Colossians 1:9

> “For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you.
> We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives.” — *Colossians 1:9 (NIV)*

In this verse, Paul expresses one of the most important spiritual priorities: that believers should be filled with the knowledge of God’s will. This knowledge isn’t just intellectual it involves spiritual wisdom and understanding (*synesis*) given by the Holy Spirit.

What Is God’s Will?

In Christian theology, God’s will is commonly understood in three dimensions:

God’s Sovereign Will (Decretive Will)

This refers to God’s unchangeable plan that governs all of history. It is hidden and cannot be thwarted.

> “The Lord Almighty has sworn, ‘Surely, as I have planned, so it will be, and as I have purposed, so it will happen.’” — *Isaiah 14:24*

> “Our God is in heaven; he does whatever pleases him.” — *Psalm 115:3*

This aligns with the doctrine of divine sovereignty. God’s ultimate purposes (like Christ’s crucifixion for our redemption *Acts 2:23*) unfold exactly as He intends.

God’s Moral Will (Preceptive Will)

This is God’s revealed will in Scripture what He commands all people to do.

> “It is God’s will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality.” — *1 Thessalonians 4:3*

> “Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” — *1 Thessalonians 5:18*

> “Do not lie. Do not steal. Love one another.” — *(Various commands in Romans 13, Exodus 20)*

This reflects God’s holiness and moral character, and aligns with the ethical aspect of sanctification growing in Christlikeness (cf. Romans 8:29).

God’s Specific (Personal) Will

This is God’s unique guidance for individual decisions such as

career, relationships, or ministry assignments.

> “Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, ‘This is the way; walk in it.’”
> — *Isaiah 30:21*

> “The Spirit told Philip, ‘Go to that chariot and stay near it.’”
> — *Acts 8:29*

This is associated with divine providence and personal calling, which varies per individual and is discerned over time through spiritual disciplines and surrender.

How Do I Discover God’s Will?

The Bible outlines several key ways by which believers can discern God’s will for their lives:

1. Prayer — Communing with God

> “If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.” — *James 1:5*

> “Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.” — *Colossians 4:2*

Prayer is a means of grace, a spiritual discipline by which believers engage God relationally and receive His wisdom. According to Reformed theology, prayer aligns us with God’s purposes more than it changes God’s mind (cf. *Matthew 6:10* – “Your will be done”).

2. The Word of God — The Foundation of Discernment

> “Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.” — *Psalm 119:105*

> “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.” — *2 Timothy 3:16–17*

According to the doctrine of Sola Scriptura (Scripture alone), the Bible is the highest authority for faith and life. The general will of God is always consistent with Scripture, and personal guidance never contradicts it.

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3. Christian Community & Counsel — The Wisdom of the Body

> “Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.” — *Proverbs 15:22*

> “Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety.” — *Proverbs 11:14 (ESV)*

> “It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us…” — *Acts 15:28*

In ecclesiology (the theology of the church), the body of Christ functions together in mutual edification and discernment. This reflects the priesthood of all believers (1 Peter 2:9) and the need for communal discernment, especially in major decisions.

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4. Spiritual Discernment — Growth in Wisdom and Maturity

> “Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.
> Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is his good, pleasing and perfect will.” — *Romans 12:2*

> “But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.” — *Hebrews 5:14*

This connects with sanctification and the work of the Holy Spirit. As we grow in Christ, we develop discernment a spiritual “radar” to sense what aligns with God’s heart. This is what Paul called *“the mind of Christ”* (1 Corinthians 2:16).

Why Is This So Important?

> “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven,
> but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.” — *Matthew 7:21*

> “The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the

> will of God lives forever.” — *1 John 2:17*

This highlights the difference between nominal Christianity (in name only) and true discipleship. Doing God’s will is not just about knowledge it’s about obedience, which is the fruit of saving faith (James 2:17).

Practical Summary — How to Walk in God’s Will:

Final Encouragement

> “The Lord will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs... and strengthen your frame.” — *Isaiah 58:11 (NIV)*

Knowing and doing God’s will is not a mystery for the elite, but a calling for every believer. Through prayer, Scripture, community, and spiritual maturity, God lovingly makes His will known to those who seek Him.

> “You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.” — *Jeremiah 29:13 (NIV)*

Be Blessed

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