

“Just Do Something”

Kevin DeYoung

Kindle Notes by Dave Kraft

“Adulthood” is the new normal. Perhaps your free spirit needs less freedom and more faithfulness. Our search for the will of God has become an accomplice in the postponement of growing up, a convenient out for the young (or old) Christian floating through life without direction or purpose. Too many of us have passed off our instability, inconsistency, and endless self-exploration as “looking for God’s will,” as if not making up our minds and meandering through life were marks of spiritual sensitivity. I’d like us to consider that maybe we have difficulty discovering God’s wonderful plan for our lives because, if the truth be told, He doesn’t really intend to tell us what it is. And maybe we’re wrong to expect Him to.

1. God’s Decrees- Things he will accomplish in the bigger scheme of things; his grand and overarching plans and purposes

2. God’s Desires- His expressed desires for His children explicitly stated in His Word; 1 Thessalonians 4:3 “For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that you abstain from sexual immorality. 1 Thessalonians 5:16, “Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”

3. God’s Direction-Where we struggle with God’s will for us in a future non-moral decisions, for which, in many cases, he has no specific will. For example: What job we take, where we live, what school we attend, etc.

First reason we seek to know God’s specific will of direction for us: We want to please Him. We should really stop putting ourselves through the misery of over-spiritualizing every decision. Our misdirected piety makes following God more mysterious than it was meant to be.

The **second reason** some of us seek God’s will of direction is because we are, by nature, quite timid.

The **third reason** we seek God’s will for direction is we are searching for perfect fulfillment in life. Many of us expect too much out of life. We’ve assumed that we’ll experience heaven on earth, and then we get disappointed when earth seems so unheavenly. I’m pretty sure most of us would be more fulfilled if we didn’t fixate on fulfillment quite so much.

The **fourth reason** is that we have too many choices. My hunch is that most of our obsession with knowing the will of God is due to the fact that we are overburdened with choice.

I wonder if the abundance of opportunities to explore today is doing less to help make well rounded disciples of Christ and more to help Christians avoid long-term responsibility and have less long-term impact. “Decide” comes from the Latin word *decidere*, meaning “to cut off.” I am advocating floundering less, making a difference for God sooner, and—above all—not spiritualizing year after year, our inability to make decisions in the elusive quest to discover God’s will. I’m arguing that our eagerness to know God’s will is probably less indicative of a heart desperately wanting to obey God and more about our heads spinning with all the choices to be made.

The **fifth reason** we want to know the will of God is because we are cowardly. Many of us—men and women—are extremely passive and cowardly. We don’t take risks for God because we are obsessed with safety, security, and most of all, with the future. We should stop looking for God to reveal the future to us and remove all risk from our lives. We should start looking to God—His character and His promises—and thereby have confidence to take risks for His name’s sake.

Because we have confidence in God’s will of decree, we can radically commit ourselves to His will of desire, without fretting over a hidden will of direction. But God’s normal way of operation is not to show this plan to us ahead of time—in retrospect, maybe; in advance rarely. The conventional approach to discovering God’s will focuses almost all of our attention on non-moral decisions. The conventional approach implies that we have a sneaky God. Anxiety is simply living out the future before it gets here. The conventional approach encourages a preoccupation with the future.

Our fascination with the will of God often betrays our lack of trust in God’s promises and provision. We must renounce our sinful desire to know the future and to be in control. The conventional approach undermines personal responsibility, accountability, and initiative. Passivity is a plague among Christians.

It’s not just that we don’t do anything; it’s that we feel spiritual for not doing anything. The conventional approach enslaves us in the chains of hopeless subjectivism. Why did the Lord give us brains and say so much about gaining wisdom if all we are really supposed to do is call on the Lord to tell us what to do in a thousand different non-moral decisions? Die to self. Live for Christ. And then do what you want, and go where you want, for God’s glory. The most important decision we face is the daily decision to live for Christ and die to self. If we do those two things, then we are free to choose between jobs and schools and locations. God wants us to stop obsessing about the future and trust that He holds the future.

God does not have a specific plan for our lives that He means for us to decipher ahead of time. What is a bad idea is treating non-ethical decisions as weightier than they really are because you think that there is One Right Answer that you must discover. What’s also a bad idea is expecting God to tell us what to do whenever we are perplexed.

1: God guides us by His invisible providence at all times

2: God can speak to His people in many different ways, guiding them with their conscious cooperation

3: In these last days, God has spoken to us by His Son

4: God continues to speak to us by His Son through His Spirit in the Scriptures

5: Apart from the Spirit working through Scripture, God does not promise to use any other means to guide us, nor should we expect him to

With few exceptions, Paul ... made his own decisions about the non-moral matters of his life. If we do nothing, because we are always trying to figure out the perfect something, when it comes time to show what we did for the Lord, we will not have anything.

Some traditional ways to seek God's direction for the future:

1. OPEN DOORS (AND DON'T BE AFRAID TO KNOCK)

Here's the bottom line: If God opens the door for you to do something you know is good or necessary, be thankful for the opportunity. But other than that, don't assume that the relative ease or difficulty of a new situation is God's way of telling you to do one thing or the other.

2. FLEE THE FLEECE!

Humble goals and loosely held plans are good. Expecting God to do tricks for us is bad. Gideon's request was probably an indication of cowardice and unbelief more than faithful, wise decision making.

3. RANDOM IS AS RANDOM DOES-Focusing on random verses out of context

4. IMPRESSIONS AS IMPRESSION-Going with subjective feelings in making decisions.

Don't confuse hunches and subjective feelings with certain words from the Lord. We cannot infallibly judge the rightness or wrongness of our plans based on the feelings we have about them after prayer. Open doors, fleeces, random Bible verses, and impressions, if construed in the right way, have their place in the Christian's life. But in my experience, these tools have been wielded for more harm than good. They are easily abused, manipulated, and lend themselves to superstition. Isn't it interesting that we are never told in Scripture to ask God to reveal the future or to show us His plan for our lives?

But we are told—in no uncertain terms—to call out for insight and to cry aloud for understanding. We get wisdom by reading our Bibles (storing up God's commands), listening to sound advice (turning our ears to wisdom), and praying to God (calling out for insight).

When there is an overabundance of Christian singles who want to be married, this is a problem. And it's a problem I put squarely at the feet of young men whose immaturity, passivity, and indecision are pushing their hormones to the limits of self-control, delaying the growing-up process, and forcing countless numbers of young women to spend lots of time and money pursuing a career (which is not necessarily wrong) when they would rather be getting married and having children.

The problem with the myth of "the one" is that it assumes that affection is the glue that holds the marriage together, when really it is your commitment to marriage that safeguards the affection.

In talking with my grandpa about his life, I asked whether he wrestled with God's will, or remembered waiting for a sense of direction before taking so much initiative in life as a young man. "No," he said. "I felt like God was waiting for me to get involved." I wonder how many of us are just the opposite—waiting for God to tell us what to do rather than assuming He's waiting for us to go out and be obedient.