

God's Permissive Will

Someone asked me this question once: I recently decided to marry a non-Christian man, but he is "open" to hearing about my faith. I know I did not follow God's "perfect will" for my life, but isn't it God's "permissive will"?

This question takes me back almost 30 years, in Christianity. It was in the mid to late 80's when I first began to hear these catchphrase words of "God's permissive will Vs God's perfect will" for our lives.

The idea represented by these phrases indicates that God has a unique and perfect plan for each one of us. It is a plan that he has designed to bring us the greatest good for our lives, and the greatest happiness. However, flawed humans that we are, for a wide variety of reasons, we do not always "find" that path he desires for us, but very often end up taking a detour route along the way. These detours, since we are still Christians, become a part of God's plan for our lives, because He loves us and will never forsake us or leave us. (Deut 31:6, purposely misquoted out of context).

There are a variety of problems with these concepts and this line of thought. For starters, these phrases and ideas are not biblical concepts though often many biblical texts are quoted to back them up.

For example, it has been stated that God's "perfect will" for Israel was that they enter into the Promised Land, directly from their departure of Egypt. However, they got detoured along the way and ended up following God's "permissive will" for their lives, the 40 years of wandering in the desert. Clearly God did not leave them or forsake them during this period, and their detour became a part of God's plan for their lives, his "permissive plan".

The problem with this type of mentality or thinking, is that it tends to justify sin. It eradicates right and wrong, transforming them into just a series of choices. It turns the clear-cut directives of God into a gray area for our existence.

When you and I choose to follow God's "permissive will" we are choosing to DISOBEY GOD, and that is sin!

It is not a matter of me making a choice to settle for less than what God has prepared for me.

It's not a magnanimous or humble decision for me to say, I'm happy enough with this option.

It's not like we are buying a new car and saying, well the perfect car would have bun warmers in the seat and power adjusting side view mirrors, but I can live just fine without those additional options.

To knowingly disregard God's plan for our lives is SIN.

The Israelites wandered the desert for 40 years because their SIN angered God who disciplined them for it, they weren't following His permissive will for their lives, they were walking in disbelief and sin and because of it, ONLY 2 of them were allowed to enter into the Promised Land.

HEB 3:16 Who were they who **heard and rebelled**? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt? ¹⁷ And with whom was he **angry for forty years**? Was it not with **those who sinned**, whose bodies fell in the desert? ¹⁸ And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed? ¹⁹ So we see that they were not able to enter, **because of their unbelief**.

HEB 4:1 Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. ² For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith.

This description hardly sounds like people following in the footsteps of the "permissive will" of God.

Knowingly following God's "permissive will" for our lives is making a choice to REBEL AGAINST the one we call our LORD. This in and of itself is a contradiction of terms. Additionally, we have not only sinned against God in the decision we make, we have also defamed and blasphemed his name by providing an inaccurate portrayal of who He is while we bear His name, the name of Christian. We have testified to everyone around us that God is tolerant of sin creating a false witness of who He is and what he desires of our lives.

I have many times heard young college Christians try to justify why it is ok for them to start dating an unbeliever. Invariably they argue something like this: "But I believe God brought them into my life for a reason."

My answer has always been the same: "I believe that too, it was so that you could be a faithful witness of Christ in their life and you blew it by dating them."

So what can be done about this problem?

In this and every such case, the solution is always and simply the same. It comes down to to one word – Repent!

That is not to say anyone in a similar situation should leave their new husbands or wives.

That would be an additional sin. Recognize though that you have sinned against God, pray for forgiveness, and you will be forgiven. Live the life of an obedient Christian before your spouse and pray for their salvation. And perhaps most importantly, don't blame God if heartache comes your way, there are natural consequences to sin, and being unequally yoked with an unbeliever will bring many of them to fruition.

If you desire to truly follow God's specific will for your life, the only way to find and follow His specific plan for you is to live according to His general will for all Believers. That implies regular times of prayer, fasting, Bible study and Christian fellowship. These Biblically founded directives were designed to shape and renew your goals and desires, refresh your focus and priorities and clear away the uncertainties that we often face when trying to find God's will for our lives.

Rest assured that God loves you.

Find your joy in him FIRST, HE IS THE ONLY WORTHY!