



**PRACTICAL GUIDELINES FOR AN EFFECTIVE CHRISTIAN LIFE**  
**Lesson Ten: Responding To the Will of God**  
**James 4:1-13-17**

**1. How do you define the phrase "the will of God"?**

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**2. Describe some ways you've seen other Christians discern God's will.**

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**3. How do you go about determining God's will for your life? Why?**

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**The Context**

For James, doing the will of God identifies another test of genuine saving faith. True Christians are characterized as "doing the will of God from the heart" (Eph. 6:6). They joyfully, willingly pray, "Your kingdom come, Your will be done" (Matt. 6:10).

On the other hand, a constant disregard for or lack of interest in God's will is a certain mark of the presence of pride—the ugly sin also underlying conflict, worldliness, and slander (4:1-12). To disregard God's will is tantamount to saying, "I am the sovereign ruler of my own life." Such a prideful attitude is antithetical to saving faith. As James has already pointed out, "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (4:6).

True to the pattern he has followed throughout his epistle, James takes a practical approach to the issue of responding to God's will. In this brief passage James gives significant insights into the ways people respond to God's will.

## Keys to the Text

God's Will: In the broadest sense, God's will is expressed in all the commands and principles of Scripture. Specifically, the Bible says that God's will is that people be saved (1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9), Spirit-filled (Eph. 5:17-18), sanctified (1 Thess. 4:3-8), submissive (1 Pet. 2:13-15), and suffering (1 Pet. 3:17). For the Christian, doing God's will is an act of worship (Rom. 12:1-2). It is to be done from the heart (Eph. 6:6) as a way of life (Col. 1:9-10; 4:12), recognizing that He must energize us to do it (Heb. 13:20-21). Acknowledging God's will affirms His sovereignty over all aspects of life. We live only because God so wills it, for He controls life and death.

### James 4:13

Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit"; Proverbs 27:1

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### James 4:14

Whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. James 1:10, Psalms 35:9

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### James 4:15

Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that." Prov. 19:21, Romans 1:9-10

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### James 4:16

But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.

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**James 4:17**

Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.

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1. How does James characterize our lives (i.e. The length of our lives)? Why is this significant?

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2. Why does James insist that we preface our plans by saying, "if The Lord will....."? What does this mindset indicate?

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3. How does a concern for the will of God demonstrate our belief in His sovereignty?

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4. According to James, what lies behind the reasoning that excludes God and His will?

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