

WORSHIP

SUGGESTED WORSHIP SONGS:

Endless Praise, In Jesus' Name, Good Good Father, God of this City, Build My Life

WELCOME

How confident are you that you know God's will for your life in different areas (relationships, work, ministry, etc.)? Use a scale of 1-5 to give your response, with 5 being "absolutely confident" and 1 being "not at all confident". Briefly explain your rating.

WORD

ACTS 16:4-10

Now while they were passing through the cities, they were delivering the decrees which had been decided upon by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem, for them to observe. ⁵ So the churches were being strengthened in the faith, and were increasing in number daily. ⁶ They passed through the Phrygian and Galatian region, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia; ⁷ and after they came to Mysia, they were trying to go into Bithynia, and the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them; ⁸ and passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. ⁹ A vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing and appealing to him, and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." ¹⁰ When he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

Continue reading through the rest of Acts 16.

Many of us desire to know God's will for our careers, marriages, and some of us, for a general direction in life. But it is one thing to KNOW GOD's will, and another thing to DO it.

Romans 12:2 shows us how we to know God's will: we should not be conformed to the ways of the world, instead we must be **transformed by the renewing of our minds**, then we will be able to know God's will. The will of GOD is described here as pleasing, acceptable, and PERFECT. If we want to be wise, we have to understand what God's will is and be sure to fulfill it (**Ephesians 5:17**). Our passage in **Acts 16** shows us **5 things** we can do to discover the will of God:

1. STUDY GOD'S WORD

God's WILL never contradicts His WORD. The foundation is knowing and studying God's Word. The Bible is very clear – God's Word is to be treasured; we should delight in reading and practicing it; and we should be thankful that we can be guided by it in all aspects of our lives (**Psalm 119:11, 47, 105**).

We see this in the decisions made by the Apostle Paul after the resolution of the conflict in **Acts 15**. In **Acts 15:36**, Paul began to go back to the places he previously visited to deliver the news and point people back to God's Word. Note that the basis for their actions all throughout Scripture is rooted in God's Word. The first thing you need to do to see if something is God's will for you, is to check if it is consistent with what the Bible teaches.

2. SEEK GOD'S MISSION

Like the Apostle Paul, we must keep in mind that God seeks to accomplish His will and mission even in the presence of challenges and unfavorable circumstances.

In **Acts 15:37-38**, we are given a scenario: Paul and Barnabas wanted to pursue GOD's mission. The problem was that Barnabas wanted to bring John Mark (who earlier deserted them in Pamphylia), but Paul disagreed. **Verse 39** shows us that they separated from one another, but this minor though sharp conflict didn't affect the movement! We even read in other passages (**Colossians 4:10, 2 Timothy 4:11**) that eventually, John Mark was appreciated by Paul. God's will is revealed as we pursue God's mission of making disciples of all nations. We may not always agree on the methods on how to accomplish this, but we must not let that distract us from advancing Christ's kingdom. We can disagree agreeably and continue to love each other, united in the fulfilment of our Heavenly Father's will.

3. SUBMIT TO AUTHORITY

Acts 16 opens with Paul and his team taking the **decrees** from the leaders in Jerusalem to the other churches to ensure that believers will submit to these teachings. This is a reminder for us to submit to authorities! Scripture is very straightforward when it comes to the commands regarding submission:

In relation to the government, every person is to be in subjection to governing authorities (**Romans 13:1-2**);

WORD (cont'd)

For children, there is a command to obey parents in the Lord (**Ephesians 6:1**). Wives are to submit to their husbands, as to the Lord (**Ephesians 5:22**). For those who are employed, we are commanded to be obedient to our bosses (**Ephesians 6:5**). In church, we are reminded to obey our leaders and submit to them (**Hebrews 13:17**). For the most part, God reveals his will for our lives through the leaders he appointed over us.

4. BE SENSITIVE TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

Throughout this chapter, we see how Paul walked with the Holy Spirit and submitted to His leading for the mission. Notice how God guides us: we must be busy doing the work, and as we do our best to fulfill His mission and for us, He will be the one to provide us specific direction on where to go, and what to do next. Thus, Paul received instruction to go to Macedonia, to not proceed to Asia but minister in Europe instead (**v11-12**). As Paul obeyed, the Lord paved the way for the first European converts like Lydia (**v14**) and the slave girl (**v16-18**) to come to Jesus.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

(Leaders: Please choose questions that are appropriate to the level of spiritual maturity of your members)

1. Talk about an instance when you asked for God's WILL and you did whatever it was because you desired to honor God in your obedience. How did God bless you in this endeavor?
2. Now share about an instance where you did not seek God's will and did things YOUR way. What was the consequence of that decision or action? What lesson did you learn from that experience?
3. Crucial to this passage is SUBMISSION to God's Word and authority. Is there an area in your life where you need to practice submission to God's Word and your leaders?

WORKS

PRAY CARE SHARE IN ACTION

Pray for those in authority over you that they may be given the opportunity to hear the gospel. Share the gospel to at least one person this week in obedience to God's will for us to be Christ's ambassadors of reconciliation.

One important reminder about God's will is found in **v19-24** where Paul and Silas faced painful opposition. **Doing God's will does not exempt you from problems or trials.** Many times, God will allow trials to mold your character as you accomplish His purpose.

5. SUPPLICATION WITH THANKSGIVING

When Paul ended up in prison (**Acts 16:25**) did he have a "pity party", crying out in despair? NO! Instead, he was praying and praising God! Paul writes from this prison and admonishes believers in **Philippians 4:6-7** to not worry about anything, but to pray with thanksgiving, and the peace of GOD will guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. At the close of **Acts 16 (v31-40)**, we read how even the jailer was converted to Christ, and Paul was released from prison through God's intervention. Our GOD is Sovereign and always in control, we can pray with thanksgiving knowing that He will work out His will for us as we obey. Let us seek to know His will and do it!

WEEKLY PRAYER POINTS

I. Thanksgiving

- Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives

II. Country and the World

- Upright and moral governance of Public Servants
- A God-centered Philippines
- Repentance and Salvation

III. Church

- That CCF Members would honor and love God and make disciples
- Elders, Pastors, Leaders, and Families
- Ministries and Churches worldwide

IV. CCF Facilities

- Worship and Training Center
- Prayer Mountain

V. Personal Concerns

- Deeper intimate relationship with God
- Righteous living
- Salvation of family and friends