

# All Your Heart



Week One

## inTro



Read This Week's Passage:  
Jeremiah 29:11–14b

### THE PREREQUISITE

Why would anyone *not* want to know God's will for his or her life? After all, if God is all-knowing and all-caring, shouldn't we be jumping up and down to find out what that plan is? But human history does not attest to this. Humanity has desired supernatural knowledge, insights, secrets, and understanding. Once this knowledge has been acquired (if at all), however, the human response has been, "I'm good; that's enough; I would rather choose something (or someone) else." Sometimes it's called rationalization, or curiosity, or human philosophy; and at other times it's just plain arrogance. This is because the core of the human heart is sinful and carnal. We don't want what's good for us; we want what we think we want, which usually means we cannot choose good in and of itself.

When presented with the divine will, the selfish response is to choose the alternative, or option B. Sometimes God goes forward with His scenario, knowing full well that humanity will reject it. The foreknowledge of God does not prevent Him from doing so—the love of God for humanity overrides. In other words, God doesn't act from what He knows but from who He is: love. The problem is not on God's end, because He always acts out of love. The problem lies with humanity, which acts out of selfishness and doubt of God's love.

The first week of this study deals with the prerequisite to knowing the will of God.



**inScribe**

Write out Jeremiah 29:11-14b from the translation of your choice. You may also rewrite the passage in your own words, outline, or mind map the chapter.



Go back to your scribed text and study the passage.

**Circle** repeated words/phrases/ideas

**Underline** words/phrases that are important and have meaning to you



Draw **Arrows** to connect words/phrases to other associated or related words/phrases

What special insights do your marks seem overall to point to?



Memorize your favorite verse in Jeremiah 29:11–14b. Write it out multiple times to help memorization.

If God says He knows you, what does He know? (c.f. Genesis 18:19)



Read more at [www.inversebible.org/will1-3](http://www.inversebible.org/will1-3)

**NO TAGS**

Life does not have a tag on it that says, “Care instructions: Hand wash with mild soap. Air dry only. Do not bleach. Do not iron. Made in China.” God’s will is not a protocol and to find it we simply have to complete a checklist. We don’t put in something and out comes a customized plan for our future. This is the basis for many pagan religions out there—if a sacrifice is given in this manner on that date under the auspices of these conditions, then the powers that be will give you X, Y, and Z.

Though many identify themselves as Christians, they may be pagan Christians, doing the same thing but replacing pagan rituals with rituals of Bible study, prayer, tithe, lifestyle changes, church attendance, and so on. It’s not that these exercises are wrong, but the order of their cause and effect is inverted (more on this in Lesson 13). Many do their devotions every morning, live pious and religious lives, return tithe, and do all the “dos” and avoid the “don’ts,” but still do not know the will of God.

As stated in inTro, the problem is not with the method, nor with God. He can reveal His will through the wind or a small still voice (1 Kings 19:12), through lightning and thunder, through animals like a donkey, and through other, most unexpected media. But the simple problem is us.

In Genesis 18, the city of Sodom was about to be destroyed for its wickedness. To save Lot, God conveyed information and instructions to Abraham. The great question emerges, Why didn’t God first reveal His will regarding Sodom directly to Lot? Why go through Abraham at all? James 2:23 reveals that Abraham was a friend of God. As a friend, the Lord would not withhold anything from him. In the narrative of the two human characters, one was qualified to know God’s will, while the other was not. What was the difference between the two men?

Though Lot served and worshiped God, he had secret intentions toward Sodom. Genesis 13:12 says that Lot pitched his tent near Sodom. By Genesis 14:12, Lot was living in Sodom. And at Genesis 19:1, he had a leadership position and sat at the gate of Sodom. He didn’t have the mindset in which news about the destruction of Sodom would have been taken well. Though both men were eventually told about the future of the city, God’s conversation with Abraham went very differently than with Lot (compare Genesis 18:23–33 with Genesis 19:12–13). God’s conversation with Lot took place within the context of urgency and panic. God’s conversation with Abraham was prefaced with God asking Himself if He should hide the judgment of Sodom from His friend. In Genesis 18:19, God says that He knows Abraham. In other words, God is saying, “I really know him well. How can I not tell him?” All these verses paint a picture that Abraham’s heart was willing to obey while Lot’s heart was in a different place.

When it comes to ascertaining God’s will, it’s not about the method, technique, or procedure. Rather, the revelation occurs as the natural extension of friendship and relationship. It is not dependent on the state of the heart at a particular time of life; it is not dependent on the amount of theological accuracy in one’s knowledge; it is not how accurately or precisely we follow a protocol. Instead of in a tag, the will of God is revealed in the relationship with God.

## WILLINGNESS, NOT WORLDLINESS

The conventional thinking is that every Christian has a relationship with God. The question remains as to what type of relationship we have and how intimate it is. Lot surely believed in the monotheistic God that Abraham had believed in. But the “thoughts and intent of the heart” of Lot were centered in living in Sodom (Hebrews 4:12). He didn’t discern the dissonance between the world of his daily life and the world from God’s perspective. Ambition, worldliness, superficiality, and consumerism of Sodom were all too alluring for him. This is evident in the spiritual attitude of his daughters, sons-in-law, and eventually his wife.

The underlying status of his heart was worldliness instead of willingness. In the mind of a believer, worldliness tries to use the power of God to accomplish human plans, while willingness of heart uses the power of God to accomplish His plans. First, the human-centered me-ness must be given up for the God-centered Him-ness. Without this surrender, so-called Christians may mistake their own feelings, thoughts, ambitions, motives, and desires for the workings of the Holy Spirit. The Bible is misinterpreted, selectively interpreted, or not read at all. In Testimonies to the Church, Vol. 5, Ellen White writes, “Until you have the resolution to obey God’s will you cannot have His guidance” (511).

Daily we must apply God’s Word and seek the Lord to see if there are sins and selfish thinking in us. This consists of reflection on the past, heartfelt prayer, and honest interaction with Scripture. How have we conducted ourselves in our finances, health stewardship, social interactions, thoughts, attitudes, words, actions, and desires? To discover some wrongful offense should come as no surprise to us. Yes, it’s painful, but it is to be surrendered, repented of, and even despised. Praise the Lord that He is merciful and willing to forgive to the uttermost (Psalm 103:8–14)!

After these selfish voices are acknowledged and surrendered, the voice of God becomes clearer to reveal what His will may be. This is the beginning of a devotional life. Without this time invested in developing a relational foundation with God, He may have revealed His will to us already, but we would not have understood it, acknowledged it, or obeyed it due to our self-absorption. When we are made willing by God’s powerful grace, His voice becomes clearer and we learn to become even more willing each day, not only for the current decisions that need to be made but also for the long-term, larger decisions that lead up to the final events of earth’s history.



**inTerpret**

After looking at your scribed and annotated text, what special insights do your marks overall seem to point to?



What questions emerge after studying this passage?  
What parts are difficult?

What other principles and conclusions do you find?

Does worldliness enter your version of God’s will for you? Where?



Read more at  
[www.inverseible.org/will1-4](http://www.inverseible.org/will1-4)

All Your Heart



What relationship do the following verses have with the primary passage?

Ezra 7:6–10

2 Tim. 2:4–5

Deut. 4:29; 10:12;

Luke 10:27

Ps. 143:7–12



What other verses/promises come to mind in connection with wholehearted willingness?

Review your memorized verse from Jeremiah 29:11–14b.

To say that Jesus loved to do His Father's will is an understatement. Christ taught that His staple food was the will of God in John 4:34. "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work". While it could be understood as hyperbole, it can also be understood contextually as literally stating His dependence on the will of the Father more than on food. If one thinks about it, all of society, commerce, economics, and global trade revolve not around money but the largest expenditure of money: food. At the core of every existence is the drive to sustain oneself. While this drive is cushioned in the developed world with other luxuries, the developing world is quite cognizant and constantly mindful of this need. Christ states that more than meeting the fundamental needs of human life is the basic need to obey the will of God.

This will is understood to be more than a blessing here and there and the answering of a prayer of mine and yours. God's will encapsulates the salvation of the world (John 6:38-40). In other words, Christ saw the salvation of the world as more important than life itself—love beyond life. Not only was this the largest and most zoomed-out plan of God, but also Christ took delight in it, seeking the pleasure of the Father in this macro-narrative of a plan (John 8:29). He prayed about it daily, as exemplified in the line of the Lord's Prayer, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10, KJV).

But in one particular moment the fate of the world came to a standstill. It was a night in Gethsemane when, though He was God, His humanity made Him vulnerable. Christ had previously acknowledged that He could not do the will of God by Himself and didn't seek to do His own will (John 5:30). At Gethsemane, though He asked for the will of God, Christ wanted it to pass from Him (Matthew 26:39-44). In fact, this is what He prayed for three times.

Though the conditions of the temptation are drastically different, the parameters of the temptation are the same with us. We will never be called to be tempted as Christ was in the intensity and magnitude of the crucifixion. But we are tempted to avoid God's will and to have our own way. We are tempted either to be partially obedient, dilatorily obedient, or disobedient altogether. The secret to our miniscule conundrums (as well as to the divine plan of salvation for humanity!) is Christ's statement, "Not as I will, but as You will" (Matthew 26:39).

Not only the prerequisite to knowing God's will but also the strength to do God's will are found in the denial of self-will and the seeking of His. Once this heart assent is calibrated, the strengthening grace of heaven accompanies the surrendered heart to success, just as it happened to Jesus Christ.



Meditate on Jeremiah 29:11-14b again and look for where Jesus is.



How was Jesus wholeheartedly and daily obedient to God's will?

What is He saying to you through these texts?

How do you see Jesus differently or see Him again?

Prayer: How do you respond to seeing Jesus in this way?



Read more at  
[www.inverseible.org/will1-6](http://www.inverseible.org/will1-6)



Review the memory verse.  
How does it apply to your  
life this week?

—————→  
After this week’s study of the  
chapter, what are personal  
applications you are convicted  
of in your life?

What are practical applications  
you must make?

How does one maintain a  
wholehearted devotional  
life daily?



Read more inSight from the  
Spirit of Prophecy at  
[www.inverseible.org/will1-7](http://www.inverseible.org/will1-7)

**DIVINE GUIDANCE THROUGH PRAYER**

“We May Learn God’s Will for Us Through Prayer—The Lord works in no haphazard way. Seek Him most earnestly in prayer. He will impress the mind, and will give tongue and utterance. The people of God are to be educated not to trust in human inventions and uncertain tests as a means of learning God’s will concerning them. Satan and his agencies are always ready to step into any opening to be found that will lead souls away from the pure principles of the Word of God. The people who are led and taught of God will give no place to devisings for which there is not a “Thus saith the Lord”” (*Selected Messages*, 2:326).

“Pray for God’s Guidance—You must educate your judgment so that it shall not be feeble and inefficient. You must pray for guidance, and commit your way unto the Lord. You must close your heart against all foolishness and sin, and open it to every heavenly influence. You must make the most of your time and opportunities, in order to develop a symmetrical character” (*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, 302).

“Consecrate yourself to God in the morning; make this your very first work. Let your prayer be, ‘Take me, O Lord, as wholly Thine. I lay all my plans at Thy feet. Use me today in Thy service. Abide with me, and let all my work be wrought in Thee.’ This is a daily matter. Each morning consecrate yourself to God for that day. Surrender all your plans to Him, to be carried out or given up as His providence shall indicate. Thus day by day you may be giving your life into the hands of God, and thus your life will be molded more and more after the life of Christ” (*Steps to Christ*, 70).

“Angels Are Near to Help as We Pray for God’s Guidance—Like Nathanael, we need to study God’s word for ourselves, and pray for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. He who saw Nathanael under the fig tree will see us in the secret place of prayer. Angels from the world of light are near to those who in humility seek for divine guidance” (*The Desire of Ages*, 141).

“Parents to Pray for God’s Guidance—Parents, humble your hearts before God. Begin a thorough work with your children. Plead with the Lord to forgive your disregard of His Word in neglecting to train your children in the way they should go. Ask for light and guidance, for a tender conscience, and for clear discernment that you may see your mistakes and failures. God will hear such prayers from a humble and contrite heart” (*Child Guidance*, 557).

“Those Willing to Be Guided May Know God’s Will—The Lord reveals His will to those who are earnest and anxious to be guided. The reason for your inefficiency is that you have given up the idea of knowing and doing the will of God, therefore you do not know anything positively” (*Testimonies for the Church*, 3:467).

“Too many, in planning for a brilliant future, make an utter failure. Let God plan for you. As a little child, trust to the guidance of Him who will ‘keep the feet of His saints.’ 1 Samuel 2:9. God never leads His children otherwise than they would choose to be led, if they could see the end from the beginning and discern the glory of the purpose which they are fulfilling as co-workers with Him” (*The Ministry of Healing*, 479).



Share insights from this week's memory verse and Bible study as well as any discoveries, observations, and questions with your Sabbath School class (or Bible study group). Consider these discussion questions with the rest of the group.



What is more powerful, will or grace? (Phil. 2:13)

What is more needed, will or grace?

What is the difference between a partially obedient, dilatorily obedient, and disobedient heart?

What are some manifestations of a partially obedient or disobedient heart?

What does a wholeheartedly willing heart look like?

Why doesn't God reveal His will to an unwilling heart?

How does one know his or her own willingness?

Why does humanity prefer a method or a ritual rather than a relationship?

Why is heart-searching so painful? What are ways to encourage more heart-searching today?