

Why Can't I See God's Will For My Life?

Presented by Pastor Scott Walters on 03/15/20

At Crossroads United Methodist Church

Waunakee, WI

My prayers extend to each of you today.

A time when the communal nature of the church is challenged.

A time to use technology to stay in touch;
for each person and the church.

We are in the midst of a Lenten theme of "Why? Making Sense of God's Will" by Adam Hamilton.

My message today will contain a couple of the ideas shared in that book.

Almost inevitable: there will be times in our lives when we ponder questions such as, "How can we discover God's will for our lives?"

- 1] Is the story of my life already written?, or;
- 2] Is my life a "work in progress?"

Shakespeare, "As You Like It" –

*All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances;
And one man in his time plays many parts.*

I have heard some Christians tell others that God has, even before you were born, a complete plan for your life.

As though we were merely actors offering the lines already written for us by "the great Playwright in the sky."

If that's true, then using simple logic, dictates that God is the one responsible for the world's cruelty and genocide and injustice.

Or, if it's true that God has a plan all laid out for each one of us, where is the justice in God punishing us for something we apparently had to do, because it was in God's plan.

That simply doesn't ring true, at least to me.

What if God, in giving to us, freedom and life, what if God invites us to collaborate in writing the stories of our lives?

Few times, I have been part of Dialogue Sermons; [DESCRIBE]

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Using that metaphor, perhaps you and God can write the dialogue sermon of your life.

Hamilton speaks of God's "Prescriptive Will:"

the instruction God has given us that will lead us to great spiritual and relational health: what I can, "wholeness of life."

God's will is more about how we make decisions instead of the specific decisions we make.

Examples: The Ten Commands; 2 Greatest commandments of Jesus and today's passage from the letter to the Colossians:

We haven't stopped praying for you and asking for you to be filled with the knowledge of God's will, with all wisdom and spiritual understanding.

We're praying this so that you can live lives that are worthy of the Lord and pleasing to him in every way: by producing fruit in every good work and growing in the knowledge of God.

Over the years. I spoken to so many parents who shared how, as much as they wish they could, at points, could not plan out the lives and the decisions of their children.

They agonized over their children and what they thought to be unwise decisions; and joy over accomplishments and generosity given to others.

Maybe, just maybe, God is like a loving mom or dad who realizes that, ultimately, they can't make daily decisions for their son or daughter.

And like a parent, God weeps in agony when one of God children makes a decision that hurts their lives or the lives of others

And like a parent, God weeps in joy over those decisions made that may put off immediate gratification in order to accomplish something hard or lasting or true or just.

Friends, my prayer for you is that each one of you might know that your story is complete.

I say that whether you are 9 years of age, or 99 years of age.

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God wants the very best for you, and wants you to shape the rest of your lives in the ways you can best express your love of creation and your hope for the future, and also God's love expressed through you.

That is God's will. That you *"lead lives worthy of the Lord, fully please to God, as you bear fruit in every good work and as you grow in the knowledge of God."*