

2 Timothy 4:7 (NKJV)

⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, (*my course*) *KJV*, I have kept the faith.

One of the things all Christians question at some point is the will of God for their life

Whether you are just starting to realize the will of God for your life or have been living on the path He has for you; this series will help you **Stay the Course**

Often, even if a person fully understands the will of God for their lives, it takes time mentally to adjust to what is revealed

- The problem is not God
- The problem is we sometimes lack understanding or make mistakes in following His plan
- Throughout the Bible we see men and women of God experienced bumps along the way
- Sometimes a result of incomplete obedience
- Sometimes a misunderstanding of what God was asking of them
- Sometimes a struggle in embracing what God had asked them to do
- The good news is God is willing to work with anyone who has a heart to keep trying

The apostle Paul was one of the most unlikely candidates you could ever imagine to be called into the ministry

- If God could use him, He can use you and I

1 Timothy 1:12–13 (NKJV)

¹² And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting *me* into the ministry, ¹³ although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did *it* ignorantly in unbelief.

- No one painted a better picture of Paul's grievous lifestyle before coming to Christ than the apostle did himself
- It doesn't matter what our past is God chose us!

Ephesians 1:4, 11 (NKJV)

⁴ just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, ¹¹ In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will

Ephesians 2:10

¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

- The grace of God completely transformed Saul from the inside out
- God redirected his life to fulfill His will
- And God will do the same for you and me

God will always confirm what He tells you to do and give you further direction for the course of your life when you surrender to His call

If you are determined to follow God's will for your life, you will also face your own "*crossroads moments*" when Jesus gives you an assignment that requires more of you than you have to give in the natural

- It is vital to keep your spiritual eyes and ears open to hear the Lord's confirmations when He provides them
- As Saul was pondering what had happened to him he had another vision that gave Him more direction
- Obedience will lead to more instruction

Both Saul as well as Ananias needed confirmation to know they weren't hallucinating or imagining what they had seen and heard

- Every step along the way God provides confirmation
- Encouraging them to keep moving forward
- When Ananias prayed for Saul, he delivered a prophetic word that God had given him for Saul
- This was a confirmation of what Paul had already heard from the Lord – **Acts 26:16-17**
- **A prophetic word will always re-affirm something the Lord has shown or is showing you**

When Saul received the prophetic word from Ananias it was exactly what he needed to hear to keep moving forward

Remember true prophecy confirms what you have already heard

- When “*words from the Lord*” don’t fit in
- Always be respectful and prayerfully consider what was spoken
- If it doesn’t fit don’t take it seriously
- If it affirms something listen very carefully
- Remember you hear His voice – **John 10:27**

“A genuine prophetic word regarding God’s will for your life will confirm what He has already told you, and it will empower you to face the future with confidence” – Rick Renner

- If God is going to speak something significant to you about your life, He will likely tell you first
- He may speak during prayer or reveal something while you’re reading the Bible
- Perhaps you and your spouse are praying together and you both sense an upcoming change
- You may receive a word of direction while sitting in a church service
- That’s what happened to both Paul and Ananias
- God spoke to them each in a vision
- He gave them both confirmation along the way

One major key to following and fulfilling the call of God on your life is to be a part of a life giving, Bible preaching, vibrant church of believers

- One in which there is a blend of different ethnicities, backgrounds, and age groups
- The church in Jerusalem had become narrow minded and religious by the time Saul was converted
- They thought the Gospel was only for the Jew
- God moved Paul to Antioch and an environment in which he could grow

Being in the right place at the right time is vital to your preparation

1 Corinthians 12:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸ But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased.

- God knows what you need and is working a plan to fully develop the gifts He has placed in you
- The local church is the training ground for you to learn how to submit to authority and serve others
- This may not be easy on your flesh
- Be still and know that He is God

Psalm 46:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ Be still, and know that I *am* God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!

The environment we live in can sometimes have some mental noise and clutter

You might think the pressure or negative influence of people around you, *or what you perceive as negative*, is hindering you from developing your gifts

- You may think you can't possibly hear what God is saying
- Rest assured – the Holy spirit wants to talk to you more than you want to hear from Him

We all need to learn the art of getting quiet on the inside, even in the midst of chaotic circumstances and external noise

Sometimes we allow ourselves to get too comfortable where we are in a particular phase of life

- This may hinder you from having to stretch and totally lean on God
- You may feel a “*divine discomfort*”
- The Lord may be calling you to “*step out of the boat*”
- God wants us in a place of challenge and purpose

Maybe you need to spend time before the Lord renewing your commitment to depend on Him for all things

- Not your paycheck, friends, or familiar surroundings

2 Timothy 1:6-7 (NKJV)

⁶Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.⁷ For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

The first step in the process of getting aligned with God's will for your life is learning how to hear His voice

- But the next step is crucial
- You must determine to fully obey Him without wavering
- Many times, even if God's will is clear it may not make sense to your natural mind

Romans 8:6 AMPC

⁶Now the mind of the flesh [which is sense and reason without the Holy Spirit] is death [death that ^[a]comprises all the miseries arising from sin, both here and hereafter]. But the mind of the [Holy] Spirit is life and [soul] peace [both now and forever].

- God gives us a mind to use

But when we lean on our own understanding instead of trusting God's word and leading of His Spirit, we begin to operate in the mind of the flesh

- We have all done this

But when we are surrendered to the Will of God and His purpose all things work together for our good

(Romans 8:28, NKJV)

“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”

The Call of Abraham

(Genesis 12:1, NKJV)

“Now the LORD had said to Abram: “Get out of your country, From your family And from your father’s house, To a land that I will show you.”

- God told him to leave his homeland
- He told him to separate himself from his relatives
- He told him to leave his father’s house
- He told him to go to a land that he would show him

Sometimes even simple orders can be complex

Things we can learn:

- After hearing from God don’t rely on natural reasoning
- It is clear from scripture that Abram didn’t do exactly what God told him to do
- He did leave his country and followed God toward a new land
- However, he brought his nephew lot
- He probably pondered the call of God and thought

“I know God told me to leave my family, but Lot is like a son to me, the son I never had. God couldn’t have really intended for me to leave him behind. Surely God wouldn’t expect me to leave those this close to me.”

Partial obedience delay's God's plan

“If you are willing and obedient, You shall eat the good of the land;” (Isaiah 1:19, NKJV)

“There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.” (Proverbs 16:25, NKJV)

- We cannot follow what seems right to us
- We must diligently follow what the Lord instructed us to do

When we follow our understanding it will bring strife, stress, fear, dread, broken relationships, delayed blessings, unfulfilled dreams, and endless list of pains and problems

Partial obedience produces problems

- God mapped out a road for Abram
- He probably thought he was following it
- But by not carefully obeying God's instructions it produced significant problems
- When Abraham reached the Promised Land with a huge company, they found themselves in the middle of a famine
- If Abram's company only included who God instructed him to take they could have stayed in Canaan
- There simply wasn't enough food for the large company including Lot, his people, and livestock
- He was in the right place but with the wrong people
- He got bumped off course
- They journeyed to Egypt

In Egypt Abram feared he would be killed, and his wife taken captive because of her beauty

- He convinced Sarai to say she was his sister so if the Egyptians did take her his life would be spared
- God exposed Abrams plan and he was kicked out of Egypt
- The entire company headed back to Canaan
– **Genesis 12:10-20**

Abram and Lot had other problems as well

- They had such abundance of livestock that the land could not support all of their herds living so close together
- Abram offered Lot to choose which land he wanted to take
- Lot chose the land near Sodom and Gomorrah and pitched his tent there
- They rest is history

Because of Abram's decision to take Lot with him, he wasn't where he was supposed to be either

- Lot and his family were later captured as prisoners of war
- Abram had to go to war to save them
- God gave them a miraculous victory
- However, Lot returned to Sodom and became one of the city's leading citizens
- His life took a downward turn from that point

Story: *Convinced we were supposed to pastor in Big Rapids*

- *I had a plan that PJ said would work but it wasn't God*
- *PP said it wasn't God – we went for a drive anyway*

“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.” (Jeremiah 29:11, NKJV)

- God has a good plan for your life
- Your mind may not easily grasp or comprehend His plan
- But He will make it clear to you
- Listen for His Spirit speaking to your heart
- Carefully and obediently follow His directions

God may have told you to go into business or start a ministry

- Maybe He’s asked you to give a large sum of money to an organization
- Perhaps He’s asked you to believe for something that seems impossible to attain
- He has spoken to you and even confirmed it
- Maybe He is dealing with you every day about it
- In your mind you just can’t seem to make sense of it
- Maybe because you haven’t fully grasped His instructions you have only partially followed His instruction
- As a result, you are living in a place of stagnation with no ongoing experience of true joy or victory
- When we don’t obey the Lord, it can provide a foothold for the enemy

Yes, the distance from where you are to where God wants to take you may seem huge

The truth is, you will not be happy or successful until you are fully obedient to God’s will

When you fully align yourself with God’s will, things in your life will get better

- That doesn’t mean you won’t face opposition – You will
- But the power and favor of God will go with you wherever you go

“For the LORD God is a sun and shield; The LORD will give grace and glory; No good thing will He withhold From those who walk uprightly.” (Psalm 84:11, NKJV)

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and depart from evil. It will be health to your flesh, And strength to your bones.” (Proverbs 3:5–8, NKJV)

“I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye.” (Psalm 32:8, NKJV)

Remember:

- Partial obedience is disobedience
- Have I added my own interpretation of what God has asked me to do?
- Am I in the right place but connected to the wrong people?
- What has God spoken to your heart that you are still struggling to make sense of?

Has God put a dream in your heart?

- Has He told you to do something that seems so huge your tempted to dismiss it as nonsense?
- Don't dismiss your dream too quickly
- That dream is a vision of your future that God has dropped into your spirit
- Hesitation is fine for a while, especially if you're taking time to confirm you are on track
- Don't wait too long or God will find someone else

“For many are called, but few are chosen.”

(Matthew 22:14, NKJV)

- There have been many called to do something big for God
- Because they didn't follow the Lord they were not *“chosen”*
- Don't let that be you

So many times, we get caught up in excuses and focus on our insecurities and weaknesses

“And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”

(2 Corinthians 12:9–10, NKJV)

So many believers present God with a host of reasons why He should chose someone else

- I can't speak well enough
- I see other people that are more talented
- I don't think I'm ready yet
- I'm afraid
- I don't know how I'll be able to pay for it
- I'm too fat
- I'm too skinny
- I'm not handsome enough
- I don't have enough time to do it
- I'm not the best choice

Some people don't even come up with an excuse they just tell the Lord

- Its not in my heart to do it
- I don't feel led
- I just don't want to do it
- NO! I won't do it

Until you quit fighting and simply surrender your will to obey God, you will never lay hold of your divine purpose in God

“Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.” (Philippians 3:12, NKJV)

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”

(2 Corinthians 5:10, NKJV)

- How tragic to live an entire life only to find out you missed the destiny God had planned for you
- Turn your faith loose!
- Jump out into the vast river of God

“To everything there is a season, A time for every purpose under heaven.” **(Ecclesiastes 3:1, NKJV)**

- Every plant and animal has a purpose
- Every lake, sea, river, and creek have a purpose
- The clouds have a purpose – they store moisture and filter UV rays
- Everything God has created has a specific design and function

When you don't look into your God-given purpose you will only wander aimlessly in life from one thing to another

- Trying to fill that space with every empty thing this world has to offer
- Money, drugs, alcohol, or relationships cannot fill that hole
- Get God's vision for your life and run with it!
– **Proverbs 29:18**