**All Access Week 3**

**Summary**

This is what we taught Sunday morning.

Have you ever heard someone talk about finding and following God’s will for your life? If you’ve spent much time around church at all, chances are you have! And when you did, you probably found yourself thinking one of two things: *What in the world does that even mean?* Or, *How do I know what God’s will is?* Finding and following God’s will seems like one of those things only super-committed Christians or really important church leaders have figured out. But the truth is that God has big things He hopes and wants for *all of us*, and you don’t have to be a Christian for 10 years or work at a church to figure out what those things are. Because of Jesus, we all not only have the ability to understand what

God wants for our lives, but also the power to accomplish it. As we look one more time to the book of Hebrews this week, we’ll see that with Jesus’ help we can access God’s will for our lives and understand how He has uniquely equipped each one of us to live it out every day.

**Bottom Line**

God’s will for you is to be *you* and love *others*.

**This Week’s Scripture: Hebrews 13:20-21**



**Devotional**

When you’re a kid, there’s a popular question that gets asked: *What do you want to be when you grow up?* The possibilities are endless. You could be a super hero, mermaid, pop star, astronaut, NFL quarterback, or even the President—there are no limits to that question when you’re a child.

When you’re an adult though, the answer to that question gets a little trickier. We recognize that super heroes and mermaids aren’t real (bummer), that being a pop star or quarterback requires very specific talent, and that being an astronaut requires years and years of intense training. And so trying to figure out what we want to do with our lives becomes a potentially stressful and stifling question.

As Christians, sometimes this question gets even more complicated.. Not because God makes it difficult on us, but because we make it difficult on ourselves. We want so badly to walk the road we think God designed for us—to follow His will for our lives—that we get lost in the details. We spend so much time trying to figure out what we think God wants that we end up barely moving forward at all. We get stuck because we haven’t gotten the giant, obvious, burning bush answer we’re waiting for.

But here’s an important truth to remember about God: He’s not in the business of confusion. He doesn’t want to trick or tease or frustrate us. He’s not laying things out in code and leaving us to figure out the puzzle. No, God is our Father, our helper, our leader, and our friend. And because He’s all those things and more, He wants to help us.

In fact, He’s already given us everything we need to not only know His will, but also follow it. Check it out:

*Now may the God of peace—who brought up from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, and ratified an eternal covenant with his blood—may he equip you with all you need for doing his will. May he produce in you, through the power of Jesus Christ, every good thing that is pleasing to him (Hebrews 13:20-21a NLT).*

No, the answer to what you should specifically be doing with your life isn’t written in the Bible for you, but the answer to *who* you should be is. God wants you to *be* a person who loves other people. And we also know this: He’s equipped you with specific skills and talents to accomplish His will. So when you’re struggling to understand His plan or will, remember that He’s already equipped you for it. Ask Him to show you how you can use your specific gifting to accomplish His ultimate will for all of us—to love others to Christ.

**Think About This**

**By: Carey Nieuwhof**

You may have a toddler right now who won’t leave your side. You know the kind. The kid who’s glued to your leg, velcroed to your arm, who keeps wanting you to read the same story again, and again, and again. It’s driving you nuts some days, isn’t it?

**It’s hard to believe, but one day, they’re going to withdraw.** Ask any parent who has middle schoolers. Or teenagers. It happens...they withdraw. And you know what happens to most parents? Most parents have no idea what to do. So they do this: When their kids withdraw, *they* withdraw.

Why wouldn’t you? I mean it kind of works like that in life, doesn’t it? When someone doesn’t want to be your friend

anymore, you eventually give up and withdraw, which only makes sense. You can’t be friends with someone who doesn’t want to be your friend. Except that in this case, they’re you’re family. The dynamic isn’t as straightforward. So what do you do?

As a father of 2 sons, now 19 and 23,I can give you a few pointers. Now, I’m not an expert by any stretch of the imagination. I’ve just been confused by it long enough and have enough scars to write a few hundred words on the subject.

Basically, if you’ve got a kid who thinks Minecraft is far more interesting than Mom, or a son who doesn’t want to watch movies with you but seems to want to watch anything and everything with their friends, what do you do?

**1. Get over your hurt.** Just admit it: It kind of hurts a little. You pour your heart into your kids, get up at 5 a.m. to take them to practice, do homework with them on nights when your brain should have had a rest hours ago, fund everything, and suddenly they find you...uninteresting.

As much as that kind of stinks, you’re the parent. Get over it. Your job isn’t to be their friend, it’s to be their parent.

**2. Be around.** When my oldest started high school, he told me, “Hey dad...why can’t you just be like other dads and simply hang around more?” It was weird for me to hear that, because I was home a lot. But he was right. I was always busy. Being a driven person who loves what he does, I was always working on a new project or writing something new.

The penny dropped. So basically I just needed to hang around and do nothing or at least not be preoccupied? I didn’t know if I had a category for that. But I tried. I decided to hang around the house night after night with no particular agenda, just to see what happened.

The first night my oldest son went out after supper to hang out with friends and my other son was tied up with something else. I thought, well this is stupid. I wanted to go get busy with something. But my wife persisted. So I decided to give it more time.

And after a while, we started connecting much more. No agenda. Nothing pressing. Just by virtue of being in the same space in the same time repeatedly, we connected. And I learned this: **While being around is no guarantee anything relationally significant will happen, not being around is an absolute guarantee nothing relationally significant will happen.** So be around.

**3. Leverage the ordinary.** Your rhythm changes as your kids get older. Tucking your five-year-old into bed is an amazingly glorious ritual. Tucking your 15-year-old into bed every night is just weird. You lose a lot of the rhythms of childhood when your kids get older. And if you keep invading the space they spend with their friends, you lose major points.

But there are other opportunities. Meal times are a case in point.

Take the time to eat a meal together...not in the car... not standing at the kitchen breakfast bar sucking back a smoothie on your way out the door, but at a real table, with real chairs, with real forks and real knives. And chew your food. If you take 15-30 minutes to have dinner together and turn off all your devices, amazing things happen. Amazing things like conversations. No matter how busy our lives get, we always try to sit down together for five dinners a week. If you prioritize it, it can happen.

Another great opportunity is during your drive time. I know, you feel like a taxi service. So leverage that. Turn the music off...or up, depending on your mood. Don’t talk on the phone. Stop texting (especially if you’re driving), and talk. **Conversations in the car can go deeper faster because you haven’t got the pressure of looking at each other.**

So what happens when all this happens?

Well, you grow up. They grow up. And sometimes, they develop a habit of coming around.

I’m writing this after having lunch with my eldest son and his wife at a Mexican restaurant they found near their place in Toronto. He had called the day earlier and said, “Hey Dad, you and mom want to come down after church? We’d love to hang out with you guys.” My other son now calls and texts from a university out of town...even when he doesn’t need money. Imagine that.

Just remember this. When your kids withdraw, don’t withdraw. It’s so worth the fight.

  

In this series, we’ve been talking about the idea of “all access”—the idea that we have all access to God, which gives us access to hope and purpose. But your teenager also needs to know they have an all-access pass to talk to *you*. That’s certainly easier when they’re younger. Bath time and bed time give you clear opportunities to talk. But as schedules get busier and the conversations become more complicated, it may be helpful to remind your son or daughter that they still have your attention.

**This week, try texting them or writing a simple note to let them know you’re still available to them.** It doesn’t have to be long or emotional. Try something like this:

*Hey, I heard you’ve been talking about “all access” at church. I know sometimes it may not feel like you have or need all- access to me, but I want you to know that you can talk to me about anything, anytime. No pressure to start today. Just wanted you to know.*

Honestly, you may not get a response. That’s okay. The goal is to simply re-give them permission to talk to you on their time and when they’re ready.