

# HOW TO KNOW GOD'S WILL

God's Will and the Church // 1 Corinthians 12:1-11

**THE POINT:** God often reveals His plans for us through His church.

## THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

Several years ago, my wife and I moved to Baltimore to start a church among the marginalized people. During our time here, we've built meaningful connections with many people who struggle with really difficult challenges. When we face challenges, it's always good to have people to help us through it. This is something a lot of our neighbors never had—at least, not until they connected with our church. One of the great gifts God has given us is His church. God uses our fellow believers to help us grow in Christ and to know and experience His will for us.

► **What are some of the most difficult struggles you've faced?**

## 1 CORINTHIANS 12:1-3

One of the ways God speaks is through people. This is not to say that just anybody can speak for God. However, God uses people to remind or help us understand clearly what He has revealed through His Word. When another person's words line up with Scripture, we'd better pay attention—it may be God's speaking directly to us. The Holy Spirit is a real person who actively guides people. He doesn't always tell us what we want to hear, but He always tells us what we need to hear. For those who have truly surrendered to Christ, the Holy Spirit will continually speak to us, convincing us of the truth. God speaks—He speaks through His Word, He speaks to our hearts by His Holy Spirit, and He speaks to us through those who acknowledge and live out the truth that Jesus is Lord.

► **Where do people often look for guidance today?**

► **What does it mean to be led by the Spirit?**

## 1 CORINTHIANS 12:4-6

We were created to live in a relationship with God, and each individual's walk with God is unique. Yet it is the same Holy Spirit who works in every person's life. The Spirit does not change, but He relates to individuals in ways that suit their personality and the plans God has for us. In the Old Testament, the Spirit came upon people to equip them for a special assignment. Because people had different assignments, God prepared them uniquely. In the New Testament, God placed His people in the church. Today, that universal church is seen in countless local churches all across the globe. Each local church is a part of the body of Christ with individual members, and each member has a purpose. In the body of Christ, the Holy Spirit equips each of us for the part we play in His body. The gifts are not for our own individual use—they are for the building up of the body. The fellow believer is a distinct person, but it is the same Holy Spirit in all believers.

► **How can we filter the guidance offered to us by fellow believers?**

► **Why is it important to recognize that our gifts, activities, and ministries come from God?**

## 1 CORINTHIANS 12:7-11

It's the same Holy Spirit who indwells all believers, yet the ways He equips us can be incredibly different. There is a great variety of gifts, and we need this diversity. As each one of us carries out our unique ministry and service, the body grows and Christ is glorified. Paul listed some spiritual gifts, but it is important for us to understand this is not a comprehensive list. Scripture lists more spiritual gifts in other passages, and even these are not seen as exhaustive (Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Cor. 12:27-30; Eph. 4:11; and 1 Pet. 4:9-11). The wonderful thing about the list of gifts is their variety. How we choose to categorize the gifts is not important. Paul never categorized the gifts, nor did he create one exhaustive list of all the spiritual gifts. Paul focused on the purpose of the gifts: "A manifestation of the Spirit is given to each person for the common good" (1 Cor. 12:7).

► **Why is it so important for there to be a diversity of gifts and ministries within the church?**

► **How have the gifts of others helped you discover God's will?**



# LIVE IT OUT

Unit 2 // Session 4

## ➤ CHRIST

---

Scripture teaches that the church is the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:12). We all have different roles in building one another up, and one of the most profound ways God speaks to His people is through other believers.

➤ How have others influenced you to grow in your relationship with Christ?

➤ Thank God for the believers He has placed in your life to walk alongside you.

## ➤ COMMUNITY

---

When we live in community with other Christians, we put ourselves in the position that God would speak to us through others. However, when we miss church, we miss out on the opportunity to hear God's voice through our church family.

When have people in your church spoken in a way that you received these from God:

- Encouragement:
- Direction:
- Correction:

➤ What other ways has God spoken to you through others?

➤ How will you engage with others in order to hear from God and to have others hear God through you?

## ➤ CULTURE

---

It's not uncommon in our culture for people to think that faith is personal, and that it's not necessary to gather with other believers. While faith is certainly a personal issue, it's to be lived out in community. When people isolate themselves, refusing to allow others to speak into their lives, they commonly accept beliefs that aren't in line with the Bible and which are contrary to the wisdom passed down over generations through the church.

➤ How do you see people trying to figure out on their own truths about faith and eternity?

➤ What will you do this week to help someone not connected with the church see the value in fellowship?