

# How to Know God's Purpose

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## I. Preparation For Hearing God's Purpose

1. **Be a Christian.** "But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised" (1 Corinthians 2:14). Unless a person is converted, he is like a radio without a tuner. He cannot understand the guidance of the Holy Spirit because he is not attuned to Him.
2. **Be a surrendered Christian.** "If any man is willing to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from Myself" (John 7:17). Unless a person is surrendered (i.e. willing to do what God wants in advance—no matter what), God will not reveal His will to us.
3. **Pray.** "Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it shall be opened" (Matthew 7:7-8). You must demonstrate to God that you want to know His will by consistent prayer. The bigger the decision, the more prayer is needed.

## II. Tools For Seeking God's Purpose

1. **Talk with Christian friends.** "Where there is no guidance, the people fall, but in abundance of counselors there is victory" (Proverbs 11:14). You need advice from spiritual people who will be honest and who make good decisions themselves.
2. **What do the Scriptures say?** This requires us to answer 2 questions:
  - **Does it violate the letter of the Scripture?** "And by this we know that we have come to Him, if we keep His commandments" (1 John 2:3). Where the Bible is specific and clear, it always reveals the will of God.
  - **Is it in harmony with the spirit of the Scripture?** "Who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the



letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life" (II Corinthians 3:6). God teaches us much through principles and examples, which are less obvious but as important as outright commands.

3. ***What does the pattern of God's work in your life indicate?*** "Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, since he has taunted the armies of the living God" (I Samuel 17:36). Have you been moved toward this opportunity, or does it represent an abrupt change for which you are not prepared? God prepares us for His will.
4. ***Is my conscience truly clear about it?*** "The faith which you have, have as your own conviction before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves" (Romans 14:22). If you really feel uncomfortable, what you are considering is probably not God's will. If you really feel comfortable, it probably is God's will—unless your personality and preferences regularly lead to bad choices.

### III. Discerning God's Purpose

1. ***Don't be put off by a lack of settledness.*** Moses was afraid at the Burning Bush but by God's help became settled (Exodus 3-4). Are you pretty settled about going ahead? Then you should probably go ahead. Are you pretty settled about not going ahead? You probably should not. Jesus sought another way in Gethsemane—He at least felt reluctant, if not fearful. "And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, 'My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me yet not as I will, but as You will'" (Matthew 26:39). Fear does get in at times, but God can cast it out. Has He for you? "There is no fear in love but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love" (I John 4:18).
2. ***Am I excited about it?*** "Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men" (Colossians 3:23). Growing excitement over time usually means God is in it—unless excitement often leads you to problems.
3. ***Does my excitement or commitment deepen over time?*** "And so

in the present case, I say to you, stay away from these men and let them alone, for if this plan or action should be of men, it will be overthrown; but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them or else you may even be found fighting against God" (Acts 5:38-39). Here the Rabbi Gamaliel says to the Pharisees, "We need to see what happens over time. If God is in it, we will know."

4. ***If you had to say "I accept or reject your offer" and write a letter of explanation, what would you say in one written to God? What would you say in a letter written to the person who made the offer?***

### NOTES