

Dear Friend,

I watched Pastor Carter preach the message you are about to read while it was streaming live on the TSC website. It really spoke to me. I am learning to go back to basics—praying, reading the Bible, loving my family. I am discovering that God wants me to start finding His will in simple, practical things—one day at a time.

Learning to trust God with the “small” things helps put the larger things into perspective. At Times Square Church I work in the missions department directing an initiative called Feed New York. Every month, Feed New York provides food to thousands of New Yorkers through one hundred churches across the city. Feed New York has also brought these churches together to pray.

Initially, Feed New York had funding for one year—and it is now headed into its fourth year. It is amazing to see what God can do when we surrender to finding His will one day (or year!) at a time.

Learn how you can help Feed New York by visiting feednewyork.org.

Enjoy the read,

Kate Hughes

FINDING THE WILL OF GOD

by Carter Conlon

“How can I find the will of God? How can I be sure that I am walking in His will for my life?”

Do you live with the constant fear that you are missing God’s will for your life?

Have you ever found yourself asking these questions? Do you find the topic of the will of God confusing, or do you live with the constant fear that you are missing His will for your life? If so, I hope that by the end of this newsletter you will have a better understanding of what the will of God is about.

To begin, let’s look at a statement that Jesus Himself made concerning the will of God: *“If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority”* (John 7:17). In other words, this applies to anybody who wants to do the will of God—people who are not praying or going to church simply to get God to agree with their will, although this is common in much of Christianity today. In fact, it is as if we have inverted the truth into, “Lord, not Thy will but mine be done!” There is no shortage of preachers who will tell the people anything they want to hear concerning their own will, their

own vision of themselves, or how they see their future playing out.

However, according to Jesus, if you have it in your heart to do the will of God, you will understand and know what truth is. You will know His voice that says, “This is the way, walk in it.”

Since the time I was a young Christian, I wanted to do the will of God—even though I did not always fully understand what that was going to look like in my life. I remember going to church, sitting in the congregation and listening to the preacher, and thinking, “How in the world can these people sit under this kind of message? Don’t they see how off track this is?”

Most of the time they sat and listened because they did not really will to do the will of God. People simply wanted to go to church so that they could be blessed. They wanted their finances and their sphere of influence to increase. They lived with the sentiment, “Lord, if it fits into my parameters of what I think Your will should be, then fine—I’m in! But if it doesn’t, I don’t want to hear it.”

When people do not want to do the will of God, the first thing that comes into their lives is doctrinal confusion, eventually followed by an inability to discern truth. As their prayers go unanswered, they come to the conclusion that God doesn’t speak to them. However, the bottom

line is that they do not really want to do the will of God. They want their lives to be extraordinary—they want the crowds; they want to raise the dead, lay hands on the sick and have them recover; they want to speak in tongues and all the rest of it, but they do not want to do obey the revealed will of God.

Oftentimes the unique will of God leads you to an unfamiliar place, and it initially comes as a strong impression on your heart.

■ THE REVEALED WILL OF GOD

First of all, let us distinguish between the “revealed will of God” and what I call the “unique will of God”—or those things that the Lord has set you apart for—what He has called you, exclusively, to do for Him. Oftentimes the unique will of God leads you to an unfamiliar place, and it initially comes as a strong impression on your heart.

On the other hand, the revealed will of God is the practical part of His will, to which all of us are collectively called. You do not have to go searching all over the place for it—it is right there in the Bible. If you take a concordance and look under the word “will,” you will see that the will of God is clearly revealed throughout the Scriptures, particularly in the New Testament. Let’s look at some examples.

The apostle Paul says, *“For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel*

in sanctification and honor” (1 Thessalonians 4:3–4). This is where we need to start, especially in this generation. We must turn away from sexual immorality in all of its forms. We must ask God for the strength to live a holy life, set apart for Him.

Continuing in First Thessalonians, we find another example of the revealed will of God: *“In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you”* (1 Thessalonians 5:18). In everything give thanks—which means you ought to give thanks for the home you are in, the marriage you are in, the job you have, the family you are a part of. Learn to be thankful instead of constantly praying, “Oh, God, get me out of here and I will serve You; get me out of here and I will love You! There will be no greater worshiper than me if You will just get me out of this place!”

But the Lord says, “No, that is not My will! My will is that you learn to give thanks where you are. You are going to learn to win the victory where I have placed you.”

Do not focus on being a great missionary or preacher if you do not love your wife as Christ loves the Church.

Or consider the verse: *“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her”* (Ephesians 5:25). I remember the first time I read that, I blurted out, “Oh, right, that’s easy for you to say!” After all, the apostle Paul was single! However, we cannot ignore any aspect of the revealed will of God.

I have never “found” the will of God for my life. As I did the practical things, the unique will of God simply began to unfold before me.

Do not focus on being a great missionary or preacher if you do not love your wife as Christ loves the Church. If you are not willing to be given for her, then put down the illusion of this unique calling coming out of heaven into your life one day.

As you continue to read through the Scriptures, you will find that it is also the will of God that we learn to speak the truth. After all, this is a kingdom of truth, and we represent the One who said, *“I am the way, the truth, and the life”* (John 14:6). It is the will of God that we be loyal and dependable, and that we do not quit when things do not go right. Be loyal in the workplace as an employee who shows up on time and leaves at the proper time, not before. Be helpful; be concerned about others. Reach outside of your own sphere—beyond your own struggles, trials, concerns, and desires. Don’t be a person who does the will of God only when it feels right or if it is convenient. Ask God for a heart to genuinely care about other people.

■ THE UNIQUE WILL OF GOD

Often while we are doing the revealed will of God, the unique will of God just seems to start to find us. That is the key. I have never “found” the will of God for my life. As I did the practical things, the unique will

of God simply began to unfold before me. I simply walked, the best I knew how, in the way that all who are called by the name of Christ are supposed to walk. Eventually, I began to get strong impressions on my heart that would not go away.

To be honest, most of the time the will of God was not something I naturally wanted to do. For example, I had to get up early every morning to feed the animals on our farm, drive thirty-six miles to work, work an eight-hour shift, and then drive thirty-six miles back home. Again I had to feed the animals, tuck my kids into bed, and then head off to conduct a Bible study that was another nine or ten miles away. Sometimes on snowy nights it was incredibly difficult to even see the road. But as I remained faithful to what God called me to do, the unique will of God began to unfold in my life.

One day, the group of people in my Bible study said, “There has been no testimony of God within these forty square miles for a hundred years. We ought to be a church!”

I remember saying, “Well, if we want to be a church, then I will go find us a pastor so that we have a covering.” I met with the leader of a denomination in our country at that time and asked if he would be able to get us a pastor. He asked me, “Are you willing to pastor this church?”

“No, sir! No chance!” I replied. I was doing very well in my career. Besides that, I was once on the board of a large church, and I had seen some of the inner workings that made me disinterested in getting involved at that level again. So he finally told me that they would conduct a search for a pastor.

In the meantime, our group had to change our location to a hotel in the middle of town. It was quite the place. We had to turn over the girlie posters and empty the ashtrays, and the children’s church was held in the “men only” room. Yet, God continued to bring more people until we were packed out! I agreed to pastor the church for about six months until we could find a permanent pastor. But the whole time, the will of God kept coming back to me. One day as I was preaching, I glanced out the window and saw a little brown sparrow sitting in the driveway. It was the middle of winter, so it was just pecking at the snow. I was suddenly reminded of the Scripture that says, “*Are not five sparrows sold for two copper coins? And not one of them is forgotten before God...Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows*” (Luke 12:6–7). The Lord then asked me, “Can you not trust Me with your future? Can you not trust Me to look after you and your family?”

You have to win the battles in secret before you can win them in public.

I did not want to hear that! However, not too long after, I was in the mall with my partner, working in criminal intelligence in the police department. Suddenly some suspicious-looking characters entered the mall and were nearing the bank. My partner turned to me and said, “You do have your gun on you today, don’t you?”

“No, I forgot it in my locker again,” I replied.

And right there in the mall, my partner, an unsaved man, said, “You are called to preach the

gospel! Carter, you are a nice guy, but your heart is no longer here. Your heart is in another place. I’m telling you, you have got to go do what God is calling you to do!”

I had done the revealed will as well as I knew how, and now here was the unique will of God for my life! I finally went back to the denomination’s leader and said, “God has been speaking to me to pastor this church. If you would like me to, you can cancel the search.”

“There has been no search,” he replied. “I knew you were the pastor all along!”

■ FIRST THINGS FIRST

The unique will of God has led me into many places throughout my life, and it has been an incredible journey. However, we must learn to do the first things first. Therefore, come back to your first love if you need to; open the Word of God and begin to read it. Don’t live in an illusion that one day this mystical will of God will fall into your lap while you are choosing to ignore the revealed will of God.

As the Scripture says, “*This is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men*” (1 Peter 2:15). This is the revealed will of God—doing good; speaking the truth; caring in an uncaring time; praying when nobody else prays; studying when everyone else is writing off the Word of God; speaking the name of Jesus when everyone else wants to curse His name. This is where character is formed! You have to win the battles in secret before you can win them in public. Remember, you will not become a super evangelist who loves everybody if you have not

learned to love people in private. That is how it works. So do not worry so much about finding the unique will of God for your life; it will come to you. Concern yourself today with the revealed will of God, and the unique will of God will surely follow.

***As you trust God
for the will to
do His will, I
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Paul said in the book of Ephesians that we “should do the will of God from our hearts” (see Ephesians 6:6). And so I encourage you today to ask God for the will to do His will. Come to Him and say, “Lord, open my heart to what You have for my life. Don’t let me consider anything as too small or too undignified. Help me to be the one who sees a piece of paper on the floor and picks it up. Help me to be kind, truthful, and faithful; a builder rather than a destroyer. Help me to be one who will promote unity in the midst of a divided society. Yet, let me also be willing to take a stand for truth when everyone else is content to deal with lies. Lord, give me the courage to follow You fully.”

As you trust God for the will to do His will, I believe Jesus will be revealed to you in a way that you have never known Him. You will be absolutely amazed at where God is going to take you and what He will do through your life!

Carter Conlon
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CARTER CONLON

Carter Conlon is senior pastor of Times Square Church, where he has been on the pastoral staff since 1994.

TIMES SQUARE CHURCH

Times Square Church was founded in 1987 by Pastor David Wilkerson, author of “The Cross and the Switchblade.” It is an interdenominational church located in the heart of New York City.

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WEEKLY SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Sunday	10:00AM	3:00PM	6:00PM
Tuesday	7:00PM	Prayer Service	
Friday	7:00PM	The Gate*	

*Youth and Young Adult Service

Live Webcast:

All our Sunday and Tuesday services can be watched live and replayed for seven days on our website.

tscnyc.org

This newsletter is an edited version of “FINDING THE WILL OF GOD,” a sermon given on July 5, 2015 in the sanctuary of Times Square Church in New York City. Other sermons are available by visiting our website at tscnyc.org. You are welcome to make additional copies of this sermon for free distribution to friends. However, for all other forms of reproduction or electronic transmission existing copyright laws apply. This sermon cannot be posted on any website or webpage without permission from Times Square Church. Unless otherwise noted, all scripture references are from the New King James Version.