


FINDING
GOD'S WILL
FOR
YOUR LIFE

DISCOVERING THE PLANS
GOD HAS FOR YOU

JOYCE MEYER

#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR



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New York • Nashville

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Introduction



Finding God's will for your life is not as difficult as you may think. The first step I would encourage you to take is, instead of trying to "find" it, asking God to show you His will for your life. Instead of focusing solely on trying to hear from God, you can also trust Him to speak to you. We *try* to do far too many things when we should simply trust God to guide, lead, reveal, and speak to us. When we want to know God's plan for our life, the first thing we need to do is pray, asking God to reveal His will to us. We should pray also for the people we know that they will be filled with the knowledge of God's will for their lives.

In this book, I write about the general will of God for all of us and the specific will of God for each of us. I believe we should first be sure we are doing

the general will of God for us as believers in Christ according to His Word. When we are, then God leads us into His specific assignments for us.

God's specific assignments may not seem big, supernatural, or even very spiritual. They are often quite ordinary. But when we do something ordinary for Him and for His glory, it becomes extraordinary.

A man I know was desperately seeking to discover what to do with his life. He was certain he was called to be a missionary, but he was unclear about what part of the world he should go to. India? Africa? Asia? South America? He pondered and prayed about this for so long that he became quite confused. At that point, he sought counseling from a seasoned minister, who listened intently to his concerns and finally said to him, "Do something, lest you do nothing." You see, it is entirely possible that God was not as interested in which part of the world the man went to so long as he went somewhere and began the work he was called to do.

One reason many people find it so difficult to know what God wants them to do is that they don't realize that He leaves many details of our lives to

our discretion. When God called me to preach the gospel, He didn't tell me specifically where to go. He simply said to go north, south, east, and west. Since this is a broad statement, I started in my town, St. Louis, Missouri, and organized meetings where I could teach God's Word in the north part of the city, the south part, the east part, and the west part. Some of those meetings took place weekly, and others were scheduled monthly. But I covered all four geographic areas of St. Louis, and the ministry expanded from there as opportunities came along.

As I mentioned, not everyone is called to do something that might be categorized as "spiritual." I say this simply because everything we do is spiritual if we do it for and with God. Even something as simple as the grocery store can become a mission field if we are open to taking every opportunity that crosses our path to represent Christ. Our assignment for a particular day may be to encourage everyone we meet or merely to smile and be friendly. These seemingly ordinary acts are very important to God.

I'm sure you realize that you cannot drive a parked car. As you seek to find God's will for your

life, my advice is to get your life out of “park.” Start moving in the direction you feel God is leading you. After you take an initial step of faith, you will get more definite direction from God. God told Abraham to go to a place that He would show him, but Abraham had to *go* before anything else could happen (Genesis 12:1).

As you step out in the direction that you believe you are to go in, you can trust that God will interrupt you if you are not going in the direction He wants you to go. Take one step at a time, and if the first step works, take another. If it doesn't, step back and go in another direction. Let me say as I begin this book: Don't be so afraid of missing God that you suffer what I call the “paralysis of analysis.” In other words, don't analyze your options for so long that you become stuck and unable to move forward. Overthinking causes a great deal of confusion and can keep you stagnant.

Being led by the Holy Spirit involves learning to listen to your heart instead of your head. Sometimes you simply need to quiet your mind and see what is in your heart—and there you will find God's will.

1



Serve the Lord with
Gladness



*Serve the Lord with gladness! Come before His
presence with singing!*

Psalm 100:2

A woman who once worked for us spent a great deal of time seeking God and questioning what His will was for her life, as many people do. One day she came across Psalm 100:2 and immediately knew in her heart that, at least for the present time, God simply wanted her to serve Him with gladness.

Serving God with gladness may not sound like much, but it may be one of the things that God enjoys most. Many of His people are dissatisfied, discontent, and frustrated—none of which reflects His will for us. It is rare to find an individual who can simply be content to do gladly what each day brings. The apostle Paul wrote that he had learned to be content whatever his circumstances might be (Philippians 4:11). Whether he was abased or abounding, meaning “in plenty or in want” (NIV), he learned to be content (Philippians 4:12). When we read Philippians 4:11 in the Amplified Bible, Classic Edition, we see the word *content* explained as being satisfied to the point where we are “not disturbed or disquieted.” We can live this way no matter what state we are in. We all want change in certain areas of our lives, but

it is important to enjoy where we are on the way to where we are going. This is not only important for our own peace, but when we have this attitude, we also glorify God because it demonstrates our trust in Him. This type of attitude is also a great way to show Christ to other people.

*Enjoy where you are on the way to where
you are going.*

Notice that Paul “learned” to be content. I wonder what had to happen in his life to cause him to learn this important lesson. I imagine he spent some time being discontent and ultimately realized that it did no good. I’m sure he wanted to be happy, as we all do, and we cannot be happy if we are discontent every time our circumstances are less than perfect. Life is full of ups and downs. It is not difficult, nor does it require any faith in God, to be content when circumstances are good, but our faith is tested when

they are not good. God uses challenging times to stretch and test our faith, according to 1 Peter 1:6–7:

[You should] be exceedingly glad on this account, though now for a little while you may be distressed by trials and suffer temptations, so, that [the genuineness] of your faith may be tested, [your faith] which is infinitely more precious than the perishable gold which is tested and purified by fire.

We never know how much faith we have until it is tested. I may listen to sermons on faith and think I know all about it, but when my faith is challenged, I may find I only have mental knowledge about faith and no experience. We learn from God's Word and life's experiences (Proverbs 3:13). The more our faith is tested, the stronger it becomes, until finally we become people who can truly be content in all circumstances because we trust God, no matter what is happening. We have learned from experience that He is good and always does what is best for us.

DO YOU WANT YOUR CHILDREN TO BE HAPPY?

Dave and I have a four-year-old grandson, and I can tell you that life is much more pleasant when he is laughing than when he is upset or frustrated. Anyone who has children wants them to be happy. It is heartbreaking to see our children depressed, discouraged, and discontent. If you want to know how God feels about you, just think of how you feel about your children. And if you don't have children, think of anyone you love, and you will know what God wants for us, His sons and daughters.

Gladness (joy) is contagious, and we should be contagious Christians. The world is filled with negativity and sadness. When I looked at the news today, I read about 28,000 people who were killed in an earthquake, a woman who was abducted from her home and later found dead, a famous singer who died from a drug overdose, rising prices on almost everything, and shortages of many items we need each day. On and on the bad news went, but the

gospel of Jesus Christ is called the Good News, and it certainly is.

We live in the world, but we don't have to let what is happening around us make us unhappy. We can avoid a lot of negativity by simply not listening to or reading too much about all the negative things that are happening. Fill your mind and conversation with all the good things you can think of. Be filled with hope for the future.

*Don't let what is happening around you
make you unhappy.*

You may think, *Well, Joyce, I wish I could be joyful and filled with hope*, and my answer is "You can." Wishing doesn't accomplish much, but action does. Being glad is a decision we make about the perspective (outlook) we have toward life. Some things may not be great, but they could be a lot worse. In many cases, no matter what is happening in your life, there

are people going through something worse. I encourage you to think about what you do have, not about what you don't have. Focus on the good things about the people in your life, not just on their weaknesses and flaws. If we would live by Matthew 7:12, which is called the Golden Rule and teaches us to treat others as we want them to treat us, we could serve the Lord with gladness.

The Bible is filled with scriptures about being glad, and without a doubt, being glad is God's will for us. Psalm 126:2–3 says, "Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy; then they said among the nations, 'The Lord has done great things for them.' The Lord has done great things for us; we are glad" (ESV).

Multiple scriptures talk about God's face shining on us and making us glad. For example, the writer of Psalm 119:135 says, "Make Your face shine [with pleasure] upon Your servant, and teach me Your statutes." Saying "Make your face shine" is like saying "Smile on me!" Isn't it wonderful to know we can be filled with gladness and that God smiles on us?

TWO WAYS TO JUMP-START GLADNESS

If our car battery is dead, we get someone to put jumper cables on it and jump-start it. In like manner, if our gladness is dead, there are ways we can jump-start it.

There are ways to jump-start your gladness.

Smile

The idea of jump-starting our gladness with a smile may sound overly simplistic, but when we smile, it seems to lift everything up, including our mood. God has given us the ability to smile and laugh, and He must have done this for a reason. After all, His Word says, “A merry heart does good, like medicine” (Proverbs 17:22 NKJV). Sometimes after I have enjoyed a bout of laughter, especially if it lasted very long, I feel as though my entire system has been aired out and energized. In fact, I recall laughing so hard one time that the laughter relieved a headache.

We don't have to wait to smile until we feel like smiling; we can do it on purpose. As the saying goes, "A smile is a frown turned upside down." Start smiling and let it change your feelings. Smile in the mirror every morning, and you will start to see a big difference in your life. Job, in the Old Testament, said he would stop complaining and smile instead: "If I say, 'I will forget my complaint, I will change my expression, and smile'" (Job 9:27 NIV). This is a great example for us to follow.

Make Melody in Your Heart to the Lord

Paul instructs us in Ephesians 5:19 to "Speak out to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, offering praise with voices [and instruments] and making melody with all your heart to the Lord."

I often find myself unintentionally humming a song that is in my heart, a song I have learned at some time. Recently, I caught myself humming the same tune for almost a week. It was a Christmas song, but it was not Christmastime. I was simply making melody in my heart. This is another way to jump-start your gladness. You can make melody in your heart on

purpose, or if you have developed the habit of doing it, you may just find yourself singing or humming without having purposed to do so. I love it when I catch myself humming a tune, because I know it means that joy resides in my spirit.

10 REASONS TO BE GLAD

1. Be glad your name is written in heaven and that you will spend eternity there with the Lord (Luke 10:20).
2. Be glad you never have to be filled with the poison of hatred, because God gives you the grace to forgive those who hurt you (Colossians 3:13).
3. Be glad you can develop and maintain a positive attitude in all things (Ephesians 4:23).
4. Be glad you can be patient. Being impatient only frustrates you and never makes things happen faster (Psalm 37:7).
5. Be glad that God is always with you. You are never alone (Deuteronomy 31:6; Matthew 28:20).

6. Be glad you are loved unconditionally every moment of your life (Romans 8:35–39).
7. Be glad the Helper (the Holy Spirit) lives in you and helps you anytime you need help (Romans 8:11, 26–27).
8. Be glad you have a home, food, clean water, and clothing, because many people in the world don't have these things (Philippians 4:19).
9. Be glad you can help others, because when you do, it will make you happy (Proverbs 11:25).
10. Be glad that God works all things together for your good because you love Him and are called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28).

God gives you the grace to forgive those who hurt you.

I heard a story about a woman who had lost her husband to cancer and her son to an accident within

the previous six months. She was so distraught that she thought about killing herself. Day after day, she was depressed and miserable. One day she was walking to the store and noticed a kitten following her. She felt sorry for the lonely, hungry little kitten and took it home to feed it. After she fed the kitten, he rubbed against her leg several times, and she felt the comfort of his soft coat. He purred, and she could tell she had made him happy. Knowing she made him happy put a smile on her face, and then her eyes were opened to the key to being happy for the remainder of her life. All she had to do was stop thinking about what she had lost and start giving what she had left. She started helping others anytime she could and went on to enjoy a happy life.

HOW OUR THOUGHTS AFFECT OUR JOY

Our thoughts affect every area of our life—especially our words, attitudes, and actions. If we think about what we do have and are thankful for it, we will be glad. But if we think about what we don't have and

the problems we are facing, we will be sad, angry, and filled with self-pity. We can intentionally redirect our thoughts to the things of God and invite Him to help us. We don't have to think about and meditate on whatever falls into our minds. The Word of God tells us that we can choose thoughts that produce and add to our gladness (Philippians 4:8).

Your thoughts affect every area of your life.

For the weapons of our warfare are not physical [weapons of flesh and blood], but they are mighty before God for the overthrow and destruction of strongholds, [inasmuch as we] refute arguments and theories and reasonings and every proud and lofty thing that sets itself up against the [true] knowledge of God; and we lead every thought and purpose away captive into the obedience of Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed One).

2 Corinthians 10:4-5

This passage tells us that we can cast down wrong thoughts and choose thoughts that reflect God's will. When we learn to think as God thinks, gladness will be our constant companion.

Never forget that God's will for us is to serve Him with gladness.