



## What Keeps Us from Knowing God's Will?

### 10 Common Mistakes

#### 1. Resentment:

Sometimes we get angry that God is not doing things our way. Resentment deafens our ears to God's voice. But God is not a genie who fulfills our wishes whenever we rub him the right way. He's a partner in our lives, even down to the least significant detail.

#### 2. Praying wrongly:

Most of us pray hoping to change God. The fact is, God is unchanging and unchangeable. We change ourselves when we pray. Prayer aligns our thinking with God's, and it lets us and all the hosts of heaven and hell know that we have aligned our thinking with God's.

#### 3. Idolatry:

Only God knows and understands all the facts involved in our situations and search for ministry. If we think we know better than he does, we are worshiping ourselves, believing that we are gods greater than God himself.

#### 4. Human reasoning:

Our desires, perceptions, and ideas all speak to us about what we think the answer from God should be. We come up with all the pros and cons of a decision, and although God may use these to help us come to the right decision, we must not allow them to control our decision-making process. The list of pros and cons should glorify God, rather than worldly wisdom.



Besides that, the list is not the answer to prayer; it is an opportunity for more prayer.

#### 5. Human desires:

We can never totally trust ourselves. Before we can listen for God's voice, we need to get all of our personal desires out of the way. We must surrender them, nail these intruders to the cross with Jesus and let them die. Here is one way to do this in prayer:

"Father, in the name of Jesus, and by the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, I make it an act of my will to die to all human reasoning and my own desires on this issue. It doesn't matter at all what I think or what I desire; it's what You think that counts, what You desire for me. With an act of faith, I thank You, Lord, that You have seen the sincerity of my heart, and that You see I am not going to operate on human reasoning or desires, and I ask You to silence the voice of my Self. I delight in doing Your will."

When we pray, instead of saying "Lord, help me," we should say "Lord, use me." To say "help me" means all we're asking for is some assistance. We still hold the reigns, we still hang onto control of the situation or the ministry. But when we say "use me," that's total surrender. And in surrender, we hear God and really see him work in us and through us.

**6. Disobedience:**

When God says go, we should go. When God says change your plans, we try out the new plan. When God tells us to do something, we do it. That's the greatest freedom any of us could ever dream of having.

**7. Opinions of others:**

Human reasoning often speaks to us through well-intentioned friends and family. One of the worst ways to try to hear God is by soliciting the opinions of those who have not prayed for the answer.

Yet, this is what we most often resort to. It's a habit to which we easily succumb, and it's hard to break. We seek the advice of all the people we know, and we end up with many different opinions, causing more confusion than we had in the beginning.

It could be that none of them have given us God's answer. Better that we spend that same amount of time in prayer alone with God, relying on the words of only those who truly trust God and seek his will for their own lives.

**8. Taking too little time to listen:**

Most of us don't want to take the time to stop and listen to God's voice. It takes too much effort to scan through scriptures to find guidance, so we do our own thing and hope it's okay with God. Hearing God takes a yielded will. To surrender our will to God's, we must be willing and ready to obey whatever God tells us to do.

To surrender our will, we have to have a clean heart. Unconfessed sins get in the way. So does impatience. We need to wait and give God time to clean out our hearts and reveal his plans. When we wait, that means we really believe that God is doing what's best for us. As we refuse to give up, persisting in prayer, we prove that we believe that God will finally communicate his will. Only then will the answer finally come.

**9. Doubt:**

Since we can never be sure that we have fully surrendered to God, it's good to pray, "Lord, if this answer is from You, then I accept it. Please increase it in me until there is no room for doubt." Then we watch for results. Does the same message stop coming? Or does it grow, and does a sense of inner assurance grow with it?

We need to wait for God to reveal his answer in more than one way. God will confirm his instructions, and the more important the decision, the more he will give us confirmation. We'll hear it when we turn on a Christian radio station. Or we'll get a newsletter in the mail that speaks of the same idea. Or we'll hear the priest mention it in his homily, or we'll sing about it in a hymn.

**10. Distrust:**

If we think God doesn't have our best interests at heart, or if we think God doesn't really care about us, we can't hear him call us to ministry.

To cure this, we can thank God for the guidance that he gives before we are sure he has given it. This is the same as saying, "God, no matter how deaf I am to You, no matter what distracts me from Your voice, You are bigger than the obstacles. You are bigger than me. Therefore, I trust that You will make Your will known to me, and You will keep trying until you get through to me, and You will help me desire to do Your will."