purpose here is to help you make sure you are building with “gold, silver, [and] precious stones.”

Let’s revisit 1 Corinthians 10:23 which we covered in chapter 1. We looked at something being lawful versus unlawful, but the verse unpacks the next level which is how profitable is our choice. We can ask ourselves, how our choice measures up in God’s scale of profitability? Our default measurement is the world’s measurement which calculates

profit in terms of money, things, respect or fame, and I could go on. God's measurements are not the same. Read the Beatitudes in Matthew 5, they are contrary to the world's way.

- Blessed are the poor in spirit.
- Blessed are those who mourn.
- Blessed are the meek.
- Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.
- Blessed are the merciful.
- Blessed are the pure in heart.
- Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake.

When it comes to spiritual choices, we will have to make choices sometimes that go against our own gratification, our own profit. Serving, meekness, Christlikeness are some of our main concerns, especially with church related questions. This does not mean we must sacrifice all of ourselves and our family to fulfill our spiritual service to the body. There will be times though that we must lay aside what is easy, or what we want to do, to serve the body of Christ. However, it is always balanced with the understanding that we cannot earn our love from God. He loves us. No sacrifice or serving is going to change that. It is about our hearts towards Him, and not doing something for Him. Serving in and of itself to punish yourself for God is not what He desires. King David reflects that what God truly desires is a broken spirit and a contrite heart, not sacrifice. In David's case it was a burnt offering, but our service is similar to a burnt offering to Him.

“For You do not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it; You are not pleased with burnt offering.¹⁷ The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.” Psalm 51:16-17

Here are a few questions to guide you along. Keep in mind your situation. You may need to pray about your answers or give yourself time to think about them. Not everything is automatically clear. Ask God to search you and show you the truth. Since we determined it was from Him already, we will not focus on if it is lawful because you should have already decided that in Section 2. This should help you keep your focus rightly on Him as it is so easy to veer off into doing something for our own glory.

Evaluation

1. Is this choice more than lawful, is it profitable, and how is it profitable (1 Cor 10:23)? Definition of Profitable – helpful or something that brings benefit to your life or others. (Acts 20:20) _____

2. Does my choice edify or build me up, or others, or both (1 Cor 10:23)? Definition of Edify – building up like a construction project, making something better (Eph 4:29) _____

3. Does my choice focus on my gratification only (1 Cor 10:23)? Definition of Gratify – “to be a source of or give pleasure or satisfaction, to give in to, indulge, satisfy” (MERRIAM WEBSTER) _____

4. If you look to the end of your plan or idea, where does it lead you? To God getting glory or people seeing how great you are (1 Cor 10:31)? _____

5. How will God be glorified (1 Cor 10:31)? _____

6. How will this choice produce fruitful labor and honor God (Phil 1:21-22)? _____

7. How will this better conform you to the image of His Son (Rom 8:28-29)? _____

8. Is the purpose of your whole life to live for God in these areas (Matt 5:16; 1 Peter 4:2)?

- a. Job/Work _____
- b. Relationships _____
- c. Money Management _____
- d. Priorities _____
- e. Habits _____

9. Are you afraid of what people will think if you do what God has called you to do (2 Cor 2:14-16)? _____

10. What are some verses that God has shown you in your leading? _____

Sometimes it is helpful to write a purpose statement so you can keep yourself focused on the goal of glorifying God. Here are some examples, then write your own.

Example: I am looking for a new job so that I can better provide for my family and be able to give more when needs arise because God says, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

Example: I am deciding to stay at home with the kids because God has led us to this, and I will obey even if money gets tight and I am afraid. I will trust in God’s promises that He “will provide all our needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”

Example: I am going to pass on this ministry opportunity because though it would be a step up from where I am at and is a more prestigious position, I feel God leading me to stay where I am at and serve Him faithfully. I would rather be in God’s will where He wants me than follow my own dreams aside from the timing God has.

Write your own purpose statement. It is best to include the verses you used in question 10 so that you have a clear Biblical direction. That way, if you forget why you made this choice, you can be reminded where God has led you and whose glory you are making your choice for.

Section 4

Determining the Means (Through Him)

“For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things.
To Him be the glory forever. Amen.”

Romans 11:36

You have now reached the third and final stage of Romans 11:36’s three-stage process to knowing and doing the will of God. I realized that learning to follow through on doing God’s will, His way, is like bowling with the bumpers up. Learning to stay in God’s lane on your path to doing His will is key to a life that honors God in all things. It is now time to create your own personal bowling bumpers for navigating life. Since there are so many possible choices you may be facing, we will use three main categories: His strength, His timing and His ways and help you to create Biblical bumpers for each.

As Christians, our lack of consistency, our circumstances, and our weaknesses (the flesh) get in the way of us following God perfectly. Peter is a prime example in Matthew 14 on how easy it is for us to lose focus on Christ. Matthew 14 details Peter’s experience of walking on water. Christ is right in front of Him and he even jumps out of the boat and is doing good until he notices the water and waves around him (the circumstances). By taking his eyes off Christ, he starts sinking. If you have ever watched a kid bowl, you probably can picture the ball rolling from side to side; hitting the bumpers until it finally reaches its destination. If you are at the beginning of your journey to proving God’s will, you will probably feel this way. After practice, you will get better at staying in God’s lane without always bumping on the sides. But establishing your bumpers will protect you for the times you wander, and they will catch you before you get too far off track.

A few things to remember about doing His will “through Him” is that you want to do His will in His strength, His timing, and His way. Do not focus on your purpose and run off by yourself. God might reveal something to you but waiting for His timing is crucial, just as David had to wait to become King. There was almost a 15-year gap between the time God told David he would be King and David became King. There was even an opportunity to take that kingship early and yet David waited for God’s timing. (1 Sam 24:3-6). God wants you to know His will and if you wait on Him, He will guide you each step of the way.

Living in His strength, His timing, and His ways are interconnected and yet still distinct. A helpful guiding verse is Proverbs 3:5-6.

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart,

and do not lean on your own understanding.
In all your ways acknowledge Him,
and He will make your paths straight.” Proverbs 3:5-6

Proverbs 3:5-6 tells us of a three-process step to keeping ourselves on the right path.

1. Trusting in God fully.
2. Not trusting our own choices but going to God (through prayer) and asking for His understanding.
3. Acknowledging God, asking yourself “what does God want?”

This needs to become a pattern in your life. Going to God (His strength), focusing on Him, and not expecting yourself to know the answer (His ways). This usually takes the form of studying the Bible to see what it has to say, praying for God to help you see what He wants you to do, and waiting (His timing).

His Strength

Christians often throw around Biblical phrases, for instance, “just trust God,” or “God will lead you,” or “you just need to give it to God.” Often, we don’t fully understand what that looks like in our day-to-day activities. The concept of “living in His strength” can be a little vague. It can be hard to articulate but with study we can acquire a greater understanding of it. We will start with looking at some verses.

“Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear
fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine,
so neither *can* you unless you abide in Me.” John 15:4

According to John 15:4, we need to abide in Him. How do we do that? Prayer, study, and often a whole lot of patience. Abiding is the way we will gain His strength. What kind of strength does He provide? Here are a few avenues of strength He gives. How do these verses help strengthen you?

- Grace: 2 Corinthians 12:9 _____

- Perseverance: James 1:2-4 _____

- Wisdom: James 1:5 _____

- Hope: Romans 8:18 _____

- Joy: Nehemiah 8:10 _____

Doing God’s will through His strength is a day-by-day process of depending on Him. God designed the process to help us walk daily depending on His strength. We need Him to work in us and through us to accomplish His purpose and His will, as it says in Philippians 2:12-13.

“So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed,
not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence,
work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;
¹³ for it is God who is at work in you, both to desire
and to work for *His* good pleasure.” Philippians 2:12-13

Here is an example of walking in God’s strength versus our own strength. Let’s say you work in children’s ministries. If you have ever had any interaction with children or teens, you know that their roller coaster of emotions can make them difficult to deal with. After a long day of work, you might feel tired and exhausted and not physically ready to go to church and teach them. Someone who is walking in God’s strength would pray and ask God to give them joy in teaching the kids, or an extra dose of strength to wake up and have energy to love the kids that God has given them to minister to. Someone that is walking in their own strength might just stop by a coffee shop and order a double espresso with no thought to ask God for help. If God has given you the task of teaching the kids or working in that ministry, He will also supply the strength to do it; especially when the going gets tough.

Think of a time you did something in your own strength and write about it. _____

Was it a joy to do? Did you accomplish what you were supposed to, or did you quit? Were you mad at God because He seemingly gave you something too hard to do? _____

Often, doing things that God wants us to do in our own strength creates burn out, feelings of hopelessness and can lead to quitting or anger at God. Have you ever felt that way about your life (marriage, raising kids, your job)? If yes, work through it and see if there are any connections to doing it in your own strength instead of asking God for help.

Write out what you found. _____

His Timing

We already looked at an example of God’s timing with David becoming King in 1 Samuel 24. Another example is Abraham. Unfortunately, He and Sarah didn’t wait for God’s timing, and it produced some lasting consequences. Abraham received a promise that He (God) would make him a great nation in Genesis 12:1-4. In verse 4, it says Abram (Abraham) was 75 years old when that promise was made. In Genesis 21:5, it says Abraham was 100 years old when Isaac was born. It’s hard to imagine waiting 25 years. Unfortunately, Abraham felt the same way and decided to help God’s plan along by listening to his wife’s advice and sleeping with her servant Hagar. Hagar’s son birthed a nation that was characterized by war and fighting. In Genesis 16:12, it says, “He shall be a wild donkey of a man, and his hand against everyone and everyone’s hand against him, and he shall dwell over against all his kinsmen.” The Hagar incident was 11 years into the 25 years between the promise and its fulfillment (Genesis 16:16). It is important to wait for God’s timing instead of taking matters into our own hands.

On the flip side, Jesus was a positive example of God’s timing. In John 11:1-44, which details the account of Lazarus being raised, Jesus receives a message from Mary and Martha that their brother Lazarus was ill. Now most of us would pack our bags and be gone

as soon as possible. But Jesus, being in tune with God the Father, knew He had other plans. In verse 6, it says “He stayed two days longer in the place where He was.” It also tells us that He was fully aware of what was going on in verse 4. “But when Jesus heard it he said, ‘This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.’” If Jesus had rushed over to see Lazarus, He might have only had to heal him from His sickness (which is still amazing) but we would have missed out on Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead. Or people would have doubted that Lazarus was truly dead, and it was just a trick by Jesus and His disciples. By the time Jesus arrived, Lazarus had been in the tomb 4 days (John 11:17). That is a long time to fake being dead. There was no doubt in the minds of the people that Lazarus was dead.

So, what can we learn from these examples? How will we know the correct timing? Since you have made it this far in the study, you most likely have been putting in a lot of time studying and praying. God gave us His word to help us, and He also gave us His Spirit, the Holy Spirit. That Spirit “helps our weakness; for we do not know what to pray for as we should... [and] intercedes for us” (Romans 8:26-27). When you pray, study, and connect with God, He will show you what you need to do and when you need to do it.

What do these verses say about trusting God to show you the timing?

- Hebrews 11:6 _____

- Hebrews 13:20-21 _____

Are you waiting on His timing? YES or NO

His Ways

“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,” declares the LORD.⁹ “For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts.” Isaiah 55:8-9

Look up the following verses about God’s ways. What do you observe?

- 1 Corinthians 3:18-19 _____

- Psalms 127:1 _____

- Isaiah 30:1 _____

Now look at what your part is in knowing His ways. What do you observe?

- Ephesians 5:15-17 _____

- James 3:13-18 _____

- 1 Corinthians 3:10 _____

- Luke 8:18 _____

- Galatians 2:20 _____

- Gal 5:22-23 _____

These verses tie back into Romans 12:2, “that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.” God’s ways are beyond what we can imagine. He sees the big picture of how everything, both in the past until the end and beyond, fits together for His purpose. We see the equivalent of a section of one puzzle piece of a billion-piece puzzle. This requires us to have faith and trust that He knows what

is best and that He “causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose” (Romans 8:28).

How do we practically live in His ways? We pray, we search, we are careful how we walk and build, we listen for Him to speak and lead, and we work at adding the qualities of God to our life, including His wisdom and then we will have the fruits that come from a life dedicated to Him. Now it is up to you to take what you have learned and apply it to your life day in and day out. Use what you have learned to continue to prove His will and do it **“from Him and through Him and to Him”** (Romans 11:36).

“Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him *be* the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.” Ephesians 3:20-21