



STUDY GUIDE

DANIEL KOLENDA

WAKE UP TO GOD'S WILL FOR YOUR LIFE

LIVE BEFORE YOU DIE / Study Guide

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Introduction

This *Live Before You Die* Study Guide has been written for individuals or for groups of any size. Its design is simple. ***Each week covers one chapter of my book.*** Each weekday, you will have a devotional focus on a “big idea” from the chapter along with interactive exercises for you to do to help you learn, understand, and implement the living truths from Scripture. Then on the weekend, you can fill out the Journal page recording what God has revealed to you during the week.

As you work through this Study Guide, have a copy of my book, your Bible, and a pen or pencil with you. As you write down your responses, pray for wisdom and guidance from the Holy Spirit. I believe you will be amazed at how God will speak to you about His will for your life now and in the future. Remember that the plans He has for you are good: “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future” (Jeremiah 29:11-12).

I am praying Romans 8:28 over you as you discover how to *Live Before You Die* over the coming weeks and months:

Lord Jesus Christ, I know and pray that in all things God works for the good of your child who loves you, who has been called according to your purpose. Reveal Your answers to their questions and meet their every need through Your Mercy and Grace. Amen.

-Daniel Kolenda

PART 1

Five Basic Questions About God's Will

WEEK

1

Does God Really Have a Plan for My Life?

*For You formed my inward parts;
You wove me in my mother's womb.*

Psalm 139:13 NAS

The Master of the universe, the eternal, immortal, invisible, all-wise God, made you with His own hands! But before He began to weave you together in your mother's womb, He saw you in His eternal mind, down to the smallest detail. And before you were ever born, He had a dream for your life. Perhaps as He was weaving you together in your mother's womb, He said, "I'm going to make this boy into a mighty man of fearless courage!" Or, "I'm going to make this little girl into a mighty prophetess to her generation!" Whatever His dream for your life might be, one thing is for sure: His will for your life is beyond what you could ask or think!

—Live Before You Die, p. 15

Read the Scripture verse and book quote above out loud ... slowly ... while picturing yourself in your mind, looking into a mirror, or looking at a picture of yourself.

This week, you will discover or rediscover that God has made you in His image. He has a wonderful plan for your life beginning with the very DNA with which He created you. Your life has purpose. You have been created to make a difference and an impact on the earth.

Regardless of how you are feeling about yourself, your family and friends, your work, or your circumstances, God wants you to know that you cannot live your life by feelings; however, you can trust His truth and His words to you about who you are, where you are going, what the future holds, and how loved you are by Him.

Get ready! It's going to be a wonderful week of discovering God's truth about you!

Move ahead to Day 1.

Day 1

NOT A SUPER HERO, BUT...

God had a plan to deliver Israel from the hand of Midian, and He had chosen just the man for the job, but God's choice seemed highly unlikely. Gideon was not a superhero by any stretch of the imagination. He was a victim of his society's ills, a man who had been influenced by the climate of cowardice that had crippled and enslaved the Israelites. He was such a prisoner of fear that he would hide in a winepress to thresh his small harvest of wheat (Judges 6:11).

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 11

(Read the Foreword and pages 1-13 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. So, what's happening within and around you right now? How would you describe your daily life? **Check** all that apply:

☐ Exciting

☐ Painful

☐ Stuck in the Past

☐ Busy

☐ BorinG

☐ Healing

☐ Progressing to the Future

☐ Dull and routine

Other: _____

2. You probably haven't retreated to a winepress, but where have you hidden yourself during discouraging times? Are you facing life with all its challenges with discouragement (like Gideon), or with courage, hope, and enthusiasm? **Circle** some of the feelings you have about your life right now:

Discouraged

Encouraged

Hopeful

Depressed

Peaceful

Confident

Worried

Fearful

Anxious

Trusting

Confused

Perplexed

Involved

Uninvolved

Prospering

Lacking

Other: _____

3. If you had been Gideon, what would you have said to the angel that showed up declaring, "The Lord is with you, you mighty person of fearless courage." **Write** down your response to the angel:

You are a mighty person who is courageous! Take God's word for it!

Day 2

GOD—THE MASTER ARTIST

Our God is a master artist! Consider the unfathomable wonder of creation, which even in its fallen condition gives us a fleeting glimpse into the genius of its Creator who, in His eternal mind, saw every detail down to the smallest particle while there was still nothing.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 15

1. **Read** pages 13-15 in *Live Before You Die*. Then **read out loud** Psalm 139 in your Bible. Personalize the passage for yourself. Replace the personal pronouns in the passage with your own name. Declare this psalm over your life. In fact, go ahead and memorize it.
2. God knows every detail about you—body, soul, and spirit. You are created in His image. And in Genesis 1:26-31 (read it), God declared that being created in His image is *blessed* and *very good*. **Write** a brief prayer of thanksgiving to God for being created in His image:

3. Regardless what others have said to you or about you that may be demeaning, negative, derogatory or prejudiced, God created you to be a masterpiece not a piece of junk. Do you really believe you're created in God's image, or do you lack faith, confidence and courage the way Gideon did? **Check** one:
 - ☐ I am blessed and created in God's image.
 - ☐ I see myself as broken, shattered, fragmented, and "not good."

If you have checked the second statement, please go to Romans 8:1-11. **Write** a brief paraphrase about what this passage says to you:

Day 3

YOU'RE NOT AN ACCIDENT

In thousands of classrooms all over the world teachers are indoctrinating naïve and impressionable students with the notion that they are an accident, the result of millions of years of random anomalies and lucky deformities, or that what they do with their lives is just a matter of preference and there is no divine designer who created them. But the Bible tells us that God designed us with a purpose in mind. Psalm 139:14 says we have been *fearfully and wonderfully made*.

—*Live Before You Die*, pp. 15-16

1. **Read** pages 15-19. **Write down** one sentence below from this section of the book that really speaks to your heart:
2. God formed and fashioned you in the womb. You may have been a joyful arrival as a baby for your parents. Or, you may have been an accident; perhaps, you were unwanted or don't even know your biological parents; or you may have been neglected, abandoned, or abused. The truth is, the Father loves you and formed you in the womb with purpose. **Complete** these sentences...
 - Gideon's purpose was _____
 - Jeremiah's purpose was _____
 - John the Baptist's purpose was _____
 - Jesus' purpose was _____
 - My purpose is _____

3. Perhaps completing the last sentence above was difficult for you. You may feel flawed, broken, or simply confused and lost. Knowing your purpose begins with knowing your Creator. If Ford had created you, then your purpose would be to be a vehicle. If a house builder had created you, your purpose would be to become a home. God is love. God created you to love and be loved. **Pray** right now thanking God for creating you and ask Him to show you what your purpose is.

Day 4

THE GOODWILL OF GOD

When Gideon looked in the mirror, all he could see were disadvantages and shortcomings. He doubted that he was capable of greatness and was not convinced the Lord had picked the right man for the job. But the Lord knew exactly what Gideon needed to hear, and He spoke words that went right to the heart of Gideon's inadequacy: "The Lord said to him, Surely I will be with you" (Judges. 6:16 AMP).

—*Live Before You Die*, p.20

1. The Angel of the Lord showed God's goodwill toward Gideon but he was slow to believe it. In spite of all the difficulties you may have faced in life, it's time to accept the goodwill of God toward you. **List** at least five ways God has shown goodwill toward you. You might begin with "giving me life."

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

2. **Read** Hebrews 13:5, Matthew 28:20, and Romans 8:31-32. In your own words, **rewrite or paraphrase** these assurances from God to you. What is He saying to you personally in these verses?

3. You have the ability to focus on whatever you choose. You can focus on the failures and disappointments of your past or the promises of God for your present and future. Read Romans 8:28 below. **Circle** and **underline** the words you need to focus on:

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." (NIV)

Day 5

GOD'S WILL FOR YOU

Salvation, atonement, forgiveness, justification, regeneration, redemption, reconciliation—these are all words used to describe what God desires to do in our lives. Turning ashes into beauty is not an auxiliary benefit of the Christian experience; it is the heart of the gospel, and it is God's will for you!

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 21

1. Will you **decide** right now to open yourself up to your future—God's good plans and will for you? Will you **commit** yourself to focus on His goodwill instead of your fears, failures, or past? **Check** anything that would hinder you from making such a commitment:

- ☐ Guilt, sin, transgressions, iniquity
- ☐ Pain, hurt, brokenness
- ☐ Fear, worry, anxiety
- ☐ Negative people or situations in my life now

Other: _____

2. 1 Peter 5:6 reveals: "**Cast** all your cares on God because He cares for you." Right now, **list** all the cares you will hand over to God and never take back:

Now **thank** God for taking these cares from you!

3. Philippians 1:6 declares that God has begun a good work in you and He will complete it. Describe a good work God has already begun in you; it can be something He started years ago or recently:

Live Before You Die Journal

WEEK 1

This week, you have read the foreword, introduction and first chapter of Daniel Kolenda's *Live Before You Die*. Using the Scriptures and wonderful stories with great teaching insights, Daniel encouraged you to see yourself as God sees you—*created in His image*. God has good plans and a future for you. His will for you is filled with potential and promise. Daniel concluded with this thought:

Jeremiah 29:11 says, “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.” Does God have a plan for your life? The answer is a resounding yes! But it's even better than that. Not only does God have a plan, but He also has a *good* plan that is ‘exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think’ (Eph. 3:20, NKJV).

At the end of each week in this Study Guide, you will have the opportunity to record what you have learned, heard from God, and decided to do in response to God's love and will for your life. Go through and discuss with your group or an accountability partner the key points presented in this chapter as you begin to put into action what God has revealed to you through this week's study.

Chapter 1 Review

This Chapter Review can be used in a small group or class study, or in a personal journal. Answers to the questions may be written down in this study guide or in your own personal/prayer journal. Each Key Statement (☞) points out a key truth or principle made in this chapter for you to reflect on and pray about in response to the questions below.

☞ The Bible states that “God is love” (1 John 4:8). This is why Jesus taught us to pray that God's will would be done on the earth.

Share a specific way you have personally discerned God's will concerning a decision you needed to make in a personal relationship, career or business decision. How did you know it was God's will?

Based on what you learned about God's purpose in your life, how would you explain this truth to someone else struggling to know God's will for his or her life?

- ☞ God allows us freedom of choice. He guides us, but only as we are moving. He directs our paths and respects our will.

Share a wrong or poor choice you have made that proves God allowed you freedom of choice. What did you learn about God through this experience?

How would you explain God's gift of freedom of choice to someone who has been misinformed about how this really works?

- ☞ The purpose of your existence is not to achieve your own happiness or success. Your role is to advance a cause greater than yourself.

What are you living for?

What will make your life count? How will your life make a difference in the lives of others?

What do others see reflected in the way you spend your time, energy, finances, and passion?

- ☞ Leonard Ravenhill once asked the question, "Is what you're living for worth Christ dying for?"

What does it mean to you to know you have an obligation, a debt, a compulsion, and a liability to the One who laid down His life for you?

How does the way you are living prove your love for Jesus? Give a specific example of what you are saying or doing to witness to your love for Christ.

How does the way you are living concretely and practically show others your love for Jesus?

- ☞ Throughout your life, no matter where you go or what you do, whenever God looks at you, He sees inside of you the potential He placed within you, and He is always calling to that potential. God wants to take your life from the junkyard of the devil and turn it into a masterpiece, a trophy of His amazing grace and mercy.

Give an example of how God has taken you or someone you know from the devil's junkyard and turned it into a masterpiece for His glory.

Describe some specific ways you can encourage others to see what God sees in them.

- ☞ God has a plan for your life.

How are you going to put into action what God has revealed about His plan for your life?

Write out a very specific action plan and ask for input from your group or accountability partner.

Write a thanksgiving prayer to God as you complete this week's lessons and ask Him how you can use what you have learned to help at least one other person this week.

WEEK

2

Have I Misunderstood God's Will?

*Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is
-his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

Romans 12:2 NIV

All four Gospels tell of the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, and an interesting fact is mentioned. The Bible says the people “took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord” (John 12:13). Have you ever wondered why they waved palm branches and cried, “Hosanna”? The reason is not what many people think.

Political zealots had used the palm branch as a symbol for quite some time. At one point the palm was used on coins minted during an insurrectionary rebellion, and they conjured images of Maccabean resistance. The palm branches seem to be an indication of the nationalistic and political expectations the people had for Jesus. This is further confirmed by the word *hosanna* itself, which means “save, please” in Aramaic. But Jesus was a great disappointment to the people of Israel, and a few days after waving their branches and crying “Hosanna,” they turned on Him and cried, “Crucify Him!”¹

The nation of Israel as a whole rejected their Messiah because He did not fit into their preconceived expectations. They were looking for a political deliverer, a man of war and conquest. They were looking for a king who would overthrow the oppressive Roman government and return the nation to its former glory. Instead they found a man of peace, meek and humble, riding on a lowly donkey rather than a warrior's stallion. To this day Jews around the world are praying for the arrival of their long-awaited Messiah, but He came two thousand years ago, and many still do not recognize Him because He is not what they are looking for.

Preconceptions produce misconceptions that can blind us to what is obvious, and this happens to many people as they seek God's will for their lives. God already has

a purpose for you that has been in existence since before you were born! In fact, God may have already revealed His will to you, and you might be looking right at it, but misconceptions might be keeping you from recognizing it. In this chapter I want to unmask three common misconceptions about God's will.

—Live Before You Die, p. 23

Get ready! This week you are going to do away with those hindering misconceptions!

Move ahead to Day 1.

Day 1

MISCONCEPTION #1: GOD'S WILL IS HARD TO FIGURE OUT

“God’s will is often like that oasis in the desert; it is a life-giving source of purpose and reason for being. In most cases God’s will is not a faraway mystery but something within view and something accessible. Yet what is right in front of our faces is often the easiest thing to dismiss, and God’s will may be so obvious that we overlook it thinking that it must be more difficult.”

–*Live Before You Die*, p.25

(Read pages 24-26 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. Have you ever noticed that when a person first becomes a believer, he seems to easily hear God’s voice and sense His leading?

How easily do you hear God’s voice? (Circle One)

Very Easily Moderately Easily
Moderately Difficult Very Difficult

The scientist in my story died because

His knowledge and experience

2. Have you heard sermons about God’s will that left you feeling discouraged and more confused than ever? Have you been led to believe that you need to be a prophet to know what God is saying? Does it seem as if the more you search, the less you find?

What are some of the reasons you discovered in this chapter that might cause your confusion? _____

Define childlike faith. _____

Give an example of a time when you exhibited this childlike faith. _____

Do you believe God has a plan He is trying to reveal to you? What do you need to do to begin to see what God is trying to show you? _____

3. Read 1 Corinthians 14:33. Write this verse out in your own words.

Day 2

MISCONCEPTION #2: GOD ALWAYS REVEALS HIS WILL SUDDENLY AND DRAMATICALLY

Recently in an interview I was asked how God had me shown me that it was His will for me to be doing what I am doing in ministry. I think the interviewer was hoping to hear that I had a vision, a dream, or heard an audible voice that gave me specific instructions. But my answer was quite different. I told him that as I look back on the sequence of miraculous events that has brought me to the place where I am now, the hand of God and His divine orchestration are quite evident. As I obeyed God's call one step at a time, His plan and purpose unfolded, layer by layer, with many confirmations along the way. I have found that this is usually the way God reveals His plan: one step at a time.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 27

(Read pages 26-28 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. God's will is never revealed in such a way that it negates our need for _____ upon Him.

Why is that? (See Genesis 15:1 for your answer).

God doesn't want to just _____ you to your inheritance,
He wants to _____ you there.

Why is this?

Ultimately whether or not we fulfill God's will for our lives depends on whether or not we

How do we indicate to God we are ready to receive His next set of instructions?

2. Jesus laid out a principle in Luke 16:10 that is absolutely essential in the quest to discover God's will for our lives. Read this verse in several different translations. Now honestly answer the following questions:

Are you doing what you already know to do? _____ What things or tasks are you doing?

If you are not, do you think God is going to give you more instructions?

Are you being faithful in the small things? _____ If not, is God going to entrust you with more important things? _____ Why? _____

What do you have to change in your life to be considered faithful in the small things God has already told you to do?

3. When you think about God's call and will for your life, don't think so much in terms of where you will eventually end up or what you will ultimately do. Instead think in terms of what God's will is for you right now!

What is it that you should be doing right now?

Draw a simple illustration showing where you are today and what is in your hand right now. Not sure I personally understand what to draw.

Draw a pathway(?) made up of stepping stones in front of your figure.

What does God want from you today? _____ Write it on that first stepping stone. Now do it.

As God reveals the next step, add it to your illustration.

As you follow Him in obedience, step by step and day by day, the picture will become clearer and He will entrust you with more and more. Eventually the day will come when you will look back on the many steps you took in faith and obedience, and you will see how the Lord carefully and strategically orchestrated each one in a way you never could have engineered in your own strength or wisdom.

Day 3

MISCONCEPTION #3: GOD WANTS EVERYONE TO GO INTO FULL-TIME MINISTRY

I have often seen how people have experienced disasters in ministry because they felt the tugging of God's call on their lives and they misinterpreted that as being a call into full-time, fivefold vocational ministry. We must not forget that "each has his own special gift from God, one of this kind and one of another" (1 Corinthians 7:7 AMP). If you venture outside the call and gift of God, you will not have the grace to do the job, and this could be disastrous for the one who has wrongly discerned God's call and all those unfortunate enough to wind up under his leadership.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 28

(Read pages 28-31 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. The kingdom of God needs ambassadors in every area of society.

Define ambassador: _____

Whose ambassador are you called to be? (See 2 Corinthians 5:20) _____

List some ways you can be an ambassador in your neighborhood and work place: _____

2. Read Matthew 13:31–33.

The kingdom of heaven is designed to _____, _____, and _____ all that it comes in contact with.

What does the word infiltrate mean to you?

List some ways you can effectively infiltrate where you work and live: _____

3. Read Ephesians 4:12. Use whatever sphere of influence God places you in to further His kingdom and authority!

Circle the sphere(s) of influence you are called to infiltrate:

Government	Media	Financial Community	Your Neighborhood
School or University	Medical Field	Business Community	Home Retail
Legal System	Fast Food Industry	Community Action	Political

Other _____

4. God wants to use the gifts, talent, and calling He's given *you* to impact the world for His glory. What are your God-given gifts and talents? _____

How can you use them within your sphere of influence? _____

Day 4

PREACH CHRIST OR PLANT CORN

Some of us are called to be evangelists and others to become farmers, and God will use both for His glory. God calls some people to be used for His purposes in the business world. He calls other people to become teachers and others to be musicians. He is also calling people to work in sales, engineering, medicine, law, politics, and a myriad of other careers. God may call one to preach the gospel and the other to support him financially. They are both of equal value, and God will reward them both accordingly for the different roles they played, if they are both obedient and faithful to His call.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 31

(Read pages 31-34 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. Read Romans 8:28.

What is the promise of this verse? _____

How do you qualify to receive this promise? _____

2. How did the people in the stories of this chapter allow God to use them for His purposes:

The heart doctor: _____

The stay at home mother of six: _____

The black sheep of the family: _____

Which of these people do you relate to the most and why? _____

How can you use what you have learned to become more influential in your sphere of influence? _____

3. In the story of the evangelist and his brother, which one are you most closely like in your own life? _____

Describe why you relate to the one more than the other. _____

One of the ways to begin to discover your purpose is to think about your passion. Circle an area you are truly passionate about:

Arts or Music

Teaching

Medicine

Helping Others

Cooking

Gardening

Missions

Politics

Writing

Auto Repair

Outdoor Activities

Sports

Other _____

God's purpose is generally directly connected to what you are passionate about. Focus in on your passion and you will begin to see how your gifts and talents can flow within fulfilling your passion.

Record what God is beginning to reveal to you in this area

Day 5

TECHNICIANS FOR JESUS

Most of the time when people think of the ministry of Christ for all Nations, they think of evangelist Reinhard Bonnke or myself— the preachers. But some of the most important people in our ministry work behind the scenes. One absolutely critical component to our mission is the technical team. These men who drive the trucks; set up the platform and lights; run the sound, the generators, and the cameras; and keep all the equipment running feel the same call to evangelism as the preachers, and they take their jobs just as seriously. Some have even given their lives as martyrs for the gospel. We salute them as the champions of the faith that they are!

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 34

(Read pages 34-36 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. Read the Parable of the Talents in Mathew 25:14-30. Discover the lesson of this parable by filling in the chart below. Think about how this applies to your own life.

<u>Servant #1</u>	<u>Servant #2</u>	<u>Servant #3</u>
# Talents	# Talents	# Talents
Gained	Gained	Gained
Reward	Reward	Reward
What did the master say to Servant #1? _____		
Why? _____		
To Servant #2 _____		
Why? _____		
To Servant #3 _____		
Why? _____		
Which servant are you striving to be like? _____		
Why? _____		
How are you going to become like him? _____		

2. Read 1 Timothy 4:14. What is Timothy instructed to do? _____

Why was Timothy told to do this? (See 1 Timothy 4:15-16) _____

God is giving this same instruction to you today. Who are the hearers God is calling you to “save” through your persevering in your gifting? _____

3. Read 1 Peter 4:10-11.

There are several insights from these verse:

- a) How many have received a gift from God? _____
 - b) What is the purpose of this gift from God? _____
 - c) What is it each person is to faithfully do with his or her gift? _____
 - d) How much effort should this gifted person put into using it? _____
 - e) Who is to receive the praise and glory? _____
 - f) Are you obeying the instructions in this verse? _____ Give an example: _____
-

Whether God calls you to full-time, vocational ministry or calls you to be His ambassador in the world of business, science, government, entertainment, or wherever, the principles are the same. The keys to discovering God’s will are the same, the challenges and pitfalls are the same, and in the end, the reward will be the same. Contrary to what many people believe, God does not reward us based on how many people we lead to Jesus. He rewards us based on our obedience and faithfulness to His call and will. May you be faithful and obedient in whatever field He calls you to so that in the end you will hear those words, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant” (Matthew 25:21).

This week you read about preconceptions that produce misconceptions and blind you to what is obvious as you seek God’s will for your life. God may have already begun to reveal His will to you as you read through this chapter. You might have discovered some misconceptions that have been keeping you from recognizing it. Time to deal with them and help yourself move forward in discovering God’s will for your life so you can then help others as well.

Review the key (➡) points from this chapter and discuss them with your accountability partner, small group or class. Also do your own personal review and record what you have learned in your journal.

- ➡ **God’s will is often like that oasis in the desert; it is a life-giving source of purpose and a reason for being.**

Share how the story of the science teacher and students in the desert helped you see through some of your own preconceived misconceptions about discerning God’s will for your life.

Live Before You Die Journal

WEEK 2

- ☞ Remember that God is not the author of confusion. Read 1 Corinthians 14:33. He does not create mirages to deceive you. Discovering God's will for your life is *not* difficult. He wants you to know and live in it!

Share a time of confusion that kept you from discovering God's will for your life. How are you going to avoid that situation in the future? _____

How are you going to help others avoid this type of confusion while seeking God's will for their lives? _____

- ☞ God reveals His will slowly, layer by layer over time rather than in a single, earth-shattering epiphany.

Have you experienced the layer by layer process of discerning God's will for your life? Describe below some of those layers (stepping stones). _____

- ☞ Ultimately, whether or not we fulfill God's will for our lives depends on whether or not we are willing to follow Him even when He does not reveal all the details of our journey. In the end we will all discover that the *real* prize was not the perfect career, wonderful spouse, or right education. The real reward for following God is God Himself.

*Share a time when you have reached a goal and discovered it was not the *real* prize.*

Explain below how you would help someone understand the misconceptions presented in this chapter:

Misconception #1: God's Will Is Hard to Figure Out _____

Misconception #2: God Always Reveals His Will Suddenly and Drastically _____

Misconception #3: God Wants Everyone to Go Into Full-Time Ministry _____

In reality, most Christians are called to serve God in “secular” spheres of influence. But one thing is certain: no matter what God calls you to do, it is for His glory and for the expansion of His kingdom! Will you answer God’s call today? Write down your response to God’s call:

Write a thanksgiving prayer to God as you complete this week’s lessons and ask Him how you can use what you have learned to help at least one other person this week.

WEEK

3

How Do I Recognize God's Will?

This book is about discovering God's will for your life. When we 'discover' a thing, we are actually uncovering or finding something that is already in existence but that we were unaware of previously. And while many people are desperately seeking God's will for their lives, the reality is that often what they are looking for is right under their nose, but they continue to look for it because they don't recognize it. In order to recognize a precious stone, one would need to be familiar with its characteristics and know what it should look like. In the same way, if we desire to discover God's will for our lives, we must learn to recognize the characteristics of His will.

—Live Before You Die, p. 38

Read the story of the North Carolina farmer's field on page 37. A gemstone was in that field all along just waiting for someone to come along and "discover" it. For generations farmer after farmer had worked in that field. Undoubtedly that emerald had been seen thousands of times before, but it was overlooked because, to the casual observer, it appeared to be nothing more than an ordinary rock.

Get ready! This week you are going to learn how to recognize the characteristics of God's will for your life!

Move ahead to Day 1!

Day 1

CHARACTERISTIC #1: GOD HAS A STANDARD WILL AND A SPECIFIC WILL

As we begin the journey of discovering God's will for our lives, it may seem like the options of tasks God may be calling us to are endless, and this can feel overwhelming. The good news is that God has already gone to great lengths to reveal to us in His Word what His will is for everyone—I call this the “standard will of God.” But in addition to His standard will, God has something tailor-made for each of our lives. I call this the “specific will of God.”

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 39

(Read pages 38-40 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. It is important to understand that the specific will of God for your life will never go against His standard will. On a separate sheet of paper or on your computer, take some time to go over these next 4 steps that will show you how to see God's standard will for your life.

Step 1: List the options and decisions you are facing in your life right now

Step 2: The best way to instantly eliminate confusion is to find out what God has to say about your situation so use a Concordance to look up Scriptures related to the options and decisions you have listed.

Step 3: Record what God's Word has to say about each one.

Step 4: Write the way you are now going to resolve each choice.

2. God's *specific* will for your life is something that is unique to you as an individual. Have you ever tried to imitate someone else thinking that was God's will for your life? How did that turn out for you? Explain the situation below.

3. Your quest to discover God's will for your life must begin with the Word of God. Make a sticky note of this important principle and place it on your desk or on your bathroom mirror. Read it out loud to yourself each and every day!

**★ Everything I do must line up with God's Word, and He will
never call me to do something that is contrary to it. ★**

Note: When God says never He means never! When He says everything, He means everything!

Day 2

CHARACTERISTIC #2: GOD HAS A “GOOD WILL” AND A “PERFECT WILL”

God has a wonderful plan for our lives. But because God has given us the freedom to choose whether or not we are going to follow His will, it seems there are actually four possibilities for how we can respond to discovering God’s will for our lives.

–*Live Before You Die*, p. 40

(Read pages 40–42 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. Fill in the blanks to complete the four possibilities for how you can respond to discovering God’s will for your life:
 - a) You could be content to remain _____ of God’s will.
 - b) You could know what God wants you to do but _____ to _____ Him and do things your own way instead.
 - c) You could know God’s will and follow it in part, but still _____ for _____ than what God had in mind.
 - d) You can choose to contend for _____ than God’s best in your life.

Highlight the one that most closely describes where you are right now in your search for God’s will for your life. What do you need to do to achieve number four in your life? _____

2. There is a perpetual conflict in the Christian life between what is “good” and what is “God.” Describe the difference. Give an example of a time when you did something that was good instead of what was of God. Include the consequences of your choice. _____

3. God has a “good” will for your life, but He also has a “perfect” will. His perfect will and the blessings that accompany it are reserved for those who are willing to be radically _____ and to _____ when necessary. Are you truly seeking God’s perfect will for your life? _____

Define an illusion: _____

What will happen if you settle for the illusion instead of God's perfect will for your life?

4. Will you decide from now on to yield to God's will, do it God's way, and wait for God's best? _____
-

5. The good will and the perfect will of God do not have to be exclusive. Read Romans 12:1-2 and write in your own words how God's good will and God's perfect will work together.
-
-
-

Day 3

CHARACTERISTIC #3: GOD OFTEN CALLS US TO DO THE IMPOSSIBLE

The 'You Can Do It' mind-set needs to be replaced with another, which essentially says, 'I *can't* do it on my own, but I can do all things *through Christ*. With His help and blessing anything is possible.' Finding the will of God always requires faith for the impossible and a childlike dependence upon Him. The Bible is filled with the accounts of men and women who found their destiny in the perfect will of God by doing things that were impossible for them to do on their own.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 43

(Read pages 42-45 in *Live Before You Die*.)

God takes great pleasure in doing things through us that only He can do, so that in the end He receives all the glory, honor, and praise.

1. Read about **Noah's Impossible Project** in Genesis 6. Give as many details about the ark as you can. How long did it take Noah? What did he do?

List and look at all of the NT references to Noah as well. What principles can we learn from these accounts? _____

2. Read what the Bible says about **Abraham and His Impossible Promise** in Hebrews 11:11-12. How was this elderly couple able to receive their promise? _____

3. What excuses did **Moses** use in Exodus 3 and 4?

I am not _____

I don't know what to _____

What if _____?

What did God do to help **Moses** accomplish **His Impossible Passage**? _____

What did Moses have to do to fulfill God's will for his life? _____

4. Though a young girl named Mary did not understand how God was going to accomplish **Her Impossible Pregnancy**, read how she responded to the angel of the Lord in Luke 1:38. What was the results of her willingness to submit to the will of God? _____

Throughout history God has always chosen very ordinary people to do very extraordinary things. Some were men while others were women. Some were young and others old. Some were well educated, and others were almost illiterate. What was it they all had in common?

What impossible mission has God asked you to accomplish in your life? _____

How are you going to accomplish it? _____

Day 4

CHARACTERISTIC #4: THERE ARE TIMES AND SEASONS IN GOD'S WILL

As we are seeking the will of God, we can easily become frustrated if we don't understand that just as there are times and seasons in nature, there are also times and seasons in our lives and in the process of fulfilling God's will. This is what Paul was referring to when he said, "And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart" (Galatians 6:9).

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 45

(Read pages 45-47 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. We will all experience a five-step cyclical process as we move toward the fulfillment of God's will in our lives. Knowing this important truth will help us continue on with our journey knowing the cycle will continue and we will reap a bountiful harvest if we do not grow weary of doing good.

Label the boxes below with the five stages from the list. Indicate with arrows on the circle the direction the cycle will follow from one stage to the next. Write a brief definition of each stage in the list below.

1st The Birth of a Vision _____

2nd The Place of Preparation _____

3rd The Place of Wilderness and Struggle _____

4th The Place of Realization of the Vision _____

5th The Place of New Beginnings _____

Highlight the stage you are currently in.

The attainment of the dream is not a _____, but only another step in the cycle that will continue to repeat itself throughout your life like the circle above. As God entrusts you with more, greater amounts of _____ will be required, and the _____ of the battles you faced will always increase. However, the size and quality of the harvest will also _____ as you continue to move forward in your journey to fulfill God's will for your life.

2. Now that you know the stages of this journey, do not grow weary of doing good. Are you ready to continue on to the next stage knowing God has the cycle all worked out to accomplish great things in your life?

Day 5

CHARACTERISTIC #5: GOD IS INTERESTED IN OUR JOURNEY, NOT JUST OUR DESTINATION

In most cases there is a great deal of time that elapses between when God calls us and when we have fulfilled His will for our lives. What we need to understand is that the journey is an important process that matters very much to God. The process of following Him in obedience, step by step, through many unknowns, trials, and difficulties, is a significant part of our development and preparation.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 48

(Read pages 48-49 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. Read 2 Peter 1:5-11. God uses the journey to teach you _____, to refine your _____, and to _____ you for the greater challenges that lie ahead. Notice the end result given in 2 Peter 1:8 when you willingly submit to God's will and go through the process the way God has laid it out for you. What does this process, this journey keep you from becoming?

Define ineffective: _____

Define unproductive: _____

2. Your faith is being stretched, and your patience is being tried. Your spiritual ears are being tuned as you listen to hear the voice of God's Spirit. You are confronting doubts and questions. Why is this so important during your journey? (See Hebrews 11:6) _____

Write this verse out in your own words and personalize it by inserting your own name, then read it out loud to yourself. _____

WEEK 3

3. You may be going through a great struggle, but that struggle is all part of the process of birthing all God wants to do in your life. God *always* prepares us in advance for what He has in store for us!

Read Deuteronomy 8:2.

Why did God lead the children of Israel through the desert for forty years? _____

Who needed to know the answer to the test? _____

How do you know if you will keep His commands if you have never been tested? _____

Your wilderness time, the struggles you go through will show you how strong you really are.

That process may be uncomfortable, but it is necessary nonetheless. Get ready. Good things are coming for you!

Live Before You Die Journal

WEEK 3

This week you learned to recognize the five characteristics of God's will. Perhaps as you worked through this chapter you discovered God's will for your life was right under your nose, you just didn't know how to recognize it. Even if it has not been fully revealed to yet, now you are equipped with the knowledge you need to recognize it when it is revealed to you. This chapter should have also given you some very practical tools to help others who may also be searching for God's perfect will for their life.

Chapter 3 Review

This Chapter Review can be used in a small group or class study, or in a personal journal. Answers to the questions may be written down in this study guide or in your own personal/prayer journal. Each Key Statement (☞) points out a key truth or principle made in this chapter for you to reflect on and pray about in response to the questions below.

- ☞ It is important to understand that the specific will of God for your life will never go against His standard will—what He has already revealed to us in His Word.

Based on this principle, how have you changed your decision making process and the way you are seeking to know God's will for your life?

- ☞ There is a perpetual conflict in the Christian life between what is "good" in human terms and what is "God." Both can exist if they are under God's rubric, but dangerous if they are not. Read the poem on pages 41-42.

Share how has this impacted your life and the decisions you are going to make from today forward?

- ☞ God has a "good" will for your life, but He also has a "perfect" will. His perfect will and the blessings that accompany it are reserved for those who are willing to be radically obedient and to wait when necessary. Those who are slow to learn this lesson will make many trips around the wilderness and endure much unnecessary hurt and loss.

LIVE BEFORE YOU DIE JOURNAL

This should have been an “ah-ha” moment for you. Share how this truth has helped you in your search for God’s perfect will for your life.

- **Finding the will of God always requires faith for the impossible and a childlike dependence upon Him.**

Share how you would share this important though often difficult truth with someone who truly seeks to learn the perfect will of God for their life.

- **The process of following God in obedience, step by step, through many unknowns, trials, and difficulties, is a significant part of our development and preparation.**

This is a particularly difficult concept for many Christians to grasp. Many are under the false impression that once they become a Christian their struggle should end. Discuss ways you can help them understand their need for the struggles, tests, and difficulties?

Write a thanksgiving prayer to God as you complete this week’s lessons and ask Him how you can use what you have learned to help at least one other person this week.

WEEK

4

What If God Calls Me to Do Something I Don't Want to Do?

Many people really are afraid to discover God's will for their lives, even if subconsciously. They think, 'What if God wants me to do something I don't want to do? What if God wants me to do something I'm not good at? What if doing God's will means I have to give up my hopes and dreams?' I think sometimes people haven't discovered God's will simply because they are afraid to.

—Live Before You Die, p. 52

Sometimes the songs we sing and the missionary stories we hear about the hardships and toils of the mission field scare us into thinking God's will for our life means incredible hardship and leaving all that we love behind to serve Him. Though life will bring trials and tribulations, Jesus has promised He will be there walk us through them and that God will never give us more than we can handle. He has designed us for a specific purpose and we will have to go through a process of fine tuning, but God is 100% for our success in accomplishing what He has designed and called us to do. All we have to do is cooperate with that design and stay in God's timing. When we do, we like James can say, "Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds" (James 1:2 NIV).

Get ready! This week you are going to overcome any fear you have that God is going to call you to some dreadful, horrible task that you will hate. In fact, you will discover it is a joy not a burden to live in God's will for your life!

Move ahead to Day 1!

Day 1

WHERE DO YOU FIT?

I have heard people teach that God's will is always difficult and requires great sacrifice. But I have seen that the most effective people in any ministry, occupation, or just life in general are not the ones forcing themselves to do some dreadful task because they feel it is God's will. Rather it is the ones who are doing something they enjoy so much, they feel guilty taking a salary for it.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 52

(Read pages 52-53 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. There is a way you can know what God wants from you. Ask yourself these three questions and you will be well on your way to discovering God's perfect will for your life.

What are the needs that I see lacking in the church? _____

What do I enjoy? _____

What brings me delight and satisfaction? _____

Now take a step farther and dig a little deeper by asking yourself:

What makes me want to jump out of bed in the morning? _____

What challenges me? _____

What thrills and exhilarates me? _____

What gives me a sense that this is what I was made to do? _____

2. Does this mean obedience, death to self, and sacrifice are never required or necessary? _____

Read John 16:33 and write it out in your own words to answer this question completely.

3. Read 2 Corinthians 11:23–28 where Paul talks about his journey. Then read what he says in Romans 8:18. When you are doing what you were created to do, there is a taste of sweetness in the _____, a sense of fulfillment in the _____, and an enduring hope in the _____.

Day 2

WHAT A GLORIOUS DESTINY!

Jesus was the greatest apostle, prophet, pastor, teacher, and evangelist who ever lived, and when He ascended to heaven, He made provision for His agenda to continue on the earth by giving men and women the gifts needed to equip the saints to do the work of His ministry. According to Ephesians 4:13, the end result will be that the body of Christ (the people of God) will attain “unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” What a glorious destiny!

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 54

(Read page 54 in *Live Before You Die*.)

Ephesians 4:7-8, 11-13 will help us to understand how God’s will and calling works.

1. What does verse 11 tell us the five callings of God are?

2. Where does verse 8 say these came from? _____

3. Why does verse 12 tell us these were given? _____

4. What does verse 13 say is the ultimate accomplish of these callings? _____

5. What does verse 7 say is so important and powerful about these ministry gifts?

How has this changed your mindset on the ministry gifts Jesus has given to His followers?

Are you gifted in any of these areas? _____ If yes,

Explain how you've used this gift _____

Explain ways or places that you can use this gift this week or the next _____

Day 3

BATTERIES INCLUDED

Did you ever receive some special gift for your birthday as a kid, then after you had torn open the package you realized it needed batteries to operate? When Jesus gives a gift, He also gives the batteries the gift requires to operate. The battery for “the gift of Christ” is grace. But He will give you only the measure of grace you need for the gift He has given.

–*Live Before You Die*, p. 55

(Read page 55 in *Live Before You Die*.)

- Grace comes with every gift! Use a Bible dictionary to define the word grace: _____
 Have you experienced grace in your life? _____ Explain: _____
- Jesus is the fullest expression of all of the five ministries, but when He ascended He distributed His ministry to those He has called to continue His ministry on the earth. He gave gifts:
 - to the apostles (define apostle): _____
 - to the prophets (define prophet): _____
 - to the pastors (define pastor): _____
 - to the teachers (define teacher): _____
 - to the evangelists (define evangelist): _____

Not only did Jesus give the gifts, He also gave grace according to the measure of the gift.

Why do you need grace in order to operate in your God given gift? _____

- Whenever God calls you to do something, He will _____ supply the _____ measure of _____ so you will be able to operate in your gifting.

Why is this so important to understand as you begin to operate in the gift that God has given you to achieve His will in your life? _____

4. Circle the words below that describe what happens when you try to operate outside your gift:

Miserable
Burdensome

Difficult
Frustrating

Fun
Easy

Fulfilling

5. Based on what you have learned, are you operating outside your gift? Explain your answer.

Day 4

When the gift and grace are on a person's life to do something, it seems so natural and obvious to them, they think everyone else should be doing it as well. There are two lessons to learn from this principle.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 57

(Read pages 56-57 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. What are the two lessons learned from this principle?

- Don't try to force _____
Why? _____
- If you think everyone should be doing it then _____
Have you felt this way? _____ Explain your answer: _____

2. Read 1 Corinthians 7:7. Write this verse out in your own words.

3. What did Paul obviously understand about the correlation between the gift and grace?

4. Why is it so important that you understand this as well? _____

5. Is this an area God has revealed that you need to work on in your own life? _____

6. How is this going to change the way you look at not only your own gift but the gifts God has given to others? _____

Day 5

A JOY NOT A BURDEN

When God's gift and grace are resting on a person for a certain task or calling, he is able to do with joy what would seem difficult or even impossible to others.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 57

(Read pages 57-58 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. Design a magnet to put on your refrigerator that reminds you of this most amazing truth:

★ *Grace comes with the gift, and the grace makes all the difference.* ★

2. After reading this chapter how do you know you do not need to be afraid to discover God's will for your life? _____

3. If God calls you to do something, He will also give you _____

4. Read James 1:2. When you are in God's will, covered by His grace, it is _____!

5. List the tasks are you currently doing that bring you joy. What do others think about what you do? Can you see how God's grace has given you the grace to use your gift in an amazing way?

Live Before You Die Journal

WEEK 4

This week you discovered that if God calls you to do something, He will also give you the grace to do it. When you are in God's will and covered by His grace, it is the most wonderful place to be in the whole world. You also discovered that trying to operate out of your specific gifts brings unnecessary struggle, difficulty, confusion, and frustration.

[Larry – Would this be good place to either give them or tell them where they could go to take that ministry gift test you use at your seminars?]

Chapter 4 Review

This Chapter Review can be used in a small group or class study, or in a personal journal. Answers to the questions may be written down in this study guide or in your own personal/prayer journal. Each Key Statement (↪) points out a key truth or principle made in this chapter for you to reflect on and pray about in response to the questions below.

- ↪ When you find something that makes you want to jump out of bed in the morning, when you find something that challenges and thrills you, when you find something that you sense you were made to do, chances are you are getting close to discovering God's will for your life.

Share how this amazing revelation has helped you in your quest to discover God's will for your life.

Watch for others you can share this amazing revelation with as you go through your day. If you have already shared it with another, talk about your experience.

- ↪ Read 2 Corinthians 11:23–28 where Paul talks about his journey. Then read what he says in Romans 8:18. When a person is doing what he was created to do, there is a taste of sweetness in the sacrifice, a sense of fulfillment in the obedience, and an enduring hope in the suffering.

Have you discovered what it is God has created you to do? Share how this discovery has changed your whole outlook on life.

Prepare a testimony of how this has changed your life that you can share with another in three minutes or less. Write it out here and share it with your accountability partner or group. Continue to fine tune it so you always have it handy to share with anyone God brings across your path.

Perhaps ask a friend to video tape you sharing your experience then you would have it to review and critique. When you fine tune it you could even share it on one of the social networks.

✎ **When God's gift and grace are resting on a person for a certain task or calling, he is able to do with joy what would seem difficult or even impossible to others.**

Share how this has become a reality in your life: _____

With this understanding, you never need to be afraid to discover God's will for your life. If He calls you to do something, He will also give you the grace to do it. When you are in God's will, covered by His grace, it is the most wonderful place to be in the whole world!

Write a thanksgiving prayer to God as you complete this week's lessons and ask Him how you can use what you have learned to help at least one other person this week.

WEEK

5

What If I Have Already Missed the Will of God?

Before God called you, before you were saved, in fact, before you were even born, God knew how your life would play out. Before you had made even one mistake, God took all your future failures into account, and in His infinite wisdom and love He preempted your blunders with a plan to turn your tragedy into a triumph in the end. With this knowledge you can be confident that if you are still breathing, it is never too late for God to intervene and restore what the locust and cankerworm have eaten.

—Live Before You Die, p. 59

However, it's important to understand that disobedience to God's will is not a trivial matter. God's grace does not guarantee that we will never have to live with negative consequences of our actions. Many times, even though God forgives and restores, there are still scars that remain from disobedience, and often the process of correcting our errant route is long and painful.

Get ready! If you have missed the perfect will of God in your life, you need to take the following steps immediately.

Move ahead to day 1!

Day 1

STOP!

Jonah was called to go to Nineveh. The easiest, fastest, and most comfortable way would have been by ship. But because he disobeyed God's command, Jonah chose the hard way. Although he still ultimately made it to Nineveh, by the time he arrived he had been through a storm, thrown off a ship, and swallowed by a big fish. He spent three days inside that fish and was finally vomited onto the beach. Yes, Jonah made it to Nineveh all right, but the first option would definitely have been better. If you have missed the perfect will of God in your life, you need to take the following steps immediately.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 60

(Read page 60 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. Read the short book of Jonah.
2. On the map below, the top line represents a direct route to God's will for Jonah.

Chart Jonah's actual journey to Nineveh on the bottom line. Include the storm and the whale Jonah encountered as he chose the hard way to his destination. Jonah eventually reached his destination, but what might have happened had Jonah stopped at either of his turning points and gotten back on the right course?

3. Are you going in the wrong direction? Before you do anything else, you need to _____.

4. Have you ever gotten off track and used this excuse for continuing on in the wrong direction: "What's the use? I've already blown it. I might as well just give in." Write a personal example of when this happened in your life. How did that turn out for you? _____

5. If you are still on the wrong track as you read this book, you need to realize that every day you continue on that path is a day you can never get back. Don't waste one more day or hour moving in the wrong direction. Will you *Stop now*?

Day 2

ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR MISTAKE AND REPENT

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 1:9 NAS

Even if your mistake was not caused by deliberate disobedience against the known will of God, you need to acknowledge your mistake and ask for forgiveness. Whatever the case may be, there is still redemption for everyone in the great grace and love of God.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 61

(Read pages 61-62 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. Contrary to what many people think, repentance is not a dirty word. What does repent really mean?
2. What does it mean to make repentance a lifestyle?
3. What you turn away from is not really the issue. It is what you turn *to* that makes the difference. Use the analogy of hiking in the wilderness using a compass to illustrate this important concept about repentance.
 - Draw a hiker in the middle of each of the paths below.
 - Have one hiker turn 180 degrees and go in the opposite direction. Will he reach his desired destination that way? _____ Where will he end up? _____
 - Have the second hiker adjust his direction according to the compass and recalibrate a few degrees. What are this hiker's chances of reaching the desired destination?
4. It may be time for you to make an adjustment in your direction. Turn to Jesus, and you will automatically turn from sin. Turn to Jesus, and you will always be facing in the right direction. If you have missed God's will, you need to stop moving in the wrong direction, acknowledge your mistake, and then get your heart realigned with Christ. Will you do that today before you get any further off track?

Day 3

START AFRESH

The Lord's loving kindnesses indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness.

Lamentations 3:22-23 NAS

God's mercy is truly an unfathomable wonder. Often we have a difficult time wrapping our minds around the scope of God's grace, but it is true—His mercy is new every morning! Every day is a new day. God is willing to forgive and offer us another chance every single day.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 62

(Read pages 62-63 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. Define the key words in Lamentations 3:22-23 using a Bible dictionary:

- Loving kindness means: _____

- Compassion means: _____

- Faithfulness means: _____

- Mercy means: _____

2. These are all attributes of God and the Bible adds an amazing dimension to them by saying they are new _____.! What does that mean as far as God's forgiveness is concerned? _____

3. Does this amazing promise give us a license to sin? _____ (Read Romans 6:1-2.)
Explain your answer: _____

4. What is the benefit given in this chapter if we follow God's directions and immediately stop, repent, turnaround, and start a fresh with Him? _____

Day 4

LEARN FROM YOUR PAST

As the saying goes, “Hindsight is always 20/20.” The reality is that we cannot go back in time and undo things that have been done. But what we can do, and must do, is stop moving in the wrong direction, acknowledge our mistakes, repent, and then move on.

–*Live Before You Die*, p. 64

(Read page 64 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. Some people live with terrible regret over the past. Everyone makes mistakes. Some of those mistakes may be the result of disobedience to the known will of God. But most are a result of:

- a lack of _____
- a lack of _____
- _____
- _____
- _____ of the facts.

Highlight the one(s) that have most often caused your past mistakes. If you would have known in the past what you know today, would you have made different decisions? _____

Explain: _____

2. What gave Jesus the right to contradict the demands of the Law of Moses in John 8:10-11?

Back your answer up with Scripture.

3. Did Jesus simply dismiss this woman’s adultery as though it were unimportant? _____
Defend your answer.

4. What were Jesus’ instructions to this woman caught in adultery? _____

5. What are His instructions to us today? _____
_____ (Read Psalm 103:12 and Romans 8:1).
6. Are you willing to obey these instructions and begin to move forward on your journey to discovering God's will for your life?

Day 5

DON'T LIVE IN THE PAST

*But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,
I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

Philippians 3:13–14 NAS

If ever anyone had a past to be ashamed of, it was Paul the Apostle, but this was his confession.

(Read pages 64–65 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. What is the difference between learning from the past and living in it? _____

2. Why do we need to learn from our mistakes? _____

3. Explain why the author said, “To live in the past is to insult the spirit of grace and the sacrifice Jesus made on the cross.” _____

4. Have you been washed in the blood of Jesus? _____ If your answer is yes then God does not _____ you. Are you still condemning yourself for your past mistakes? _____

5. Jesus is saying to you today, “Now, go and sin no more.” Will you obey today? _____

Live Before You Die Journal

WEEK 5

This week you learned there is still redemption for everyone in the great grace and love of God. As long as you are still breathing, God has a way for you to get back on track. You learned the steps necessary to move off of where you are and move ahead in God's plan for your life. Stop what you are doing, acknowledge your mistake, repent, turn toward Jesus, and start afresh. Learn from your past mistakes, but set up your camp and live there. Move on with the remaining time you have and live from this moment forward in obedience to the will of God.

Chapter 5 Review

This Chapter Review can be used in a small group or class study, or in a personal journal. Answers to the questions may be written down in this study guide or in your own personal/prayer journal. Each Key Statement (☞) points out a key truth or principle made in this chapter for you to reflect on and pray about in response to the questions below.

- ☞ You can be confident that if you are still breathing, it is never too late for God to intervene and restore what the locust and cankerworm have eaten.

So many stories in the Bible show that our God is a god of second chances. He wants us to fulfill our mission in life. Share about a time God turned your tragedy into triumph even though you made a wrong turn or a bad decision.

- ☞ The reality is that we cannot go back in time and undo things that have been done. But what we can do, and must do, is stop moving in the wrong direction, acknowledge our mistakes, repent, and then move on.

Though we can't undo what we have done, God has given us a way to and the means to get back on track. Share a time when you have experienced the amazing grace and mercy of God in your own life.

- ☞ We must move on with the remaining time we have and live from this moment forward in obedience to the will of God.

LIVE BEFORE YOU DIE JOURNAL

As you have come to realize the truth of this statement, what have you determined to do with your life from this day forward? What plan have you put in place to begin to get your life on the right track toward your mission and purpose in life? If you haven't written it down, do so. It has to become a reality in your life. Share your plan with your accountability partner and give him or her permission to keep you on track.

- 8— **To live in the past is to insult the spirit of grace and the sacrifice Jesus made on the cross. He paid the price so you could be forgiven from the mistakes of the past. If you have been washed in the blood of Jesus, God does not condemn you, and neither should you condemn yourself. Now, go and sin no more.**

No matter what you have been told in the past, Jesus died for you. Don't allow misinformation or ignorance of the truth to keep you locked in your past. Don't insult the spirit of grace and the sacrifice Jesus made for you on the cross. Ask those around you to tell you when they see you turning back to the past. Come into agreement with those of your group to hold one another accountable to go and sin no more!

Write a thanksgiving prayer to God as you complete this week's lessons and ask Him how you can use what you have learned to help at least one other person this week.

PART 2

Five Secrets to Discovering God's Will

WEEK

6

Secret #1: The Kingdom Comes First

In the military, depending on your position and rank, you may or may not be privy to the overall purpose for which your ship has been deployed, but in God's kingdom our commanding officer has made the ultimate objective clear, and if we keep this mission before our eyes, it will help us to discover and fulfill God's will for our lives. Regardless of the specific role we each are called to play, God's plan for our lives will always be aligned with the larger mission, and we can eliminate any initiative that is not in sync with it.

—Live Before You Die, p. 69

So what is God's supreme agenda in our world as revealed in Scripture? This week we will discover the first secret the Word of God gives us as we seek to know God's will for our lives. We need look no further than Jesus, who was in every way the complete and full expression of God's will in action.

Get ready! You may be surprised at how clear God has made His ultimate objective, and how this knowledge can keep you on course toward fulfilling God's will for your life!

Move ahead to Day 1!

Day 1

HIS KINGDOM COME, HIS WILL BE DONE ON EARTH

Regardless of what we do as an occupation, we all share a singular calling and mission in this life: to build God's kingdom on earth. This is why our 'ship' has been deployed. This is the business we should all be investing in, and if we find ourselves moving in any other direction, we can be sure we are moving away from God's will for our lives. The building of God's kingdom on earth is not just something we should keep in the back of our minds and try to contribute toward whenever an opportunity presents itself. Seeing God's kingdom come on earth must be our main *ambition*.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 71

(Read pages 69-71 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. What does Matthew 6:10 reveal about God's will for the earth? _____

 2. Fill in the missing words in 1 Corinthians 15:28. "And when _____ things shall be subdued unto him [Jesus], then shall the Son also be subject unto him that put things under him, that God may be _____ in _____."
 3. When God says "all," what does He mean? _____

 4. What is going to be in every corner of creation according to 1 Corinthians 15:28? _____

- What does that mean to you personally _____, to your family _____, to your job _____, to your neighborhood _____, your city and our country _____?
5. Read Habakkuk 2:14, Isaiah 11:6 and 9, Revelation 21:4.
Combine all these descriptions and write out what all creation will look like when they are all fulfilled.

Now compare this description to how God created the earth in Genesis 1 and 2.

WEEK 6

What did you discover? _____

6. What did Jesus say in Matthew 6:33 is the secret of knowing and doing God's will on the earth?

Day 2

FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS

Perhaps the most well-known passage in the Book of Esther is in chapter 4, verse 14 where Esther's cousin and guardian, Mordecai, says to her, "And who knows but that you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"(AMP). Many exciting and uplifting messages have been based on this scripture. But often these inspirational sermons miss the point completely because they fail to take into consideration the true context of Mordecai's words. A close look at the circumstances surrounding this passage will show that Mordecai's message to Esther was not a feel-good, motivational speech, but rather a sobering and alarming ultimatum!

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 71

(Read pages 71-73 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. This is a rags to riches, poverty to the palace story that starts out like Cinderella, but adds a hidden twist which reveals a deadly plan to annihilate Esther's people. Outline the key points from this amazing story that emphasizes how important it is to be in tune with not only God's will but His timing in our life.
 - Introduction: Read Esther 2 and write a summary of this event. _____

 - The Underlying Plot: Read Esther 3 and describe the enemy's scheme. _____

 - God's will for Esther: Read Esther 4 and describe Esther's concerns and Mordecai's instructions. _____

 - Esther's Brave Choice: Read Esther 5 and describe how Esther chose to follow God's will. _____

 - Mordecai Honored: Read Esther 6 and describe how seeking first God's Kingdom brings its rewards. _____

 - The Enemy Revealed: Read Esther 7 and describe how Esther's obedience to God's will and timing turned the tables on the enemy. _____

WEEK 6

- The Benefits of Seeking First His Kingdom: Read Esther 8-10 and describe the benefits of being aware of “such a time as this.” _____

2. Complete the warning given in Esther 4:12-14, “If you try to protect your position at the expense of the divine purpose, God will _____ you, and you will be _____!”

3. How does this warning apply to the choices you are being called to make in your own life?

4. God hasn’t blessed us so we can consume those resources on our own lusts and pleasures, He has blessed us so _____

Day 3

IF YOU WON'T, SOMEONE ELSE WILL

We often mistakenly feel we are indispensable, but the reality is that our failure to answer the call of God will not cause the purposes of God to fail. Rather it is the one who chooses to disobey who will suffer. God's plan will still come to pass, even if He has to raise up someone else to fulfill it.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 76

(Read pages 73-77 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. In this section you read about some Bible characters that failed to answer God's call. Note the results of each of these disobedient or prideful children.

In Genesis 25:34, we read how God passed over Esau because of his _____ and therefore _____ inherited the destiny that should have been Esau's by birth and became one of Israel's greatest patriarchs.

In 1 Samuel 2:12 we read about a high priest named Eli whose family had been called and anointed by God to serve Israel in the priestly office. But Eli's two sons had _____ so God chose _____ instead.

Saul's children and grandchildren were destined to sit on the throne, but because of Saul's _____ God cut his family off and instead anointed a young man named _____ through whose lineage the _____ would eventually be born (see 1 Samuel 16:1-13).

Have you seen any similar patterns in your own family heritage? _____

Trace your family tree and watch for those who for one reason or another did not answer God's call and were passed over by God.

List Your Father's family history:

List Your Mother's family history:

How will you help your generation and your next generation to avoid the pitfalls of the characters you read about in today's study?

WEEK 6

2. God has absolutely no chance of losing. We are the only ones who stand to lose when we fail to obey. What did God tell Reinhard Bonnke? _____
3. You have been placed in this world for a purpose, what is it? _____
4. Propelling God's kingdom forward is not a side issue—it is *the* reason you were saved, it's *the* reason you were born and you will be held _____.

Day 4

MEANINGLESS! MEANINGLESS!

When we are seeking first the kingdom of God, it means we have made God's kingdom the priority in our lives. And when God's kingdom is number one, suddenly all the zeroes after it have meaning: 10; 100; 1,000; 10,000; 100,000; 1,000,000! All the zeroes of life are meaningless unless God's kingdom is first! But put God's kingdom first, and not only will you find ultimate purpose and meaning in life, but even the small things will also take on significance.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 79

(Read pages 77-81 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. Read Ecclesiastes 1:2-8 and write this passage out in your own words.

2. Read Isaiah 40:6-7, 15, 17 and write these verses out in your own words.

3. Have you ever felt this way about life? Explain your answer.

4. Christianity is counter intuitive, a paradox and preaches a message that is exactly opposite of the world's wisdom.

For example the world says, "Protect your life if you want to save it."

Jesus says basically the opposite in Matthew 16:25 when He says, _____

5. Have you discovered other paradoxes in Christianity? Explain. _____

WEEK 6

6. How have these paradoxes influenced your decisions in life? _____

7. Solomon, one of the wealthiest and most powerful kings who ever lived, tasted all the world had to offer and came to the conclusion that it is all “meaningless.” But what did John write in 1 John 2:17 that can turn our lives around?

8. What do you have to do to attain the promise of 1 John 2:17?

9. Revelation 1:6 says we are all _____ therefore God expects us all to be about _____.

10. What does that mean you need to start doing every day of the week so that your life is not meaningless? _____

Day 5

ALL THESE THINGS

As we seek God's will for our lives, we can be sure that it will *never* move us in a direction that is contrary to God's kingdom purposes. The imperative of seeking God's kingdom is not only relevant in the context of highly spiritual ministry issues. Jesus says that if we seek the kingdom first, *all these things* will be added to us. This is one of the most powerful secrets to discovering God's will for your life. If you will set your sights on His kingdom and make that your priority, as you move toward it you will automatically come across everything else you need!

—*Live Before You Die*, pp. 81-82

(Read pages 81-84 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. The famous psychologist Abraham Maslow constructed a pyramid that he titled the "Hierarchy of Needs." It was his opinion that before someone could "self-actualize," he first needed to meet the baser needs of human nature such as food, shelter, and companionship. Maslow believed that before one could reach the lofty ideals at the top of the pyramid, he would need to climb from the bottom, meeting the basic needs first.⁵ ***Label the levels of the pyramid as described by Maslow.***
2. Jesus taught quite the opposite. Jesus said, "Don't worry about what you will eat or what you will wear. Your Father in heaven knows you need these things, and He will take care of you. Instead seek first the kingdom of God, and all these things will be added to you." (See Matthew 6:25–33.) What Jesus was teaching was Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs in reverse. Jesus turns Maslow's pyramid upside down! Jesus teaches us to start at the pinnacle of the pyramid, the highest and loftiest place. Put the kingdom of God first, and *everything* else will be taken care of—physical, mental, and emotional needs included. ***Draw the pyramid Jesus describes next to Maslow's.***
3. When we put anything ahead of Christ and His kingdom in our lives, not only will we miss God's kingdom, but we will also miss all the other treasures as well. Look at the list below and circle anything you have been putting ahead of Christ and His Kingdom.

Career	Money	Spouse	Family
Education	Ministry	Basic Needs	

4. Put the Kingdom of God first, and *everything* else will be taken care of—physical, mental, and emotional needs included. Are you in need? Look at the list below and highlight the one that fits your need or write your own

WEEK 6

- I want to know what job God has for me so I will seek His kingdom, and I'll find my occupational calling!
- I want to know whom I should marry so I will seek His kingdom, and I'll find my spouse!
- I want to know where I should go to college so I will seek His kingdom, and I'll land in the right school!
- I want to know where I should live so I will seek His kingdom, and He'll lead me to the right geographical location!
- I want to know what ministry I should become involved in so I will seek His Kingdom, and I'll find my place to serve Him.
- I want to know _____ so I will seek His Kingdom, and I'll find _____.

WE SEEK THE KINGDOM BECAUSE...

Read the word of caution and clarification given at the end of this first secret in discovering God's will for your life on pages 84-85.

God is not looking for spiritual “gold diggers” who use Him and His kingdom to get rich, or to become popular or powerful. On the contrary, God is looking for people whose eyes are so fastened on Him and Him alone that none of the peripheral attractions are even in view. It is those with consecrated hearts to whom He says, ‘Don’t worry. I’ll take care of everything else you need.’ We do not seek the kingdom because we love its benefits—we seek the kingdom because we love its King! When our love for the King becomes our paramount incentive, then and only then do we have things in the right order.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 84

This week you have learned God's ultimate objective for you on the earth, and how important it is to keep this mission before your eyes. You also learned how important it is to not miss God's timing. You should have come to realize that if you do not fulfill your mission, God will replace you with someone who is willing to obey His instructions. God has promised to meet all of your needs if you will put His kingdom first before everything else in your life.

Chapter 6 Review

This Chapter Review can be used in a small group or class study, or in a personal journal. Answers to the questions may be written down in this study guide or in your own personal/prayer journal. Each Key Statement (↪) points out a key truth or principle made in this chapter for you to reflect on and pray about in response to the questions below.

- ↪ The building of God's kingdom on earth is not just something we should keep in the back of our minds and try to contribute toward whenever an opportunity presents itself. Seeing God's kingdom come on earth must be our main ambition

Have you ever thought you were being blessed because you are special, wonderful, intelligent or talented? Explain your answer.

LIVE BEFORE YOU DIE JOURNAL

How did you feel when you discovered God blessed you for a specific purpose?

How has your main priority changed after studying this chapter?

How will you help the next generation to avoid the pitfalls of the characters you read about in this chapter?

Give an example of how you have applied the principle of seeking His kingdom first in your life and the results it brought in your life.

Write a thanksgiving prayer to God as you complete this week's lessons and ask Him how you can use what you have learned to help at least one other person this week.

WEEK

7

Secret #2 – The Surrendered Will

Where Adam failed in the Garden of Eden, Jesus prevailed in the Garden of Gethsemane. And the key to Christ's victory here was the secret of His whole life, embodied in those seven immortal words, "Not my will, but Yours, be done." The Roman soldiers seized Jesus and crucified Him, but they could not take His life, for He had already laid it down in Gethsemane. "No one takes My life from Me," was Jesus's confession, "but I lay it down of Myself." You cannot kill a man who is already dead! It is here that we find the next great secret for discovering God's will for our lives—the secret of the surrendered will. Jesus prayed, "Thy kingdom come," and with the same breath continued His petition by saying, "Thy will be done" (Matthew 6:10). Those phrases may seem to address two completely separate topics, but they actually go hand in hand. In fact, you can't have one without the other.

—Live Before You Die, p. 87

Get ready! If you truly want God's will for your life, you cannot simply pray, "Your will be done." You must include, "Not my will."

Move ahead to Day 1!

Day 1

THE KINGDOM IN THE EARTH

Jesus prayed, 'Thy kingdom come,' and continued by saying, "Thy will be done." These are two inseparable conditions. Wherever God's kingdom has come, there His will is being done. Likewise, when God's will is being done, there His kingdom has come. If we are seeking the kingdom first, then the kingdom is our main ambition, and this is demonstrated in two ways. First, we want to see God's will done *'in earth'* (in our own lives), and second, we seek to see His will done *on* the earth (in the whole world). If you want to see God's kingdom come *on* earth, it starts with God's will being done *in* earth—in you!

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 89

(Read pages 87-90 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. As you seek to know God's will you may find there is a difference between what you want and what God wants for your life. It is very important that you do not go to God with your list of wants and simply ask Him to validate your list.

You may already have a list you have been going to God about. Instead of just presenting this list, ask God to show you whether they match up to His wants for your life.

My Wants

What God Wants

2. Describe what it means to have God's will done *'in earth'* _____

3. Describe what it means to have God's will done *'on the earth'* _____

4. What was Jesus talking about in Luke 17:20-21? _____

5. Read John 7:38. Where does Jesus say the Kingdom of God is coming from? _____

6. God's will is that every believer becomes an annexation of His kingdom, a portal through which He can pour His glory and release His power into the world.

What is God pouring in you? _____

What is being released into the world from you? _____

YOUR NAME

If you want to see God's _____ kingdom come *on* earth, it starts with God's will being done *in* earth—in you! Is God's will being done in the earth in and through you? _____

If you answered no, what changes do you need to do in your life? _____

7. What is the inward condition of people who have submitted themselves to God? _____

8. What are they filled with? _____

9. Does this describe you? _____ Why or why not? _____

Day 2

THE VALLEY OF BROKENNESS

I knew instinctively that those cracks in the wall represented ‘broken’ men and women. They are those who have surrendered their lives to God, praying with Jesus, ‘Not my will, but thine, be done.’ Suddenly I knew how the glory of the Lord would cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. In fact, it is through these people that, even now, the kingdom of God is invading the fallen world. God’s eternal glory will penetrate the natural world through broken men and women. And when the kingdom of God comes into contact with the fallen world, we begin to see heavenly effects: the sick are healed, the dead are raised, bondages are broken, and the supernatural begins to happen.

–*Live Before You Die*, p. 91

(Read pages 90-91 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. Everywhere Jesus went, He taught about the kingdom, but He didn’t just talk about it, He demonstrated it!

List the ways Jesus demonstrate God’s will being done in and on the Earth. Add the Scripture reference for each of these manifestations.

Example, the sick were healed as in the healing of the official’s son in John 4:46-54

2. God’s will for our lives is not simply a destination to be reached; it is a _____ of the _____. What does this mean? _____

3. As we travel on the journey of discovering God’s will, the narrow road cuts through a dark valley where God tests our hearts and breaks us like a cowboy on a bucking bronco.

Why is this uncomfortable breaking process so important? _____

What happens if we refuse to submit or fail to endure this breaking process? _____

Have you experienced this breaking process in your life? _____ Explain

Day 3

GOD LOVES TO USE BROKEN VESSELS

But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, so that no man may boast before God . . . that, just as it is written, Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord.

1 Corinthians 1:27–29, 31 NAS

God loves to use broken vessels because through them He gets the most glory!

(Read pages 92–93 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. Read the story of Gideon and the broken jars of clay in Judges 7. What important point must we remember from this story? _____

2. Now read 2 Corinthians 4:7. Who are the jars of clay in this verse?

3. When we are broken vessels of clay, then God's _____ shines out, and all the _____ is _____.
4. A story is told of an Eastern village that through the centuries was known for its exquisite pottery. Especially striking were its high as tables, wide as chairs urns. They were admired around the globe for their strong form and delicate beauty. Legend has it that when each urn was apparently finished, there was one final step. The artist broke it and then put it back together with gold filigree. An ordinary urn was then transformed into a priceless work of art. What seemed finished wasn't, until it was broken.

Can you see how God is finishing you by first breaking you and then refilling you with His gold filigree?

Describe how this breaking process has been happening in your life: _____

Day 4

A BROKEN AND CONTRITE HEART

This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word.

Isaiah 66:2 NIV

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

Psalms 51:17 NIV

The way the world looks at things is so different from the way God looks at them. The world values the lofty, powerful, proud, and big. God values a broken and a contrite heart, a heart that is humble and bowed low before the King.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 94

(Read pages 94-94 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. Use a Bible dictionary to look up and write the definition of a contrite heart in your own words: _____

2. List the words that describe Jacob before his encounter with God in Genesis 32:22-31 on the left.

(Use Genesis 25:29-34, Genesis Chapters 27 and 30 to find your answers.)

List what Jacob became after this encounter on the right side.

Ex: Jacob's name meant schemer	became	Israel meaning contender with God
_____	became	_____
_____	became	_____
_____	became	_____

Do a similar list now for yourself:

I was _____	became	_____
I was _____	became	_____

3. Most people would have seen Jacob's limp as a handicap, but how did Jacob view it?

4. The broken Jacob was the blessed Jacob. After his encounter with God what did the new Jacob go on to become?

5. What has God given you to remind you of the breaking He is doing or has done in you?

6. Define a broken person: _____

7. What are you doing to work toward developing a broken and contrite heart? _____

Day 5

DEATH TO YOUR VISION

To God surrender is not complete until it is all encompassing, exhaustive, total. It is not simply saying, “Your will be done,” but it includes, “Not my will.” This death to self is not some form of divine sadism. God always has life in mind. Just as a gardener prunes off the old branches so new ones can grow, God desires to remove that which hinders life and growth. This place of death is also the place of birth, and it is how God’s purposes are born in the earth!

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 96

(Read pages 95-98 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. When we talk about being crucified with Christ and dying to self, what do we mean?

2. What does it mean to surrender your will to God?

3. What is your dream?

4. Read John 12:24. Personalize this verse by filling in the blank.

“Except my dream of _____ falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone, but if it dies, it bears much fruit.”

5. Resurrection only follows death—death to _____, death to your _____, death to your _____, and death to your _____

Live Before You Die Journal

WEEK 7

This week you learned Jesus blesses only what He breaks. God can multiply only what has been broken. It is in these painful moments of surrender that God's kingdom is established in us, when we pray with Jesus, "Not my will, but Yours be done." This beautiful brokenness allows us to become an extension of God's dominion, and our lives become "cracks in the wall" through which His kingdom can come and His will can be done *in* earth and *on* earth.

Chapter 7 Review

This Chapter Review can be used in a small group or class study, or in a personal journal. Answers to the questions may be written down in this study guide or in your own personal/prayer journal. Each Key Statement (☞) points out a key truth or principle made in this chapter for you to reflect on and pray about in response to the questions below.

☞ Jesus blesses only what He breaks. God can multiply only what has been broken.

Do you want God to take your little life and do something mighty with it? _____

Do you want to be blessed and be a blessing to multitudes? _____

Are you willing to be broken? _____

☞ This place of death is also the place of birth, and it is how God's purposes are born in the earth!

Are you willing to die to self, to your will, to your desires, and to your dreams so God can birth His purposes in you? _____

☞ When the kingdom of God comes into contact with the fallen world, we begin to see heavenly effects: the sick are healed, the dead are raised, bondages are broken, and the supernatural begins to happen.

LIVE BEFORE YOU DIE JOURNAL

Are you seeing the sick healed, the dead raised, bondages broken, and supernatural happenings in your life? _____ Explain your answer _____

If not, what do you need to do so that God's will comes in contact with your world so you can see these heavenly effects start to happen? _____

Write a thanksgiving prayer to God as you complete this week's lessons and ask Him how you can use what you have learned to help at least one other person this week.

WEEK

8

Secret #3 – Hearing God's Voice

Hearing the voice of God is one of the most basic and most profound secrets to discovering God's will for your life. In fact, without the ability to hear God's voice, knowing His will would actually be impossible. God speaks to people through a myriad of different means and methods, but many simply don't realize it. My friend, whether you know it or not, God is speaking to you, and your ability to recognize His voice is not only the key to discovering His will, but it is also the key to staying in His will for the rest of your life.

–Live Before You Die, p. 100

Hearing the voice of God is not only possible for the child of God; it is absolutely imperative to listen to and be led by that voice! This week you are going to learn how easy it is to do just that. **Get ready!**

Move ahead to Day 1!

Day 1

CALLED BY THE VOICE OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.

John 10:2–5 NKJV

If we are a part of His flock, we have all been called by the voice of the Good Shepherd, and the voice that called us to salvation is the same voice that must lead us throughout our lives.

(Read pages 99–100 in *Live Before You Die*.)

Some very pertinent questions were present at the beginning of this chapter. It is important to consider these questions as you proceed through this week. Answer them as honestly and completely as you can before you begin this week's study and then review them again at the end of the week during the review section.

Do you believe God still speaks to His people today? _____ Why or why not?

Who called you to salvation? _____

Are you or are you not called to fulfill a specific purpose in life? _____

Explain your answer _____

Who called you? _____

How do you know? _____

How did God speak to people in the Bible? _____

How does God speak to people today? _____

Day 2

HONORING HIS WRITTEN WORD

I can truly say that, for me personally, the most common way I have heard God's voice and sensed God's leading in my life is through the Scriptures. In fact, most of what is written in this book has come from what God has shown me as I have meditated on His Word. The Scriptures ring with the pitch, the tone, the rhythm, and the meter of God's voice. You will learn to recognize His voice as you cultivate a deep, abiding love for what God has already said in His written Word.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 101

(Read pages 101-102 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. When you have a need, a problem or a question about a decision you need to make, where do you turn to first, second, third, etc.? Number these resources in order of how you approach a need, problem or decision in your life. Be honest!

____ Friend

____ Spouse

____ Pastor

____ Counselor

____ God

____ The Bible

2. Should God repeat His instructions just because you didn't take the time to read what He has already said in His Word? _____
3. What did Jesus say to us in John 6:63? _____
4. How important is it that we spend time each day reading and meditating on God's written word? _____ Why? _____
5. Read a passage from the Bible at the beginning of each day. It will help you to meditate on His Word during the day if you write the verse that spoke to you from this passage on your phone (either on your calendar, or create a new note, or somewhere where you can easily access it) so you can refer to it throughout the day. When God speaks to you, write another note underneath it. Keep a file of all that God reveals to you. You will discover you are already hearing God speak to you through His written word as you see the progression day by day.
6. Read John 8:32. Once you know the truth presented in God's Word it will be harder for anyone to trap you with a lie.

Day 3

GOD SPEAKS THROUGH HIS HOLY SPIRIT

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.

John 14:26 NKJV

This is what He told His disciples at the end of Jesus's earthly ministry as He was preparing to die on the cross. The Holy Spirit is not a doctrine or denomination or optional experience reserved for only a few Christians.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 104

(Read pages 102-104 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. Here are some more very important questions you must personally answer in order to truly hear the voice of God and know His will for your life.

Who is the third person of the Trinity given by the Father in response to the prayer of Jesus?

What did Jesus say the Helper would do in your life? _____

When you say you are listening for the voice of God, who are you actually listening for?

Who reveals the voice of God in your heart? _____

What will sharpen your sensitivity to God's voice? _____

2. Label and describe what each of the parts of the armor mentioned in Ephesians 6:14-17 are used for using the pictures below:

Day 4

HEARING HIS VOICE BEGINS WITH “TURNING ASIDE”

Prayer is not about making lengthy lists of requests for God and continually chattering for as long as possible. Sometimes the best thing you can do is to *be quiet and listen!* When I am in the presence of someone who is full of wisdom and who has many years of rich life experience, I make it a point to keep my mouth shut and listen to what he has to say, because I know that what he has to say is more important than what I have to say.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 106

(Read pages 104-106 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. How would you answer the newly saved young man's question about prayer?

2. Have you received advice similar to that given to this young man by the deacon in the story?

3. What have you learned from this chapter about prayer?

4. What would you say is the most important part of your prayer time?

5. Read Psalm 130 and record what you learn about prayer and listening for God's voice.

6. Read Psalm 131 and record what you learn about being still and quiet during prayer.

WEEK 8

7. Read Psalm 40:1. What does the psalmist encourage you to do?

8. Make Psalm 130 your own prayer today.

Day 5

DISCERNING THE VOICE OF THE LORD

God seldom speaks to strangers who have no time for Him, and even if He did, they would not recognize His voice. He loves to speak to people who love Him and desire to live their lives in His presence. He draws near to those who, as an act of their will, have drawn near to Him (James 4:8). The more time we spend alone with Him seeking His face through prayer and worship, the easier it becomes to hear and immediately recognize His voice in our hearts. The greater our love for Him, the more finely tuned our ears will become to hear the sound of His voice.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 108

(Read pages 107-109 in *Live Before You Die*.)

If there is a question in your mind about whether or not something you're sensing is from God, ask yourself the following questions.

1. Is it biblical?
God will _____ tell you to do _____ that is contrary to His Word.
2. Is this causing confusion in my heart?
See 1 Corinthians 14:33 says _____

3. Is this producing peace in my heart?
_____ voice comes with an awareness of heavenly peace.
In contrast, the _____ uses urgency, pressure, and fear to drive people.
4. Have I quieted my desires and self-interest?
Identify your desires and self-interests and, as an intentional act of our will, neutralize them.
5. Record your findings _____

Live Before You Die Journal

WEEK 8

This week you learned God does speak to His people by His Spirit. The challenge is in learning to hear and then having the determination, faith, and love to simply obey what He is saying. We can all hear the voice of God if we will learn to listen.

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God

Romans 8:14

Chapter 8 Review

This Chapter Review can be used in a small group or class study, or in a personal journal. Answers to the questions may be written down in this study guide or in your own personal/prayer journal. Each Key Statement (☞) points out a key truth or principle made in this chapter for you to reflect on and pray about in response to the questions below.

How did God speak to people in the Bible? _____

How does God speak to people today? _____

God still speaks to us today. Name the various ways He speaks and how you've experienced some of these in your life. _____

- ☞ **Prayer is not about making lengthy lists of requests for God and continually chattering for as long as possible. Sometimes the best thing you can do is to *be quiet and listen!***

Discuss ways you can explain prayer time to a new believer with your small group or accountability partner. _____

- ☞ **The Holy Spirit is not a doctrine or denomination or optional experience reserved for only a few Christians.**

Discuss what you learned about the Holy Spirit this week in your small group or with your accountability partner.

How would you explain who the Holy Spirit is and what God sent Him to us to do in our lives to another? _____

Write a thanksgiving prayer to God as you complete this week's lessons and ask Him how you can use what you have learned to help at least one other person this week.

WEEK

9

Secret #4 – The Way Up Is Down

God's will for your life always leads you on the path of humility. Don't make the mistake of thinking the humble path is the way for losers. Some people are so eager to be successful that they are climbing level by level with all their might, proving themselves and promoting themselves with feverish urgency. But you should know that God has an elevator waiting for those who want to go higher than level one or level two. And the only way to get to God's lift is to go down to the low place of humility and submission. This is the path Jesus walked, and it leads to the loftiest place in existence. The way up is down.

–Live Before You Die, p. 114

Get ready! You are going down so you can go up this week. Fasten your seat belt because it is going to be a bumpy ride!

Move ahead to Day 1!

Day 1

“MOVIN’ ON UP”

Whenever we speak of advancement or promotion, we tend to think of it as upward motion—climbing the ladder, breaking the glass ceiling, getting on top of the heap, upgrading, elevating, etc.—but nothing says it better than ‘movin’ on up.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 111

(Read page 111 in *Live Before You Die*.)

Up. It is the direction everyone wants to go, for the path upward seems to be the path to fame, fortune, honor, and glory. The person who is willing to go very low could become very wealthy.

But isn’t it interesting that many of earth’s most precious substances can be acquired only by digging deep down?

Jesus said, “He who humbles himself will be exalted” (Luke 14:11 NKJV).

You have one assignment today. It’s time to be creative. Take some time and create your own design that speaks to God’s promise to promote you. Print it out, or put it on your desktop or phone as a constant reminder of God’s work in your life. or print out the picture below as a magnet for your refrigerator to remind you every day of God’s path to promotion.

The low path of humility is the only way to promotion with God.

Day 2

JOSEPH

Joseph descended the dark, winding staircase of humility and submission. When he reached the last door at the bottom, he discovered that this obscure, downward path had led him all the way to the top. Almost overnight he found himself in one of the highest places of power and authority in the world. All along it was this lowly path that God had determined to lift Joseph up. Joseph discovered that *the way up is down*.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 112

(Read the top of page 112 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. Have you ever asked these questions on your way to fulfilling your God given dream: “Why, God?” Wasn’t it God who promised me promotion and influence? Have I done something wrong? Why is God allowing me to go through such hardship?
2. Joseph had lofty dreams of greatness. Read his story in Genesis 37, 39-41. He saw his mother, father, and brothers all bowing down before him. But God’s way of promoting Joseph to the top was not what he would have imagined. Ironically, it was those very dreams of glory that bred contempt in the hearts of his brothers, who eventually sold him into a humble life of slavery. Joseph’s path to greatness would take him through the lowlands of servitude, character assassination, and even imprisonment in the royal dungeon. For a while Joseph’s life seemed to have a downward trajectory, constantly going from bad to worse. Track Joseph’s life below. Describe what each picture represents on Joseph’s journey to fulfill his God given dream.
3. Design a similar picture of your journey.

Day 3

JESUS MADE HIMSELF OF NO REPUTATION

Christ, who was, in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2:6–11

(Read the bottom of page 112 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. List the phrases used in this passage to describe how Jesus made Himself of no reputation:
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
2. List what God did as a result of Jesus' willingness to follow God's plan:
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
3. What do you personally have to do to make yourself "of no reputation"?
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
4. As you begin to take the necessary steps, record how God takes you from the bottom to the top.
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____

Day 4

PROMOTION COMES FROM GOD

The world teaches us that we live in a dog-eat-dog world, and if we want to advance we need to fight for our rights, prove ourselves, and step on the competition if necessary. But Psalm 75:6–7 tells us that “promotion comes neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: he puts down one, and sets up another.”

–*Live Before You Die*, p. 113

(Read page 113 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. If I want to be promoted, it would be wise to heed the advice of the one who gives promotions:

- Luke 14:11 says if I want to promoted I must _____
I am going to do this by _____
- Matthew 5:5 says if I want to inherit what God has for me I must _____
I am going to do this by _____
- James 4:10 says God will lift me up if I _____
I am going to do this by _____
- Proverbs 29:23 warns me to watch out for _____ because _____
I am going to heed this warning by _____
- 2Corinthians 10:18 says in order to truly be approved I must _____
I am going to do this by _____

Continue to record in your journal how God's way is leading to promotion in your own life.

Day 5

WHICH QUEUE ARE YOU IN?

The first time I ever visited the Eiffel Tower, I noticed that there were three different queues you could join. One went to the first level, one went to the second level, and one went all the way to the top. To come all the way to Paris and go only to the first or second level seemed ridiculous. I was determined to go to the top. I could see how the first- and second-level queues were climbing the stairs going immediately up, but for some strange reason my queue was headed downward. It seemed strange for the queue going the highest to be moving downward, but soon I saw the reason. While the other queues were climbing the stairs with their hands and feet, we were making our way to a lift that would take us all the way to the top.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 114

(Read page 114 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. There are times in life where we can choose which queue to enter. However, we need to be aware of where each queue will ultimately take us. Often times the shortest or the easiest route is not the one God has designed for us.

Use the analogy of the Eiffel Tower to portray a queue choice you need to make in your own life:

Which Queue Are You In?

2. Write out the plan you are going to follow to make your decision based on what you learned from this lesson.

This week you learned that God has an elevator waiting for those who want to go higher than level one or level two, and how His will for your life always leads you on the path of humility and submission before it takes you to the your dream fulfillment.

Chapter 9 Review

This Chapter Review can be used in a small group or class study, or in a personal journal. Answers to the questions may be written down in this study guide or in your own personal/prayer journal. Each Key Statement (☞) points out a key truth or principle made in this chapter for you to reflect on and pray about in response to the questions below.

☞ Joseph discovered that *the way up is down*.

What did you discover about your own life as you read the journey Joseph took to the top?

How has this changed your perspective on the trials you are facing on your journey?

How would you encourage someone who is facing their own trials as they move toward fulfilling their God given dream?

☞ Jesus made Himself of no reputation.

As a child of God and a disciple of Jesus, how are you going to follow in His footsteps based on what you learned this week?

➦ Often time the shortest or the easiest route is not the one God has designed for us.

Though the world will tell you are crazy to follow God's plan, why is it worth it to do so?

How will you encourage others to stay with God's plan?

Write a thanksgiving prayer to God as you complete this week's lessons and ask Him how you can use what you have learned to help at least one other person this week.

WEEK

10

Secret #5 – Take Action

There always seems to be a great divide in life between action and intention, between works and words, between doing something and merely talking about doing it. And it is in this space, between desire and deed, where most people die in a wilderness of inaction. For every go-getter who is ready to take the field, there are a thousand professional conference delegates who are content to go on endlessly discussing the need without ever actually doing anything. But the ones who will go on to see God's will fulfilled in their lives are people of action, initiative, and urgency.

–Live Before You Die, p.116

In the Christian world many people spend their whole lives waiting for God to do something for them. They talk about waiting for God's timing or provision; they are looking for God to "make a way," "open doors," and give "divine appointments." Although there will certainly be situations in life when we need to wait for the Lord, many times (perhaps even most times, if we are honest) the real underlying reason for our inaction is far less spiritual than we would like to believe.

For saint and sinner the perfect moment never comes so get ready! It is time to take action!

Move ahead to Day 1!

Day 1

BE YE DOERS OF THE WORD

Where is the urgency? Where is the passion? Where is the chutzpah? If you want God to part the sea for you, but you are not even willing to get your toes wet, you are living in a fantasy world— this is simply not the way it works. Even when God is fully in some- thing and has ordained it, He rarely arranges all the aspects of our lives so that everything is perfect and easy. On the contrary, in many cases God's will for your life will seem like the more difficult path, and it will have to be pursued with real determination.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 117

Jesus said, "The kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force" (Matthew 11:12). God is looking for the burning-hearted, not the faint-hearted.

(Read pages 115-117 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. Read Daniel 11:32 and fill in the blanks: "But the people who _____ their God shall _____ firm and take _____" (ESV).
2. Anyone who knows God and understands His ways will know that God cannot and will not _____ our good intentions, only what we _____.
Define a good intention: _____

How is this different than something we actually do? _____

3. Read the parable Jesus told in. Matthew 21:28-31.
Son one said _____ and did _____.
Son two said _____ and did _____.
The moral of the story is _____
4. Read James 1:22. What is God looking for? _____

WEEK 10

5. Does this describe you? _____ Why or why not? _____

6. Read 2 Corinthians 9:10. This tell us God is also looking for us to _____ before
He will _____. Are you doing this? _____

7. What actually moves God's heart and hand? _____

Are you doing what it takes to move God's heart? _____

Day 2

GET MOVING

In your life the only one who can provide the forward motion is you. God will be your pilot. He will provide the wind beneath your wings and the fuel in your tank, but you have to give Him some momentum to work with. You cannot do God's part, and God will not do your part. Your part is to get into gear, get off your backside, and get moving. Reinhard Bonnke has said, "God will lift you out of the deepest pit, but He won't lift you out of an easy chair—you have to do that yourself." So what are you waiting for? How long will you do nothing while you grow old in the wilderness of inaction?

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 118

(Read pages 118-120 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. In order to fly, an airplane needs "lift." Lift comes from speed, and speed comes from "thrust." Thrust is the power that pushes the aircraft forward, and without it nothing else matters. The aerodynamic design, the well-trained pilot in the cockpit, the sophisticated navigational technology, and the tank full of jet fuel are all useless unless the engines come alive and provide forward motion.

What is your part in getting your plane off the ground? _____

List some things that are you waiting for? _____

2. Imagine a man sitting at a red light in the downtown area of a big city. The light in front of him turns green, but when he looks ahead he sees that the next five lights are still red.

Should he sit at the green light in front of him and just wait for all the other lights to turn green as well? _____

Why or why not? _____

Have you failed to move through the green light God has given you because you foresee obstacles ahead you don't know how to handle? _____

Explain your answer: _____

What are you waiting for? _____

Day 3

READY, FIRE, AIM

The other day I went with my father to the shooting range. He was heading out on a hunting trip, and before he left I wanted to help him 'sight in' the rifle I had bought him as a gift. We looked through the scope, which we had just attached, aimed at the target, and fired, knowing that we would most likely miss the bull's-eye. But by firing at the target, we could see where we needed to make an adjustment to the scope. We were only able to make corrections when we saw how we were missing the mark. I think this is typical of life. We usually learn more from our mistakes than our successes. But unless you fire, you will never miss, and unless you miss, you will never be able to make the adjustments necessary to hit the bull's-eye.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 121

(Read page 121 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. See your initial plan as an uncalibrated machine with many dials. The dials are all the different variables represented in that particular project. Once the machine is running, see what is working and what is not working. Diligently gather sufficient feedback, and then begin to tweak the "dials" based on that feedback.
 - a) What is your initial plan?
 - b) What does your first step involve?
 - c) What were the results and do you need to adjust that first dial?
 - d) What is your second step?
 - e) Do you need adjust dial one and two based on the results of those first two steps?

Keep it going! Ready, Fire, Aim!

Until you take action, all of your planning and strategizing is simply untested theory.

Day 4

START WHERE YOU ARE

Taking action is not just a matter of trial and error. At its core, it is a matter of faithfulness. Even if there are a thousand things you cannot do for one reason or another, there is always something you can do. It may seem small or insignificant, but the eyes of God are on you. He is watching to see what you will do with the opportunities He has given you, and your response will determine whether He entrusts you with more.

—*Live Before You Die*, p.121-122

(Read page 122 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. "The Lord has called me to preach the gospel. I believe I am going to win millions of people to the Lord, but I don't know where to start."
If this is you, how should you begin? _____
2. "I am going to start a house of prayer. I am going to have prayer, intercession, and worship going on twenty-four hours per day, seven days per week, three hundred sixty-five days per year."
If this is you or someone you know, how should you begin? _____

3. "I am called to be a worship leader and lead huge congregations in awesome worship unto the Lord!"
If this is you or someone you know, how should you begin? _____

4. "I am called to work with children and develop curriculum that will minister to the youth of today all over the world!"
If this is you or someone you know, how should you begin? _____

5. "I am called to reach leaders in the business world all throughout corporate America!"
If this is you or someone you know, how should you begin? _____

6. Whatever your call, how should you begin? _____

Day 5

GETTING FROM A-Z

There's an ancient Chinese proverb that says, "The journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step." Perhaps you don't know how to get from A to Z, but you don't need to know that. All you need to know is how to get from A to B. Once you get to B, then you will go to C, and one step at a time you will find that the waters will begin to part as your feet get wet.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 123

(Read page 123 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. What is your point A? _____

2. Do you know your Point B? _____

3. As you take each step the next one will become clear. Track your progress. _____

4. Read the story of Peter walking on the water in Matthew 4:22–29. How would you relate this story to your own journey in seeking God's will for your life? _____

5. Will you take a step of faith today and watch for God to reveal the next step, one day at a time? _____ Describe that first step _____

Live Before You Die Journal

WEEK 10

This week you learned the ones who will go on to see God's will fulfilled in their lives are people of action, initiative, and urgency.

Chapter 10 Review

This Chapter Review can be used in a small group or class study, or in a personal journal. Answers to the questions may be written down in this study guide or in your own personal/prayer journal. Each Key Statement (↗) points out a key truth or principle made in this chapter for you to reflect on and pray about in response to the questions below.

- ↗ The ones who will go on to see God's will fulfilled in their lives are people of action, initiative, and urgency.

How will you become a doer and not just a hearer of the Word? _____

How will you begin to take action on what you know to do? _____

What do you need to do if you miss the target the first time? _____

- ↗ Are you looking for God to "make a way," "open doors," and give "divine appointments" or are you ready to get moving? _____

Does this meaning being reckless and foolish? _____

What does it mean?

LIVE BEFORE YOU DIE JOURNAL

☞ God is watching to see what you will do with the opportunities He has given you, and your response will determine whether He entrusts you with more.

What has God already entrusted you with? _____

Have you been faithful with what God has given you? _____ Explain your answer. _____

Are you willing to plant seeds in a small garden so God can then increase your scope of influence? _____ How will you begin? _____

What is the first step of your plan? _____

Take action today! Today's date is _____.

Write a thanksgiving prayer to God as you complete this week's lessons and ask Him how you can use what you have learned to help at least one other person this week.

PART 3

Five Enemies of God's Will for Your Life

WEEK

11

Enemy #1: The Bandit of Laziness

It's one thing to know God's will. It's something else to do it. Discovering God's will makes very little difference unless we are willing to move forward in obedience. Someone said, 'Even if you are on the right track, you will get run over if you just sit there.' Many people seeking God's will have been 'overrun' by those actually doing it. Doing the will of God requires taking action. I'm talking about something very down-to-earth right now. Not just inspiration but perspiration. Not just divine revelation but also human effort.

—Live Before You Die, p. 127

There are many people who are ineffective and unfruitful, but it is not because they are not anointed, gifted, or equipped. It is because they are lazy. The writer of Proverbs 24:30-34 says he went passed the field of a lazy man. He saw how thorns and weeds had covered the ground and swallowed the walls, which were in ruins. "I applied my heart to what I observed and learned a lesson from what I saw: a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest—and poverty will come on you like a bandit and scarcity like an armed man" (Proverbs 24:32-34 NIV).

This week you are going to learn how to guard against the bandit of laziness and keep him from entering your "field." **Get ready! You may have some weeds growing in your field you need to deal with!**

Move ahead to Day 1!

Day 1

EVASIVE ACTION

Most people think they are hardworking. In fact, people constantly tell me how busy they are and how little time they have. Yet a person can be very busy and still be lazy if he is avoiding some critical action that needs to be taken. I use the term *critical action* because not all activity is created equal. Critical action is the kind of activity that produces real results, cuts through all the fluff, and gets right down to what is vital. Let me define laziness then as choosing to evade or compromise critical action.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 128)

(Read pages 128-129 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. Define the key words in this week's study:

- procrastination _____

- critical action _____

- laziness _____

- busyness _____

- evasive action _____

- compromise _____

2. Most people are good at inventing reasons to evade or compromise a certain critical action that needs to be taken. What are some of the reasons you have used?

3. What *critical action* do you need to take today?

4. How are you going to avoid getting caught in this trap again?

5. ***Do It Now*** is another great idea for a refrigerator magnet, in fact put it on your bathroom mirror and on your desk. It could change your life! Design it yourself or use the idea below.

Do It Now!

Day 2

THE COMPROMISE

Critical action will almost always mean paying some price and sticking your neck out in some way. The comfortable compromise, on the other hand, always consists of more talking than walking. It allows us to stay safe, makes us feel good about ourselves, and keeps us busy, but it produces very few actual results. Simply put, the comfortable compromise is an action that serves as a substitute for the critical action. It is a cheap imitation, a second-rate alternative, an easy way out.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 130

(Read pages 130-131 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. Use the chart below to compare *comfortable compromise* with *critical action* using the comparisons talked about in today's reading assignment. Add some of your own as well.

<i>Comfortable Compromise</i>	<i>Critical Action</i>
Self-preservation most important	Mission is the most important

2. Go back and highlight any of the comfortable compromises you have allowed into your field.
3. Why is comfortable compromise more problematic than procrastination?

4. The *comfortable compromise* is an action that serves as a _____ for critical action. It is a cheap _____, a second-rate _____, an easy _____.
5. Use the two train tracks pictured below to “map out” something you know God has called you to do (like going and preaching the gospel) that you have chosen the comfortable compromise track. List your comfortable compromises. Then list the critical action you are now going to take to get on the right track.

Day 3

THE POWER OF URGENCY

The Bible is absolutely full of stories of men and women who succeeded when they took critical action and failed when they avoided it. While all the other Israelites stood on the battlefield procrastinating or looking for an easy way out, David had only one mission—to decapitate the giant. He did it, the deadlock was broken, and the battle was won that same day. Saul, on the other hand, was always looking for a comfortable compromise.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 132

(Read page 132 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. When David showed up on the battlefield where the Israelites were at a stalemate with the Philistines, he saw Goliath defying the armies of Israel and hurling insults at her God (1 Samuel 17).

List what David could have done if he had chosen comfortable compromise:

Instead David chose critical action. List his actions:

2. Saul, on the other hand, was always looking for a comfortable compromise. God told him to “go and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are consumed” (1 Samuel 15:18).

What comfortable compromises did Saul chose? _____

What did God consider Saul’s comfortable compromise?

What were the end results of his choosing comfortable compromise? (See 1 Samuel 15:10).

3. What specific choices are you going to make today to make sure God does not feel this way about what He has called you to do?

Day 4

THE BANDIT OF LAZINESS

A pastor once told me that he simply couldn't get new people to visit his church. I was convinced that his problem was a lack of urgency and action, so I asked him this question, "What if I told you I would give you a million dollars for every new person you could get to come to church next Sunday? Do you think you could figure out a way to do it?" He looked down and smiled. "Yes, for a million dollars I'm sure I could find a way," he said. If something can be done for a million dollars, then it can be done—period!

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 134

(Read page 133 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. If there is something you know *can* be done and *needs* to be done but *you aren't doing it*, ask yourself:

- *Is there a more direct and effective way to do this?*
- If the answer is yes, then ask yourself:
- *Why am I choosing to avoid the more effective way?* Circle one:

path of least resistance

pleasure over pain

most convenient

- *What have you concluded?*

2. Direct action is inspired by urgency! Our perception of urgency not only compels us to take action but also prescribes what action is to be taken.

For instance, if you saw someone about to fall off the edge of a cliff, would you:

send him an e-mail

call his cell phone

shout to him

run to him

reach out to him

call the prayer line

call for another to come

3. If urgency compels and prescribes direct action, and direct action is the _____ of laziness.
4. The antidote for laziness is _____.
5. You need to remind yourself that the eyes of God are upon you.

Will you stir yourself, shake yourself, and wake up before the bandit of laziness keeps you from fulfilling your calling? _____

What action are you going to take today? _____

Day 5

LAZINESS IS A THIEF

If something *can* be done and *needs* to be done but is not being done, then the person responsible for doing it is neglecting his responsibility. Whether that neglect is the result of evasive action or comfortable compromise, it is a form of laziness. Laziness is a thief that will rob you of God's best for your life. God will not honor laziness, and it will always keep you from fulfilling your calling.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 134

(Read page 134 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. Complete these powerful one-liners that will help you get the bandit of laziness out of your field and away from your God given call.

- T_____ cannot substitute for action.
- I_____ cannot substitute for action.
- A_____, p_____, and f_____ can't substitute for action.
- P_____ words cannot substitute for action.
- Fulfilling God's will for our lives is going to require putting off c_____, p_____, and l_____.
- It is always going to require taking c_____ a_____.
- That means it's going to require d_____, d_____, r_____, and good old-fashioned h_____ w_____!

2. Time to clean up your field and build a wall of protection to keep the bandit of laziness out.

Read Proverbs 24:30-34. Use the description given in this passage to label the weeds in your field.

Then use what you learned in this lesson to label the bricks in the wall that will keep the bandit of laziness out.

The lazy man's field spoken of in Proverbs 24:30-34 was in shambles. It looked as though bandits had stolen his crop and ruined his livelihood. But his real enemy was not thieves or robbers; it was his own lack of effort. Laziness is a bandit that robs us of our potential, and it is an enemy of God's best for our lives. Yet here's the problem—nobody thinks he is lazy.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 128

This week you discovered it isn't thieves and robbers that are stealing **your** blessing and robbing you of fulfilling **your** call, it is **your** laziness—whatever form it might take—that has been robbing **you** of **your** potential and is the enemy of God's best in **your** life. It is now time for **you** to take responsibility and clean up **your** own "field" and build a wall of protection against the bandit of laziness.

Chapter 11 Review

This Chapter Review can be used in a small group or class study, or in a personal journal. Answers to the questions may be written down in this study guide or in your own personal/prayer journal. Each Key Statement (☞) points out a key truth or principle made in this chapter for you to reflect on and pray about in response to the questions below.

- ☞ Discovering God's will makes very little difference unless we are willing to move forward in obedience.

Are you willing to move forward with God's will for your life?

Discuss the steps you need to take starting today with your group or accountability partner and ask them to hold you accountable by setting a time table to complete this first step.

- ☞ A person can be very busy and still be lazy if he is avoiding some critical action that needs to be taken.

Have you discovered you are very busy, but avoiding some critical action that needs to be taken?

Discuss this openly and honestly with your group or accountability partner.

How can you move forward against what is robbing you of fulfilling God's will in your life?

- ☞ If something *can* be done and *needs* to be done but is not being done, then the person responsible for doing it is neglecting his responsibility.

Are you neglecting your responsibility today?

LIVE BEFORE YOU DIE JOURNAL

Repent and ask God to forgive you. Then begin to pull those weeds and build your wall of protection against the bandit of laziness!

Write your own personalized prayer using Proverbs 24:32-34 and then ask God how you can use what you have learned to help at least one other person this week.

WEEK

12

Enemy #2: The Cemetery of Fear

I think one of the most tragic places you could ever visit is a cemetery, not because of the people who are buried there but because of what is buried within the people who are buried there: books and songs that were never written, sermons that were never preached, forgiveness that was never granted, inventions that were never developed—so much potential that was never realized. So much has been buried and lost for all eternity because someone was afraid of being hurt, afraid of criticism, afraid of rejection, afraid of financial difficulty or physical danger.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 136

“There’ll be two dates on your tombstone and all your friends will read ‘em, but all that’s gonna matter is that little dash between ‘em” (Kevin Welch).¹ How important to you is that little dash on your tombstone? **Get ready because you are about to find out!**

Move ahead to Day 1!

1 Thinkexist.com/quotes

Day 1

THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS

In Matthew 25 Jesus told a parable about a man who went on a journey to a faraway land. Before he left, he entrusted three servants with various “talents,” or money. Rather than letting his money sit in a vault, the master decided to divide it among three servants so they could invest it and his fortune could increase while he was away. To the first servant the master gave five talents, to the second servant he gave two talents, and to the third servant he gave one talent.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 135

(Read page 135 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. Read the entire account of the Parable of the Talents Jesus told in Matthew 25:14-30.

Fill in these key phrases from this passage:

- The servants were given these talents according to their _____ (verse 15).
- When the master returned he wanted to settle _____ (verse 19).
- The first two servants were called _____ (verses 21, 23).
- They were each rewarded by being given _____ (verses 21, 23).
- The third servant said he was _____ and _____ his talent (verse 25).
- The master called this servant _____ and _____ (verse 26).
- The third servant was punished by _____ (verse 30).
- Why did the master say this servant deserved punishment? (verse 29) _____

2. How would you apply these principles to the talent(s) God has given you:

- God has given me _____ as a talent to use and invest.
- God expects a _____ on what He has given me.
- When God asks me how I invested the talents He gave me, I will say _____.
- I want to hear God say to me at the time of reckoning, _____.
- My plan for being a good steward over the talents God has given me begins with _____.

Day 2

BURIED IN THE CEMETERY

Fear causes many people to bury their talents in the ground. I'm not talking about the ground in your backyard. Genesis 2:7 says God formed man from the dust of the ground—*we* are the ground! People bury their talents within themselves because of fear—fear of failure, fear of being mocked, fear of hard work, fear of the unknown, spirits of fear, and fear of man, just to name a few.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 136

(Read page 136 in *Live Before You Die*.)

- Several fears are listed in this section that can keep us from properly using the talents God has given us. Begin by defining these fears. Where applicable, write down a personal example of these in your life.

- 😬 Fear of failure _____
- 😬 Fear of being mocked or accused _____
- 😬 Fear of hard work _____
- 😬 Fear of the unknown _____
- 😬 Fear of man _____
- 😬 Fear of the enemy _____
- 😬 Fear of the persecution, hardship, or danger _____

- Now find out what the Word of God has to say about these fears:

- 😬 Fear of failure - Read Philippians 4:12-13 which says: _____
- 😬 Fear of being mocked or accused - Read Isaiah 50:7-9 which says: _____
- 😬 Fear of hard work - Read Galatians 6:9 which says: _____
- 😬 Fear of the unknown - Read 2 Timothy 1:7 which says: _____
- 😬 Fear of man - Read Romans 8:28-31 which says: _____
- 😬 Fear of the enemy - Read James 4:7 which says: _____
- 😬 Fear of the persecution, hardship, or danger - Read Romans 8:35-39 which says: _____

- Read Psalm 23 and in the space below list every instance of the Lord's help in your life. Use it as your own declaration of freedom from fear today!

Day 3

REGRET

When I was a teenager, I went on a mission's trip to England and stayed in a 'host home' with a lovely British couple. I'll never forget a poster they had hanging on their wall that reported the results of a survey given to ten groups of people. There was a group of ten-year-olds, twenty-year-olds, thirty-year-olds, all the way up to hundred-year-olds, and each was asked the same question: "What is your number one regret at this point in your life?"

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 137

(Read page 137 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. What do you think the servant who buried his talent regretted the most? _____

2. How would you answer that question today? _____

3. How would you like to answer it at the end of your life on earth? _____

4. Many people talk about the emotions they will feel when they arrive in heaven. There are popular songs about how we will dance and be overwhelmed with joy. But many will experience a very different emotion when they arrive in heaven—_____, because it will be too late to go back and do what should have been done.
5. Read Philippians 3:12-14. What does the Apostle Paul say to do so we will not regret having missed out on achieving God's will for our lives? _____

6. Did Paul accomplish this in his own life? _____
How do you know? Read 2 Timothy 4:7-8 for your answer. _____

7. Read 2 Timothy 2:3-7 and list the advice Paul gave young Timothy concerning overcoming fear and fanning into flame the gift of God within him in (1:6).

8. Read the warning given in 2 Timothy 2:11-13 and write it out in your own words.

Day 4

ACCOUNTABILITY

Evangelist Leonard Ravenhill said author and preacher A. W. Tozer once told him, 'I'm not too worried about the judgment on my Christian life. It's the things I could have done but didn't do that worry me.'¹ My friends, one day we are all going to stand before the Master and give an account of what He has entrusted to us. Oh, that we would fear that day above all and be willing to risk everything so on that day we would not be ashamed.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 136

(Read page 138 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. To many people fear seems to be a _____ reason _____ to do something.
2. The master in the Parable of the Talents accused the servant of laziness because:
 - He would not _____ his fears.
 - He was afraid to take a _____ for his master's sake.
 - He chose to take the _____ path.
 - He _____ the talent.
 - _____ at home and relaxed instead of putting it to work for the master.
3. Our talent does not belong to us—it belongs to the _____.
4. _____ has entrusted it into our hands. But one day He will return, and we will have to give an _____ for what we did with His _____.
5. Do you think fear is a good excuse for not doing God's will? _____ Why or why not?
6. Romans 14:12 which says, _____
7. Psalm 27:1-3 says, _____
8. Psalm 34:4 says, _____
9. 1 John 4:18 says, _____

Day 5

COURAGE IS NOT THE ABSENCE OF FEAR

Courage is *not* the absence of fear. In fact, there is no courage without fear. Courage is the willingness to face fear. All the promises, victories, and destiny awaiting Joshua were dependent on his willingness to face his fear.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 139

(Read pages 138-139 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. What is the only way to overcome your fears? _____
2. What is this going to require you to have? _____
3. What was the promise God made to Joshua? _____
4. What did Joshua have to do to receive that promise? (See Joshua 1:9) _____

Most of the time fear is like a mirage; as you face your fear and walk toward it, it will become more and more transparent until it disappears completely. But to face your fear requires courage. Name the fear you are facing. Notice as you face it and move forward you become stronger and it becomes less threatening.

Live Before You Die Journal

WEEK 12

If fulfilling God's will for our lives were just a matter of promoting our own names, reputations, and personal destinies, I would say, 'Don't even bother. Stay home, watch television, and enjoy a comfortable, quiet life.' But we must remember that what is at stake is God's eternal kingdom! Our talent does not belong to us—it belongs to the master. He has entrusted it into our hands. But one day He will return, and we will have to give an account for what we did with His investment.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 139

This week you learned how important it is to face your fears and overcome them. You also learned that fear is not an acceptable excuse for not using the talent(s) God has given you and expects you to invest for Him.

Chapter 12 Review

This Chapter Review can be used in a small group or class study, or in a personal journal. Answers to the questions may be written down in this study guide or in your own personal/prayer journal. Each Key Statement (☞) points out a key truth or principle made in this chapter for you to reflect on and pray about in response to the questions below.

☞ **Courage is *not* the absence of fear. In fact, there is no courage without fear.**

What has taken courage to face in your life?

☞ **Courage is the willingness to face fear.**

What was the outcome of facing your fear?

☞ **All the promises, victories, and destiny awaiting Joshua were dependent on his willingness to face his fear.**

What promises of God are awaiting you as you face your fear?

How would you encourage another to face their fears so they can fulfill their destiny?

Write a thanksgiving prayer to God as you complete this week's lessons and ask Him how you can use what you have learned to help at least one other person this week.

WEEK

13

Enemy #3 – The Poison of Unbelief

One of the characteristics of God's will is that God calls us to do the impossible! But to face the impossible requires faith. Satan knows that if he can inject unbelief into our spirits, he can effectively rob us of God's best for our lives. For this reason unbelief is a deadly enemy of God's plan for your life.

–Live Before You Die, p. 141

Many of God's people don't realize how sinister and dangerous unbelief is. Jesus rebuked His disciples for unbelief more than any other thing. The reason unbelief is so dangerous is that not only is it a sin in itself, but it also can be a gateway for other sins as well. **Get ready! You have got to close that gateway and stop the poison of unbelief from robbing you of God's best for your life! Move ahead to Day 1!**

Day 1

THE UNBELIEVING BELIEVER

In Mark 9:24 a man said to Jesus, “I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!” Notice that he didn’t ask Jesus to give him more faith. In fact, he said, “I do believe.” This man recognized that the problem was not *too little* faith but *too much* unbelief! Perhaps you don’t see the distinction I am making here. Some people think unbelief simply means ‘no faith.’ But it is possible to be an unbelieving believer. In other words, faith and unbelief could be present at the same time. Faith has the potential to move mountains, but unbelief will nullify the power of faith.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 142

(Read pages 141-142 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. Read Hebrews 11:6. Fill in the blanks on the three key points presented in this verse.
 - Without _____ it is _____ to please God.
 - Anyone who comes to Him must _____ that He _____.
 - And believe that He _____ those who earnestly _____.
2. What happens if a “believer” does not have the last two keys? Will just the first key open the door to all of God’s blessings? _____ Label the doors that need to be unlocked to receive all of God’s blessings.
3. How is it possible to be an unbelieving believer? _____
4. Are you missing any of these important keys? _____ Explain _____
5. Pray the prayer of Mark 9:24 for yourself today: _____

Day 2

THE WRONG FUEL

The problem was the injection of a substance that was incompatible with the vehicle's design. This is exactly how unbelief works. The devil wants to inject unbelief into our spirits because he knows it will bring us to a screeching halt.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 142

(Read page 142 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. What is the right fuel for you? Fuel that will help you mature in your walk with the Lord. Fuel that is needed to achieve God's will for your life. List all of the right fuels you need.

2. What is the wrong fuel the enemy wants to inject into you? _____

3. How are you going to make sure you are using the right fuel and the right keys every day? _____

4. Start by looking up belief and believe in your Bible concordance. Read one verse a day and meditate on it throughout the day to renew your mind and keep your focus on the truth that will set you free from unbelief. Start with John 20:24-31. Journal what you glean from each day's study of God's Word.

Day 3

UNBELIEF NULLIFIES THE POWER OF FAITH

When asked why the disciples had not been able to exorcize the demon, Jesus said it was because of unbelief. But now He seems to be saying that it is because they had not fasted and prayed enough. Which is it? The confusion comes when we fail to realize the moral of the story. At first glance it may appear that the demon is the focal point of this account, but a closer look will reveal that the real antagonist in this story is not the demon but the spirit of unbelief.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 144

(Read pages 143-144 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. Read the entire passage referred to above in Matthew 17:14–21.
2. If you were one of Jesus' disciples during this event, would you have been a little confused by what seemed to be two different answers to the disciples question as to why they had been unable to exorcize the boy? _____
What are the two answers Jesus gave? _____
3. The confusion comes when we fail to realize the moral of the story which is _____.
4. Who is the real antagonist in this story? _____
5. The disciples were concerned about the _____ inside the boy, but Jesus was concerned about the _____ inside His disciples.
6. What was the truth Jesus knew that He was trying to convey to His disciples? _____

7. Here is another formula for you to learn from this lesson:
Casting _____ is the Antidote for the
Poison of _____ and releases Mountain Moving _____.

Day 4

TRUST GOD'S BASKET

Early in ministry I came to a crossroads where I had to decide to go in one direction or another. I essentially had to choose between a situation that offered security, financially and otherwise, and following the call of God with all its risks and unknowns. I had an inward conviction that I had to give myself fully to one or the other, but I didn't want to let go of either option. In prayer I said, "Lord, I don't want to be foolish and put all of my eggs in one basket." Then I heard the Lord speak. He said, "You can trust My basket." I have seen this to be true. God's basket is the best one; it is fully reliable and never breaks.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 145

(Read page 145 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. Why do some investors often "diversify" their investments? _____
2. A common idiom in the business world is, "Don't put all your _____ in _____"
3. What does that idiom mean? _____
4. If you are holding back some of your "eggs," it means you are not _____ confident that a particular basket will hold. You may be 50 percent confident or even 99 percent confident. On the scale of 1 to 10, indicate how confident do you feel right now that you are keeping all your "eggs" in God's basket. 1 = "I am not very confident that I am relying on the Lord, keeping all of my "eggs" in His basket. 10 = Every "egg" of my life is completely in His basket, fully trusting in every area of my life.
5. Any small percentage of apprehension is called _____.
6. How do you know when you have gotten rid of unbelief? _____
7. How many baskets do you have? _____
8. Where have you placed your "eggs"? _____
9. What small things can you do today to transfer these "eggs" over God's basket?

Day 5

NO BACK UP PLAN

You will never really succeed at anything if you are halfway in and halfway out. If God has called you, it is not necessary to have a 'backup plan.' You don't need to hedge your bets. You don't need to hold some of your eggs back 'just in case.' Cast out the unbelief, put all your eggs in God's basket, burn your ships, and give yourself to Him and His plan, body, soul, and spirit.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 146

A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.

James 1:8

(Read pages 145-146 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. In this chapter you read about a famous Spanish explorer, Hernán Cortés.. When he arrived in Mexico's harbor of Veracruz in 1519, he faced overwhelming odds. Before him lay the mighty Aztec Empire with its vast armies. But Cortés had only about six hundred men with him. Cortés knew his men would always have one eye on the ships, longing for home. He knew that in the back of their minds they would always be considering the highly attractive alternative of retreat. He knew that if these men were divided in heart or mind, the mission would surely fail. So Cortés did something unthinkable. What was that? _____

2. This unmitigated _____ unlocked unbelievable _____ that gave them the power to _____ where all those before them had failed.
3. Read James 1:8 and write this verse out in your own words.

4. You will never really succeed at anything if you are halfway in and halfway out. So if God has called you, it is not necessary to:
 - ⊗ Have a "_____ plan."
 - ⊗ You don't need to _____ your bets.
 - ⊗ You don't need to hold some of your eggs back "_____ in case."

5. Instead you need to:

- Cast out the unbelief,
- Rip up your back-up plan,
- Put all your eggs in God's basket,
- Burn your ships, and
- Give yourself to Him and His plan, body, soul, and spirit.

(Check them off as you do each one. **You need to do all of them!**)

When you are 100 percent committed and there is no turning back, you will break into a level of effectiveness and power that you've never experienced before. You will succeed where others have failed. You will overcome in the face of overwhelming odds. Mountains will move for you, and nothing will be impossible for you.

—*Live Before You Die*, pg. 146

This week you learned the antidote for the poison of unbelief. To have it work in your life, you need to continually guard against this subtle enemy of God's will for your life.

Chapter 13 Review

This Chapter Review can be used in a small group or class study, or in a personal journal. Answers to the questions may be written down in this study guide or in your own personal/prayer journal. Each Key Statement (☞) points out a key truth or principle made in this chapter for you to reflect on and pray about in response to the questions below.

- ☞ Satan knows that if he can inject unbelief into our spirits, he can effectively rob us of God's best for our lives.

What are some of the ways Satan has tried to inject unbelief into your spirit?

How would you help others guard against this kind of enemy attack?

- ☞ Faith has the potential to move mountains, but unbelief will nullify the power of faith.

Read again Hebrews 11:6 and commit to memory the three keys you learned this week.

Make this your personal declaration as you conclude this week of study.

- ☞ God's basket is the best one; it is fully reliable and never breaks.

There are many stories and examples in the Bible that prove this was and is still true for His people today.

Read a story of God's faithfulness from the Old Testament and one from the New Testament. Research for yourself how God is reliable and trustworthy.

Be prepared to share this with whoever God sends across your path.

Write a thanksgiving prayer to God as you complete this week's lessons and ask Him how you can use what you have learned to help at least one other person this week.

WEEK

14

Enemy #4 – The Sedative of Excuses

If you are looking for an excuse, you can always find one. Some people are too young. Some are too old. Some are not smart enough. Some are not experienced enough. Some are not privileged enough. Some don't have enough money. Some don't have the right abilities. For some it's not time yet; for others it's too late. Excuses are a penny a pound, plentiful and cheap—and God does not buy them! We become extremely creative when we want to make an excuse. Our excuses can often sound very noble and even spiritual at times. We use excuses to fool others, but they are especially effective at helping us to fool ourselves. We use them as a sedative to soothe our conscience and to make us feel better about our own disobedience and laziness.

—Live Before You Die, p. 147

As you read through the following list of excuses, I would like to challenge you to allow this to be a sort of diagnostic test. Examine your own heart to see if you are allowing these excuses, or others like them, to keep you from walking in the fullness of what God has for your life. **Get ready!**

Time to defeat enemy #4!

Move ahead to Day 1!

Day 1

EXCUSE #1: I'M WAITING ON AND I DON'T WANT TO GET AHEAD OF THE LORD

The word of the Lord is “Go forward!” Begin to move in the direction God is leading. Even God cannot steer a parked car! Get moving for God, and you will find that He will begin to guide your steps and direct your path. Can you imagine God in heaven huffing and puffing and leaning on Gabriel’s shoulder as He says, “Man, I wish that guy would slow down. He’s so quick I can hardly keep up with him!” More than likely God has been waiting on you to catch up rather than the other way around.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 150

(Read pages 148–150 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. Read Exodus 14:13–15. The children of Israel had just come out of Egypt and had set their faces toward the Promised Land. But between the land of their captivity and the land of their destiny there was an obstacle that seemed insurmountable—the Red Sea. With no way to cross this body of water, they looked back toward Egypt and saw a cloud of dust stirred up by a thousand horses’ hooves—and it was hurtling toward them. The armies of Pharaoh were on their way to wipe them off the face of the earth. As you can imagine, the children of Israel began to panic. They ran to Moses, their wise leader, for his advice.

What did Moses tell the people to do? _____

What did God say to Moses? _____

2. What kind of man was this Moses that God placed in leadership over this band of exiles (six hundred thousand men besides women and children per Exodus 12:37)?

First of all, Moses never actually wanted this leadership position – see Exodus 3:10–4:17.

Look at the list of excuses he used to try and convince God he was not the right person for the job.

In Exodus 3:10, God speaks to Moses from the burning bush and says: _____

Excuse #1 is in Exodus 3:11 which asks: _____

How would you express this excuse in modern language? _____

Excuse #2 is in Exodus 3:13 where Moses asks: _____

Excuse #3 is in Exodus 4:1 which asks: _____

Excuse #4 is in Exodus 4:10 where Moses tells God: _____

What did Moses say to God in Exodus 4:13? _____

After all of these excuses, what does it say about God's response in Exodus 4? _____

Perhaps after all this we can see why God spoke strongly to Moses in Exodus 14:15.

3. Have you ever used any of these excuses for not doing what you know God has asked you to do?

Explain your answer _____

4. What could excuses cause you to miss out on? _____

Day 2

EXCUSE #2: I DON'T HAVE ENOUGH MONEY

Financial needs are one of the most practical barriers to fulfilling our dreams. Many times the money issue boils down to a faith issue. We make excuses because we are not fully convinced that God will provide for our needs. The next few sentences will change your life and even your destiny if you will allow them to sink deep into your heart.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 150

(Read pages 150-151 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. God is _____ poor, and He has no need of anything.
2. When He orders something, He will _____ pay for it.
3. He _____ expects us to finance His will on our own.
4. When God wants something, He never asks “_____?”
5. The only thing that governs what God can or cannot do in our lives is our _____ to believe Him, trust Him, and obey Him.
6. Never decide what is or isn't God's will in your life by looking at the _____ that is or isn't in your pocket. Check God's pockets! They are filled with _____ than enough!
7. As ministers we work not for money or for food; we work for _____.
8. Money will follow ministry, and as we seek first the kingdom of God, _____ these things will be added to us.

There are many people who wait until “they can afford it” to do the thing God has called them to do. They have somehow convinced themselves that funding God's will for their lives is _____ responsibility.

It's _____ responsibility, and He is more than happy to take care of it. In the meantime do what He is calling you to do, in whatever way you can, and stop using money as an excuse.

Day 3

EXCUSE #3: I DON'T HAVE ENOUGH TALENT, EXPERIENCE, EDUCATION, INTELLIGENCE, ETC.

The Lord appeared to Moses in a flame of fire out of the midst of a burning bush and said, 'Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt' (v. 10). Immediately Moses's mind filled with excuses—all the things he didn't have and couldn't do. Moses was not a general—he was a shepherd. He was not a polished orator—he had a stuttering tongue. He was not equipped to lead a nation—he had his hands full leading a flock of sheep. How could he possibly do what God was asking him to do?

Live Before You Die, p. 152

(Read pages 152-153 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. Moses made the error of thinking it was about him—about his talents, abilities, and gifts. But God quickly corrects Moses over and over throughout the rest of the chapter:

- Read Exodus 3:6 where God says, _____
- Read Exodus 3:10 where God says, _____
- Read Exodus 3:12 where God promises, _____
- In Exodus 3:14 God says, _____
- In Exodus 3:17 God promises, _____
- Exodus 3:20-21 God tells Moses He will _____

2. Moses learned who God is and is not looking for. Below cross off the types God is not looking for and circle the ones He is looking for.

most talented	most intelligent	most beautiful	most articulate
most educated	humble	most charismatic	willing to follow
willing to yield	obedient	most popular	hard working
most experienced	tested by trials	faithful	

3. Following Jesus is simple because you don't need to:

- know _____
- be a _____

- be the _____
- be the _____

Your job is to stop making excuses, let Him _____, do _____ He tells you to do, and _____!

Day 4

EXCUSE #4: I'M NOT READY YET

Delayed obedience is disobedience! I have found this to be one of the most common reasons people fall short of the will of God in their lives. So many people are continuously waiting for the 'right time' before they step out and do what God has called them to do. Reinhard Bonnke once told me, "Those who forever seek the will of God are overrun by those who do it."

Live Before You Die, p.154

(Read pages 154-158 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. The "But First" List:

Fill in the blanks with the words: "But First."

- Jesus comes to us, perhaps in our youth, and He says, "Follow Me." We say, "Yes, Lord, I will follow You, _____ let me finish my education."
- Time goes by, we graduate, and then He comes to us again. "Follow Me," He says. We answer, "Yes, Lord, I will follow You, _____ let me get a job and save up some money so I have something to fall back on."
- We get a job, time goes by, and He comes to us again. "Follow Me," He says. We say, "Yes, Lord, I will follow You, _____ let me put my kids through school."
- The kids grow, leave the house, and have children of their own. He comes to us again, "Follow Me." We say, "Yes, Lord, I will follow You, _____ let me retire from my job so I can collect my pension."

Have you used any of these excuse? _____ Don't let time run out for you!

2. Read Luke 9:60 and Matthew 4:18-22. Compare the two responses to the call of Jesus.

The young man in Luke 9:60 said: _____

In Matthew 4:18-20, Peter and Andrew said: _____

3. Define procrastination: _____

4. Why is procrastination the devil's best friend? _____

5. What secret does the devil know? _____

6. Delayed obedience is really _____.

Day 5

THE CALL VS. THE COMMISSION

When Jesus called His disciples, He didn't call them to be apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, or teachers. He simply called them to follow Him. And as they followed Him, Jesus promised that He would 'make' them into 'fishers of men.' Now the disciples left their nets immediately to follow Jesus, but they were not made into fishers of men immediately. There was a season of training between when Jesus called them to follow Him and when He commissioned them to preach the gospel.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 159

(Read page 159 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. Explain the difference between the “call” and the “commission” in your life.

My call is to _____

My commission is to _____

2. There is a season of _____ between when Jesus calls you and when He commissions you to go out and _____.

3. How long did the disciples spend in this training period? _____

Read the Book of Luke which is the fullest, most orderly story of Jesus' life (Luke 1:1-4).

List the things the disciples saw and did during this training period:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

4. Read Luke 10:1. What did this portion of their training period involve? _____

5. Track your progression from when you heard your call by adding dates to your call and to your commission. Then, add specifics to your training (either training that you've currently done, or presently in the process of, or your future training needed). It is important to write your game plan down.

When was I CALLED: _____

When was I COMMISSIONED: _____

MY TRAINING THAT IS NEEDED:

Past _____

Present _____

Future _____

6. Obedience to the call of God is about _____.
7. Jesus says, “_____ and _____.” Don’t worry about the _____. It will come as you _____.

Live Before You Die Journal

WEEK 14

This week as you read through this list of excuses, I challenged you to allow this to be a sort of diagnostic test. Examine your own heart to see if you are allowing these excuses, or others like them, to keep you from walking in the fullness of what God has for your life.

Chapter 14 Review

This Chapter Review can be used in a small group or class study, or in a personal journal. Answers to the questions may be written down in this study guide or in your own personal/prayer journal. Each Key Statement (☞) points out a key truth or principle made in this chapter for you to reflect on and pray about in response to the questions below.

- ☞ When Jesus calls, He doesn't mean "get back to Me sometime today." He means answer **now!** Don't procrastinate! Don't wait!

What are the results of your self-diagnostic test? Check off any of these excuses you have used.

- ☐ I am waiting on the Lord
- ☐ I don't want to get ahead of God
- ☐ I don't have enough money
- ☐ I don't have enough talent, experience, education, intelligence, etc.
- ☐ I'm not ready yet

Others I have used: _____

Discuss with your group or accountability partner how you are going to change this pattern of excuses in your life.

- ☞ Respond immediately, forsake everything that holds you back, and follow Jesus! Remember delayed obedience is disobedience.

How are you going to avoid being disobedient to God based on what you learned in this week's study?

How would you help others understand this important principle?

LIVE BEFORE YOU DIE JOURNAL

Write a thanksgiving prayer to God as you complete this week's lessons and ask Him how you can use what you have learned to help at least one other person this week.

WEEK

15

Enemy #5 – The Witchcraft of Rebellion!

I can give you my advice in one word: obey! I think this is perhaps the single greatest word of advice anyone could have for discovering and remaining in God's will. Unfortunately it is also one of the areas of greatest difficulty for so many of God's people. Making excuses comes naturally to us, but simple obedience seems so difficult.

–Live Before You Die, p.161

Get ready! It is time to deal with the witchcraft of rebellion once and for all!

Move ahead to Day 1!

Day 1

SHEEP, DONKEYS, AND PEACOCKS!

And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments of the Lord and His statutes which I command you today for your good?

Deuteronomy 10:12–13 NKJV

Notice that God's commands are not given to make us miserable; they are for our own good. This might sound like a cliché, but please do not dismiss it.

(Read pages 161–162 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. We are like sheep prone to _____ and amazingly _____.
Describe a time when you behaved like a sheep: _____
2. We are like donkeys—_____ and _____.
Describe a time when you behaved like a donkey: _____
3. We are like peacocks—_____ and _____.
Describe a time when you behaved like a peacock: _____
4. We are quick to _____ and _____ but slow to _____.
Describe a time you over analyzed what God called you to do or been slow to obey. _____
5. We are masters of _____ and experts at _____.
Have you become a master or an expert of either of these character traits of rebellion?
_____ Explain _____
6. Read Proverbs 28:1.
We are to be _____
And as _____ as a lion.
Does this describe you? _____
Why or why not? _____

Day 2

KING SAUL'S REBELLION

God is all knowing and all wise. He knows the future. He knows the past. He can see what is ahead in your life and in the lives of everyone around you. He knows what is going to happen in the economy, in politics, and on the world stage. When He speaks, He is giving you insider information for your advantage, and your obedience is the most profitable thing you could do for yourself.

–*Live Before You Die*, p. 162

(Read page 162 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. Consider Israel's first king, Saul, who thought his idea was better than God's command. Each act of rebellion led him deeper into trouble and farther from God's will.

Act #1 – Read 1 Samuel 13:7-9 Saul became impatient because

In disobedience Saul _____

Look at the excuses Saul used for being disobedient in verse 11:

- ♦ The men were _____
- ♦ You did not come at the _____
- ♦ The enemy was _____
- ♦ I have not _____ the Lord's favor
- ♦ So I felt compelled to _____

Look at Samuel's response to this disobedience in verses 13-14:

- ♦ If you had kept the command of the God, He would have _____
- ♦ But since you disobeyed, God has sought and appointed _____
- ♦ Because you have not _____

Act #2 – Read 1 Samuel 15:1-3.

What was Saul commanded to do by God? _____

Read 1 Samuel 15:7-9. What did Saul do? _____

What justification did Saul use when Samuel asked him why he did not obey God's command? (See 1 Samuel 15:20-22) _____

What excuse did Saul use in verse 24? _____

What did Samuel tell Saul in verse 26? _____

What does it say in verse 35 about how God felt about Saul's disobedience? _____

2. It was to Saul that Samuel said, "Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams" (1 Samuel 15:22 NKJV).

Explain what this verse means: _____

3. Samuel went on in verse 23 to declare: "For _____ is as the sin of witchcraft, and _____ is as iniquity and idolatry." (NKJV).

4. When God speaks, He is giving you insider information for your advantage, therefore your _____ is the most _____ thing you could do for yourself.

Day 3

THE WIDOW OF ZAREPHATH'S OBEDIENCE

I could point to many examples in my own life of times when God spoke to me about something, but because obeying required some level of personal sacrifice, I struggled and wrestled in my own heart and mind, sometimes for far too long. In the end I discovered that His instructions were meant to save me mountains of heart-ache, pain, and expense. If we could only learn to obey, we would be fulfilled, happy, and blessed in every way. John H. Sammis's famous hymn says it well: "Trust and obey, for there's no other way, to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey."¹

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 162

(Read page 163 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. In direct contrast to King Saul's disobedience, we see the benefits of obedience in the amazing story of the widow of Zarephath. Read her story in 1 Kings 17:7-24.

Act #1 – God sends Elijah the prophet a _____ widow.

Did Elijah need this woman's food? _____ Explain _____

Why did God send Elijah to this widow woman? _____

Act #2 – What two requests did Elijah make of this poor widow woman? _____

What was her reply? _____

Act #3 – What instructions did Elijah give the woman in verse 13? _____

What promise did Elijah give her in verse 14? _____

Act #4 – What did the woman do? _____

What was her reward for her obedience? _____

2. This woman's _____ unlocked a fountain of _____ that she never could have anticipated for her and her family.
3. Saul's act of _____ unlocked a fountain of _____ and _____ for him and his family.
4. Which example will you choose to follow? _____ Why? _____

Day 4

THE SIN OF DISOBEDIENCE

There is favor, prosperity, peace, joy, and blessing for those who obey, but the rebellious reap the reward of their own ways.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 163

(Read pages 163-163 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. In Colossians 3:6 unbelievers are called “the children of _____” and it says the _____ of God comes upon them.
2. We are not the children of disobedience, but we are known by a different characteristic. In John 10:27 Jesus said, _____. One way God’s people are distinguished from the lost is by their _____ to His voice.
3. Have you ever stopped to consider how sinful disobedience is? In the space below, write a time when you saw the major effects of disobedience in your life _____

All of creation—galaxies, planets, tides, nature—everything obeys His command, everything except people. Perhaps the greatest sin of humanity is the sin of _____. I love the way missionary Paul Washer illustrated this point in a recent sermon.

“Imagine this. Here stands God on the day of creation.

He looks at stars that could swallow up a thousand of our suns, and He says, ‘All you stars, move yourself to this place and start in this order and move in a circle, and move exactly as I tell you until I give you another word.’ And they all obey him.

He says, ‘Planets, pick yourself up and whirl. Make this formation at My command until I give you another word.’

He looks at mountains and He says, ‘Be lifted up,’ and they obey Him.

He tells valleys, ‘Be cast down,’ and they obey Him.

He looks at the sea and says, ‘You will come this far,’ and the sea obeys.

And then He looks at you and says, ‘Come.’

And you go, ‘No!’”²

In what ways has the Lord asked you to “Go.” It might not be to a foreign mission field. But He’s asking you every day to “Go” in your everyday life to live out your gifts. What ways can you “Go” today? _____ This week? _____

Day 5

REBELLION IS A SERIOUS HEART ISSUE

Rebellion is not only an enemy of God's will for your life; it is also a sign of a serious heart issue. God views rebellion and stubbornness as witchcraft, iniquity, and idolatry!

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 164

(Read pages 164-165 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. Use a Bible Dictionary and define the words used above:
 - Rebellion _____
 - Stubbornness _____
 - Witchcraft _____
 - Iniquity _____
 - Idolatry _____
2. Where do all these negative characteristics originate? _____
3. The Psalms and the book of Proverbs deal a lot with heart issues. Read these scriptures and record what they tell you about the issues of the heart:
 - Psalm 14:1 says because a fool says in his heart, "_____, " he becomes _____ and _____ and _____.
 - Psalm 66:18 warns if there is _____ in my heart, then God will not _____.
 - Proverbs 3:5 tells me to _____ in the Lord with _____ my heart and then He will make my _____.
 - Proverbs 4:23 warns me to _____ my heart because it is the _____ of life.
 - Proverbs 23:7 (NKJV) says as I think in my heart _____.

The New Testament also speaks about heart issues. Read and complete these scriptures concerning the heart:

- Matthew 5:8 – "Blessed are the _____ in heart for they will _____.
- Matthew 12:34b – "For out of the overflow of the _____ the mouth _____.

WEEK 15

- Romans 10:10 – “For it is with your heart that you _____ and are _____.”
 - Ephesians 6:6b – “Doing the _____ of God from your _____.”
 - Colossians 3:1 – “Set your _____ on things _____.”
 - Hebrews 3:8 – “Today, if you hear his voice, do not _____ your _____ as you did in the _____.”
4. Pray Psalm 51:10-12 as your personal prayer today.

Live Before You Die Journal

WEEK 15

I've chosen to end this section about the enemies of God's will for your life with this chapter about rebellion because, at the end of the day, disobedience is at the core of all these enemies. Laziness, fear, unbelief, and excuses are all easily overcome if we will simply resolve in our hearts to obey no matter what.

Live Before You Die, p.164

This week you learned there is no alternative to obedience—not even sacrifices, invocations, or tears. When God speaks, don't waste your time praying about it. When God speaks, don't waste your time rationalizing or analyzing His word. When God speaks, there is only one appropriate response—immediate, unquestioning obedience.

Chapter 15 Review

This Chapter Review can be used in a small group or class study, or in a personal journal. Answers to the questions may be written down in this study guide or in your own personal/prayer journal. Each Key Statement (☞) points out a key truth or principle made in this chapter for you to reflect on and pray about in response to the questions below.

- ☞ There are many people who have been praying about God's will and studying His Word, seeking His will, but God has already spoken, and they have yet to obey. This is called rebellion, and it will block God's blessings from flowing into your life.

If this is you, you need to repent of the sin of rebellion and stop blocking God's blessings and promises in your life.

- ☞ If you are not going to obey, none of the other advice in this book will help you. In fact, if you won't obey, even the Bible won't help you. As Martin Luther once said, "You may as well quit reading and hearing the Word of God, and give it to the devil, if you do not desire to live according to it."³

If you are not going to obey, don't bother reading the rest of this book or your Bible. Is this you?

*However, if you are ready to obey God's will for your life then take back from the enemy what he is trying to steal from you. Whatever it is God has been telling you to do, do it **today, immediately!***

- ☞ When He speaks, He is giving you insider information for your advantage, and your obedience is the most profitable thing you could do for yourself.

LIVE BEFORE YOU DIE JOURNAL

What are you going to do starting today to use this insider information God is giving you?

Be prepared to share this insider information with others.

Write a thanksgiving prayer to God as you complete this week's lessons and ask Him how you can use what you have learned to help at least one other person this week.

PART 4

Five Lingering Questions about God's Will

WEEK

16

If I Encounter Resistance, Am I Out of God's Will?

We've all heard clichés such as, 'Where God guides He provides' or 'What God ordains He sustains.' And while there is an element of truth in trite adages such as these, they can often give a false impression that if someone is in God's will, everything will be easy. This misunderstanding can cause a person to constantly question God's call and His will. What happens when the bank account is empty and challenges arise on every side? Do we then conclude that God is not with us? Should we turn back or quit when the going gets rough?

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 169

In this section we will deal with five lingering questions that you may still have concerning God's will for your life. **Get ready!**

Move ahead to Day 1!

Day 1

IF I ENCOUNTER RESISTANCE, AM I OUT OF GOD'S WILL?

Following the call of God does not guarantee that we will not encounter difficulties and hardships. In fact, the reality is quite the opposite. Jesus told His disciples in John 16:33, 'In this world you will have trouble' (NIV). Paul said in 2 Timothy 3:12 that everyone who lives a godly life will suffer. But in the midst of the suffering there is peace, and every difficulty we encounter shapes our character and brings us closer to God.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 169

(Read pages 169-171 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. Read Luke 4:1-14.
2. Jesus was led into the wilderness by _____.
3. Many times when we find ourselves in a wilderness experience, it may actually be God leading us into the wilderness. Why would God do this to us? Why would He do this to Jesus?

4. Luke 4:1 says that when Jesus went into the wilderness, He went in _____

5. But at the end of the story, when Jesus came out of the wilderness, it says, He "returned in the _____" (v. 14 emphasis added).
6. There is something about the wilderness that produces _____
men and women of God.
7. It is one thing to be filled with the Holy Spirit and have the _____
to do great things for God.
8. It is another thing altogether to have walked through the valley of the shadow of death and to emerge _____ on the other side.
9. Have you walked through the valley of the shadow of death? _____

Explain your answer: _____

10. There is a big difference between an army cadet in basic training and a battle-hardened veteran, between a new recruit and a war hero:

Describe these differences.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Which are you? _____

Explain _____

Have you been through the crisis of faith and experienced God's provision and power?

Describe how God has brought you up out of the miry clay and set your feet on the rock:

Day 2

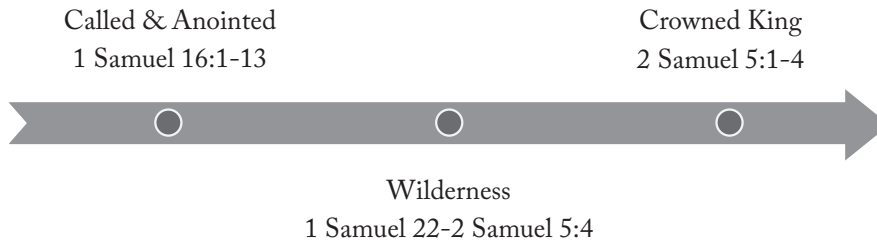
DAVID IN THE WILDERNESS OF WAITING

David was not a favorite candidate for greatness. He was not his father's first choice. In fact, when Samuel came to anoint a king from Jesse's house, David's father didn't even bother to call him out of the field. Instead he presented his older, more impressive sons to the prophet. But God's choice is often different from man's choice because while man looks at the outward appearance, God looks at the heart. God found David in the field, faithfully watching his sheep and worshipfully playing his harp. Against all human logic God chose David to be the next king of Israel. But before David could sit on the throne, he would have to go to the wilderness.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 171

(Read pages 171-172 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. Fill in the years on the timeline below as David progressed from being anointed as king to actually being crowned king and stepping into his calling as the king.



2. How old was David when he was anointed by the Prophet Samuel? _____
3. How long was David hiding in the caves of the wilderness of waiting? _____
4. How old was David when he was anointed king over all of Israel? _____
5. What did God accomplish in David's life while he was in the wilderness of waiting?

6. Now make your own timeline:



Day 3

MOSES IN THE WILDERNESS OF BROKENNESS

Sometimes God has to break us down so He can rebuild us His way. And often the more impressive the edifice of our own making, the longer and more painful is the process of dying to self and surrendering to God.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 172

(Read pages 172-173 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. Moses was chosen by God to be Israel's deliverer.

What kind of life did Moses grow up in for his first 40 years of his life?

2. Who sent Moses into the wilderness? _____
3. How long did Moses spend in the process of dying to self and surrendering to God on the backside of the desert? _____
4. Moses ran into the wilderness as a _____ and came out as a _____.



5. When and where was your "backside of the desert" experience? _____

Day 4

ISRAEL IN THE WILDERNESS OF PURGING

God needed only one day to take Israel out of Egypt but forty years to take Egypt out of Israel. That's right—God took the whole nation through the wilderness before bringing Israel into her inheritance. Are you beginning to see a pattern here? Between Egypt and Canaan, the land of captivity and the land of destiny, there is always a process and a journey that leads through a dry, lonely, barren land. In that place God accomplishes an eternal and enduring work in our lives that will bring glory to His name.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 173

(Read pages 173-174 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. Read Deuteronomy 8:2-5. Why did God send His people into the wilderness? _____

2. Think of every story that has inspired you and every memory you hold dear. You will notice that every victory has been preceded by a _____, and every climax has been prefaced by a _____.

Describe one of those stories or memories from your life: _____

3. The testimony everyone wants to have includes a _____ no one wants to _____.

The story everyone would love to tell contains a _____ everyone wants to _____. But talk with those who have gone through the trial by fire and have come forth as gold, and you will hear them say time and time again, "I wouldn't _____."

Describe a test or wilderness experience you have had that has caused you to say, "I wouldn't trade that experience for the world!" _____

4. How effective do you think an army would be if the soldiers were trained at five-star resorts?

What kind of training does a soldier require in order to survive any upcoming battles?

5. How reliable would a scholar be if he never took a test? _____

How would a scholar determine the level of learning if he did not have regular tests to evaluate his progress? _____

6. How long would a boxer last in the ring if his training consisted of pillow fights? _____

What builds muscles of any kind? _____

7. Whether you are a soldier, scholar, boxer or servant, what do you need to experience in your life to be effective at what you do? _____

Day 5

GOOD TIMBER

I read about a scientific experiment that involved a group of researchers who had isolated themselves from the outside world in an artificial environment called a 'biosphere.' Inside the biosphere the scientists had successfully replicated nearly every weather condition on earth except for one—wind. To their surprise the absence of wind was disastrous for the trees, which began to bend and snap under their own weight. It turns out that wind strengthens the trees by creating stress. Without this resistance the trees will not develop enough strength to hold themselves upright.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 174

(Read pages 174-175 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. Douglas Malloch's poem "Good Timber" expresses this point brilliantly.

Fill in the blanks and then finish illustrating the meaning of each stanza.

The tree that never had to fight
 For sun and sky and air and light,
 But stood out in the open plain
 And always got its share of rain,
 Never became a forest _____
 But lived and died a _____ thing.

The man who never had to toil
 To heaven from the common soil,
 Who never had to win his share
 Of sun and sky and light and air,
 Never became a _____ man
 But lived and died as he _____.

Good timber does not grow in ease;
 The _____ the wind, the _____ the trees;
 The farther the sky, the greater the _____;
 The more the storm, the more the _____.

By sun and cold, by rain and snows,
In trees and men, good timbers grow.
Where thickest stands the forest growth,
We find the patriarchs of them both.
And they hold converse with the stars
Whose broken branches show the scars
Of many winds and of much _____—
This is the common law of _____.¹

2. Have you watched someone you love struggle to learn how to swim or face some other obstacle they knew they had to learn on their own to overcome?

Were you tempted to intervene? _____

What is the best thing we can do for our loved ones when they were struggling and suffering in their wilderness time? _____

3. Just before Moses died he sang a song over Israel in Deuteronomy 32:10. How does this verse encourage as we spend time in our wilderness time of temptation, waiting, brokenness, and purging? _____

Live Before You Die Journal

WEEK 16

Moses, Israel, David, and countless others—including Jesus Himself—passed through the wilderness as they followed the call of God. The difficulties they encountered and the trials they faced were all a part of God’s plan and were used to accomplish God’s purpose for their lives.

–*Live Before You Die*, p. 175

This week you learned that being in God’s will does not mean there will never be setbacks or that you will be immune to difficulty. But even in the midst of the wilderness God will spread His wings over you and keep circling around you as an eagle flutters over her young. He will keep you as the apple of His eye, and He will never allow you to drown.

Chapter 16 Review

This Chapter Review can be used in a small group or class study, or in a personal journal. Answers to the questions may be written down in this study guide or in your own personal/prayer journal. Each Key Statement (↪) points out a key truth or principle made in this chapter for you to reflect on and pray about in response to the questions below.

- ↪ **Learning that being in God’s will does not mean there will never be setbacks or that you will be immune to difficulty may be a difficult principle to embrace in your life.**

How would you explain to someone how important our wilderness times are?

What example would you give them of a time in your own life you faced a wilderness time and came out the other side stronger and wiser?

- ↪ **We need to resist the temptation to try to pull our loved ones out of their wilderness time. They may not understand why we are not running to their rescue.**

How would you explain to a loved one why you are not coming to their immediate rescue?

What will you tell them you will do for them?

Discuss ways you can back this up biblically.

Write a thanksgiving prayer to God as you complete this week’s lessons and ask Him how you can use what you have learned to help at least one other person this week.

WEEK

17

How Do I Get From Where I Am to Where God Wants Me to Be?

The lobby of our ministry's headquarters in Orlando, Florida, we have an enormous picture covering an entire wall that shows a vast crowd at one of our African evangelistic campaigns. One day a young evangelist was visiting the office, and he stood in front of that picture for the longest time just staring. Finally he pointed to the picture and said, 'I've just been trying to figure out how to get that from where I am?' I think this is a common question.

—Live Before You Die, p. 177

Get ready for the most amazing journey of your life!

Move ahead to Day 1!

Day 1

BEGINNING THE JOURNEY

How do we get from where we are at the moment to where we know God is calling us? If this is where you are, you are in a good place, even if it doesn't seem that way right now. You are in the place of having a dream that has been sent from heaven. If this dream really came from God, absolutely everything you need is going to be provided as you move forward.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 177

(Read pages 177-178 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. This is going to be the most amazing adventure of your life. God has spoken, and He is going to do His part. Have you asked yourself now what? What is my role in this? _____

2. To find the answers you need to recognize that every journey begins with a small, single step. Think of a project or something you had to do in the past.

What was the very first thing you did? _____

If you were following printed instructions, they probably told you to complete Step 1 before proceeding to Step 2. To properly complete the project you had to do each step in the right order. What were those specific steps?

Step 1 – _____

Step 2 – _____

Step 3 – _____

3. Walking into all God has for us in the future begins with taking small steps in faith starting right now. Write down your dream and look around for what God has already provided for you to get you started. Make that your Step 1. Once you complete Step 1, God will show you Step 2. Track your progress in your journal.

Step 1 – _____

Step 2 – _____

Step 3 – _____

Day 2

WHAT STEPS CAN I TAKE TO PREPARE MYSELF?

Perhaps you've heard of someone who became an overnight success. The reality is that these sudden sensations are usually just an illusion. Someone told me, 'It took me thirty years of hard work to become an overnight success.' The truth is when you see someone who appears to be an overnight success, what you are usually seeing is the intersection of preparation and opportunity. It is true great opportunities will come, but only those who are prepared will be able to take advantage of them. So what can you do to prepare yourself for the opportunity God is going to bring your way?

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 178

(Read pages 178-179 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. What opportunities do you have right now that are in line with what God is calling you to do? _____
2. Is there anything you need to do? _____
3. Is God calling you to go to school and get an education that will prepare you to fulfill the vision He has given you? Go online today and start researching schools.
4. Has He given you a dream of starting a business? Think of people you can talk with who have experience as entrepreneurs.
5. Do you need to get healthy and lose some weight before you can do what God has called you to do? Change your eating habits and start a rigorous program of exercise right now.
6. Just do something. Do anything. It may seem totally meaningless at the present time, but do it anyway. Even a small seed planted in faith can become the inception of fulfilling what God has called you to do. What seed of faith are you planting today? _____

Day 3

HOW CAN I RESPOND IN FAITH?

When I asked Evangelist Bonnke why he was in such a hurry to meet, he said, 'I feel that the eyes of God are on me, and I want Him to see that when He speaks, I jump.' Over the next few weeks we were witnesses to a miracle, as literally every penny for the purchase of a brand-new, state-of-the-art facility was provided supernaturally! I saw a direct correlation between Evangelist Bonnke's wholehearted response to God's word and His dramatic supply of our miracle.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 179

(Read pages 179-180 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. If God has revealed His will to you but you are not sure exactly what to do—do *something*! Let God see that you take His word seriously and that when He speaks, you respond. What did you do *today* to respond to God? _____
2. Have you responded to the last thing God told you to do or said to you? _____
If you didn't, why didn't you? _____
How do you think God received your excuses? _____
3. In Matthew 6:26 Jesus said God provides for the birds of the air, but does He build their nests for them? _____ Does He gather their food for them? _____
What do they have to do for housing and food? _____
What do they have to do to care for their young? _____
What does God expect us to do for housing and to care for ourselves and our loved ones? _____
4. Are you are sitting at home waiting for God to spoon-feed His will to you? If you are then you are going to be waiting for a very long time. You'd better spread your wings and get moving in faith and obedience. How are you going to show God that when He speaks, you'll jump? _____

Day 4

WHAT CAN I DO TO MOVE IN THE DIRECTION OF GOD'S CALL?

If you are in a dark room and you hear someone off to one side calling your name, the way to find the person is by moving in the direction the voice is coming from. This is so obvious, but it is amazing to me how many people sense God calling them to one particular area, yet everything they are doing is moving them in a different direction.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 180

(Read pages 180-181 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. Read Deuteronomy 30:19-20. What are the three things this verse tells you to do to receive the blessings of God for you and your children?

2. Read James 1:22-25. What does this verse tell you to do?

3. What is the promise given in Revelation 3:20?

As you've read in this book, the Word of God is the best place to hear God's voice and to confirm what He's speaking to you. What are you reading in your devotional life in the Word that is helping you stay on track with His will for your life?

Day 5

GOOD INTENTIONS

God is not looking for people who have good intentions for what they will do if He blesses them. Rather, He is looking to bless people who are already being faithful and obedient with what they have.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 181

(Read pages 181 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. What does Ecclesiastes 9:10 say? _____
 What does Proverbs 13:4 say? _____
 How can you apply this verse to your life today? _____

2. Make sure that whatever you are doing is moving you closer to your call. What can you do today to begin to move in the direction of God's call? _____

3. Are you being faithful and obedient with what God has already given you? _____

 Explain your answer: _____

Live Before You Die Journal

WEEK 17

Many people want God to lay out their future for them in advance like the blueprint of a building that is to be constructed. It never works out that way. Do not despise the day of small beginnings. Do not despise small steps as long as they are obedient, faith-filled steps that are moving you in the direction of God's call. As you move forward in obedience and faith, He is going to reveal it all, one step at a time.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 181

This week you learned how to get from where you are to where God wants you to be. You learned what steps you need to take, how to respond to God's call, and how to move in the right direction which is always towards His voice!

Chapter 17 Review

This Chapter Review can be used in a small group or class study, or in a personal journal. Answers to the questions may be written down in this study guide or in your own personal/prayer journal. Each Key Statement (↪) points out a key truth or principle made in this chapter for you to reflect on and pray about in response to the questions below.

- ↪ **Great opportunities will come, but only those who are prepared will be able to take advantage of them.**

What have you learned about positioning yourself to take advantage of the great opportunities God is going to send your way?

How can you help others learn this important lesson as well?

- ↪ **If you are in a dark room and you hear someone off to one side calling your name, the way to find the person is by moving in the direction the voice is coming from. This is so obvious, but many people sense God calling them to one particular area, yet everything they are doing is moving them in a different direction.**

Do you know someone who is not moving in the direction of God's call?

How can you help them using what you learned from this week's lessons?

- ↪ **God is not looking for people who have good intentions for what they will do if He blesses them. Rather, He is looking to bless people who are already being faithful and obedient with what they have.**

Do you know someone who is caught in the revolving door of good intentions?

How can you help them using what you learned from this week's lessons?

✈ **If your dream really came from God, absolutely everything you need is going to be provided as you move forward.**

God has already done His part to get you started, have you done yours?

If not, what are you going to do starting today?

Write a thanksgiving prayer to God as you complete this week's lessons and ask Him how you can use what you have learned to help at least one other person this week.

WEEK

18

What Should I Do While I'm Seeking God's Will?

It is important to emphasize that the word seek is an action word. There are some people who say they are seeking God's will, but they are actually just waiting for a 'lucky break.' The question in this chapter is, 'What should I do while I'm seeking God's will?' But the points I am about to outline are actually what I believe it means to seek God's will in the first place.

—Live Before You Die, p. 183

These are not only things you can do while you're waiting for God to reveal His will for your life—if you are not doing these things, then you are not seeking God's will at all. **Get ready! It's time to truly seek God's will in an active way!**

Move ahead to Day 1!

Day 1

ACTIVELY ASK FOR GOD'S DIRECTION

Are you asking God what He wants you to do? Are you listening for Him to lead you and guide you in everyday life? James 4:2 says, 'Ye have not, because ye ask not.' The importance of prayer may seem like an incredibly simple thing to mention, perhaps an insult to your intelligence. But you may be surprised to learn how many people have simply never taken the time to seriously pray about what God would have them do.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 184

(Read pages 183-185 in *Live Before You Die*.)

- As you read through the story of King Asa, some very important principles on prayer should have caught your eye. Complete these statements:
 - God was not pleased with King Asa because He wanted to be Judah's _____ and _____, but instead Asa had given that opportunity to the _____ instead of _____.
 - Asa had taken the gold from the _____ house and _____ it to another; he had also taken the _____ from the Lord and _____ it to another.
 - Because of fear, Asa chose to call upon, and put his trust in, the king of Syria rather than on the _____, and God was _____.
 - As a result of this, the Lord gave Asa over to the very thing he feared most, which was _____. By not including the Lord, Asa had actually _____ upon _____ the very thing he was trying to avoid.
- Read Psalm 118:8–9. Use it to write out your prayer for today as you actively seek God for His will. _____

Day 2

SEEK AND YOU WILL FIND ME

How often has God stood by ready, willing and able to help us, but we never turned to Him or gave Him an opportunity to intervene and bring glory to Himself through our crisis? As a result, we have often forfeited peace and struggled under the load of unnecessary burdens—all because we did not inquire of the Lord. What's worse, an opportunity to bring glory to God was lost.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 186

(Read pages 186-187 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. Read 2 Chronicles 16:12-13.
2. What pattern was repeated in King Asa's life? _____
3. What was the result of King Asa's choice this time? _____
4. Asa called upon the help of foreign armies instead of the Lord, and as a result, he inherited _____.
5. He called on the aid of doctors instead of the Lord when he became sick, and as a result, he inherited _____.
6. God wanted to help Asa, _____ him from his enemies, and _____ him from his diseases. But for some strange reason, like so many of us, Asa ignored God in the issues that mattered most, and as a result, he _____ his _____.
7. Read 2 Chronicles 16:14. What had King Asa done? _____
8. What is the warning given in Jeremiah 17:5? _____
9. If you are seeking God's will for your life, it means that you are doing what three things?
 - P _____
 - L _____
 - W _____

What is God's promise to you in Jeremiah 29:13? _____

Day 3

USE WHAT IS ALREADY IN YOUR HAND

It is interesting that when people ultimately discover what God has called them to do, often they look back and see that God had placed many things in their lives early on to prepare them for their calling. It might have been a natural talent or ability. It might have been certain interests. It may have been people who influenced them in the direction of their calling even if they didn't recognize it at the time. It may have been an event or an experience that propelled them toward the plans God had for them.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 187

(Read pages 187-188 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. God _____ prepares us for the things He has in store for us.
2. When Moses bombarded God with questions as to how he was going to do all that God was calling him to do, how did God respond? (See Exodus 4:2-5) _____

3. Through the whole Exodus saga— all the miracles, wonders, and epic, world-changing exploits—Moses had nothing more in his hand than a _____!

4. When Moses did what he knew to do, when he used what was in his hand, the rest of the story began to unfold, each event triggering the next like a succession of dominoes leading all the way to the Promised Land. Label the events on the dominoes below with some of these events.

Promised Land

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Exodus 4:2-5

5. Take an inventory of your life today to see what is in your hand right now.

Circle what it is:

people
opportunities

relationships
thoughts

interests
dreams

6. Chances are that the seeds of your future have already been sown into the soil of your life. Ask God to give you the wisdom to discern them; then have the diligence to water them and the patience to wait for the harvest as part of your prayer today.

Day 4

HELPING OTHER FULFILL THEIR GOD-GIVEN VISION

While you're waiting for God to bring about the fulfillment of your vision, or even if you don't yet know what God is calling you to do, put the law of sowing and reaping to work for you. Find someone else who has a vision from the Lord and invest into that person's vision.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 188

(Read pages 188-189 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. Read Galatians 6:6-10 from The Message Bible translation. Highlight in green all the words that refer to sowing into others. Then highlight in yellow what you will reap when you do.

Be very sure now, you who have been trained to a self-sufficient maturity, that you enter into a generous common life with those who have trained you, sharing all the good things that you have and experience.

Don't be misled: No one makes a fool of God. What a person plants, he will harvest. The person who plants selfishness, ignoring the needs of others—ignoring God!—harvests a crop of weeds. All he'll have to show for his life is weeds! But the one who plants in response to God, letting God's Spirit do the growth work in him, harvests a crop of real life, eternal life.

So let's not allow ourselves to get fatigued doing good. At the right time we will harvest a good crop if we don't give up, or quit. Right now, therefore, every time we get the chance, let us work for the benefit of all, starting with the people closest to us in the community of faith.

2. List the “good” seeds you are to sow into others on the left. Then describe the harvest you will receive from those seeds on the right.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

3. List the “bad” seeds you are not to sow into others on the left. Then describe the harvest you will receive from those seeds if you do on the right.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

WEEK 18

4. List some of the things you can personally sow to help someone else move forward.

Your _____ Your _____ Your _____

5. You will find that as you sow into someone else's vision, you will soon reap a _____ of your own.

6. Make a list of people you could begin to help fulfill their God-given vision. Then think of ways you can push them move forward toward that vision. Keep a journal of their progress and how it affects your move toward fulfilling God's will in your own life.

Day 5

BE FAITHFUL WHEREVER YOU FIND YOURSELF

It used to be standard practice for large companies to ‘headhunt’ talented executives from prestigious universities or other successful companies for senior positions. But more and more I have noticed that it is becoming the policy of many large companies to promote from within. They look for talented people from their own ranks, individuals who have proven their trustworthiness and worked their way up the ladder, even from very low positions. This has always been God’s preferred method of promotion. God looks for faithful people He can promote and bless. He tests us with small tasks to see how we will react, and when we have proven ourselves, He gives us bigger responsibilities.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 189

(Read pages 189-190 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. Moses had one of the most important leadership positions in history. He was assigned the challenging task of leading an entire nation—God’s chosen people—across the wilderness to the Promised Land. It’s interesting to think that before God appointed Moses to such an important role, Moses had a similar assignment but on a much smaller scale. What did Moses do for forty years before he was promoted to leader? _____
2. Jesus taught in Luke 16:10–12, “Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else’s property, who will give you property of your own?” (NIV)

How does this apply to your life right now? _____

What are you being trusted with in your current position? _____

How are you handling that responsibility? _____

Is there something you could be doing better? _____

Think of ways you can prove yourself faithful where you are right now. _____

3. Psalm 75:6–7 says, “For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But _____ is the judge: _____ putteth down one, and setteth up another.”

4. 4. Promotion does not come from the horizontal plane—the east or the west which means _____ are not the source of promotion.

Also, promotion does not come from the south which means the _____ is also not the source of promotion.

If promotion comes not from the south, east, or west, we know by process of elimination from which direction promotion comes—_____!

So what do you need to do? _____
_____ is the promoter, and He promotes those who are _____.

Live Before You Die Journal

WEEK 18

A person who is seeking God's will is actively asking for God's direction, looking for opportunities to use what is already in his hand, helping others fulfill their God-given visions, and being faithful wherever he finds himself at the moment.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 183

This week you learned what you need to do as you are truly seeking God's will. If you put into practice what you have learned this week, you will be well on your way to promotion God's way!

Chapter 18 Review

This Chapter Review can be used in a small group or class study, or in a personal journal. Answers to the questions may be written down in this study guide or in your own personal/prayer journal. Each Key Statement (☞) points out a key truth or principle made in this chapter for you to reflect on and pray about in response to the questions below.

- ☞ **If you are seeking God's will for your life, it means that you are actively praying about it, waiting before the Lord, and listening for His direction. Perhaps you have not heard an answer because you haven't asked the question. Perhaps you have asked, but you haven't been listening.**

Have you changed the way you are seeking God's will as a result of what you learned?

Explain what has changed and why?

How will you help others receive this same revelation as they seek God's will for their lives?

- ☞ **God always prepares us for the things He has in store for us.**

How have you seen this to be true in your own life?

Add this important truth to the testimony you have been building throughout these lessons to share with others who are seeking God's will for their lives.

- ☞ **It is interesting that when people ultimately discover what God has called them to do, often they look back and see that God had placed many things in their lives early on to prepare them for their calling.**

What did you discover as you looked back at what God has already placed in your hand?

☞ **God looks for faithful people He can promote and bless. He tests us with small tasks to see how we will react, and when we have proven ourselves, He gives us bigger responsibilities.**

What changes have you made in your life that shows you are ready for bigger responsibilities?

Remember to share these truths with others God sends across your path.

Write a thanksgiving prayer to God as you complete this week's lessons and ask Him how you can use what you have learned to help at least one other person this week.

WEEK 19

What If I Have Been Waiting for a Long Time?

In this chapter I want to speak to two different groups of people: I want to address those who have been seeking God's will for a long time but have not yet discovered it, and I want to speak to those who feel they know what God's will is but have been waiting a long time to see it fulfilled.

—Live Before You Die, p. 191

Get ready! What you learn this week will challenge and encourage you even during your waiting time!

Move ahead to Day 1!

Day 1

THE CHALLENGE, THE QUESTION, THE ENCOURAGEMENT

For those of you who have been seeking God's will for a long time but have not discovered it, I have a challenge, a question, and an encouragement.

—Live Before You Die, p. 191

(Read pages 191-192 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. **The Challenge:** It is important to realize that there is a big difference between seeking God's will and just waiting for something to happen.

The word seek implies _____, not _____.

Define passivity: _____

Define action: _____

Those who are seeking God's will are actively asking for God's direction, looking for opportunities: (see last chapter for these answers)

To _____

To help others _____

To be _____ wherever they find themselves at the moment

You need to examine your heart in honesty before God and ask yourself:

Am I truly seeking God's will for my life?

Or

Am I just waiting for a "lucky break"?

What is the big difference between those two ways? _____

2. **The Question(s):** [Answer to each question is a simple Yes or No.]

Is it possible that you have already discovered God's will for your life but have not been willing to recognize it as such? [Yes or No]

Are you open to the possibility that what God has for you might not look the way you expected it to and that's why you haven't found it yet? [Yes or No]

Will you trust God and follow His will wherever it leads realizing in the end you will be much happier than if you had gotten what you originally wanted? [Yes or No]

3. **The Encouragement:**

If you are still actively seeking God's will for your life, don't become frustrated;

Keep _____.

Don't allow the enemy to plant seeds of _____ or _____
in your heart.

Become more and more _____.

With childlike _____ keep searching until you find it.

Remember, your Father knows _____.

Day 2

KEEP ON KEEPING ON

In Matthew 7:7-8 Jesus is teaching about asking, seeking, and knocking. But it is important to note that the Greek implies continued action, which is why the Amplified Bible translates the passage like this: 'Keep on asking and it will be given you; keep on seeking and you will find; keep on knocking [reverently] and [the door] will be opened to you. For everyone who keeps on asking receives; and he who keeps on seeking finds; and to him who keeps on knocking, [the door] will be opened' (emphasis added).

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 193

(Read pages 192-193 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. Fill in the blanks explaining what Jesus told us to do in Matthew 7:7-8:

Keep on _____. Are you doing this? _____

Keep on _____. Are you doing this? _____

Keep on _____. How often are you doing this? _____

Keep on _____. Does this describe you? _____

2. Read Matthew 7:9-11.

What kind of father is Jesus describing here? _____

Who is Jesus comparing a good father to? _____

What is it our Father in heaven wants to give us? _____

How is Jesus describing our persistence in asking God to reveal His will and His plan based on this verse? _____

What may be some reasons why we don't ask our Father in heaven for what we need? _____

3. How will this lesson change the way you talk to your heavenly Father? _____

4. Write out a prayer that reflects how you are going to talk to God today.

Day 3

CHILDLIKE ASSURANCE

My son asks incessantly because he sees me as his source. If I don't give him water, he'll go thirsty. If I don't give him food, he'll starve. I am his source of shelter, of clothing, of protection, of recreation—of everything. He is persistent because he must be so to survive, and he has every right to be. My son comes to me without hesitation or apprehension. He asks with a righteous audacity. Each time he asks, he expects to receive just as the time before. His seeking is incredibly simple and trusting. I would say it is a wonderful example of faith.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 193

(Read pages 193-194 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. Why are children so good at mastering the skill of persistence? _____
2. Circle the descriptions of the way you have handled asking for what you need as an adult:

be the bread-winner	climb the ladder of success	lose all dependency
master self-sufficiency	become self-reliant	hate to ask for anything
don't want to be pushy	don't want to be presumptuous	timidly
loath to ask a second time	dignified	eloquent
logical		reasonable
3. If you don't see an answer right away, do you assume it was not God's will? _____
 Do you become offended, frustrated, and discouraged? _____
 Who does the prize go to? _____
4. Fill in the blanks below and then check off the ones you have done.
 - Leave your incredible _____ at the door
 - Leave your proud _____ at the door.
 - Leave your deceptive _____ at the door.
 - Come to terms with your utter and total _____ upon your Father.
 - Understand that your _____ is the only grounds upon which you can approach God.
 - Therefore, ask with _____, _____, and _____.

WEEK 19

- Keep asking line a _____ asks a father for bread.
- Keep _____ as the widow before the unjust judge in Luke 18.
- Keep _____ as if looking for a pearl of great price (Matthew 13:45–46).
- _____ through resistance like the woman with the issue of blood (Mark 5:25–34).
- _____ into the Word like a man walking against the wind.
_____ down on His promises like a pit bull with a T-bone.

Go back and do the ones you have yet to complete with childlike assurance that this is what your Father desires of you.

Day 4

DON'T GIVE UP

If you believe you already know what God's will is for your life, but you've been waiting a long time for it to be fulfilled, let me encourage you with these words from Habakkuk 2:2–4 where God told Habakkuk: 'Write the vision and make it plain on tablets, that he may run who reads it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time; but at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; because it will surely come' (NKJV).

–*Live Before You Die*, p. 195

(Read pages 195-196 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. Read Mark 4:28-29. Illustrate the stages of planting a seed in your garden.

Stage 1:	Stage 2:	Stage 3:	Stage 4:	Stage 5:	Stage 6:
Plant Seed	Spout	Stalk	Leaves	Flower	Fruit

Look online for the time it takes from germination of a tomato seed to harvesting a tomato. How many days between the planting of the seed and harvest? _____

2. The important thing to remember is that you are planting seeds right now that will determine what you will reap tomorrow in the garden of your life.

What seeds have you been planting? _____

What stage of growth are you experiencing from these seeds? _____

3. The new Christian and the author's son in the stories had a basic misunderstanding of how sowing and reaping works.

What important concept were they unaware of? _____

4. The truth is what you are reaping today is the results of what you planted _____.

5. Seeds you plant today are for harvest _____.

6. What is the lesson Jesus was teaching us in the Parable of the Growing Seed?

Day 5

DUE SEASON

Cast your bread upon the waters, for you will find it after many days

Ecclesiastes 11:1 NKJV

Throwing perfectly good grain into the water when you are hungry is a difficult thing to do, but what is more difficult is waiting many days for the harvest. This is why Paul encourages us by saying, “Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not (Galatians 6:9.”

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 197

(Read pages 197-198 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. Imagine with me what it may have been like to grow up on an ancient Israeli farm. The long winter months have reduced the once plentiful pantries to empty shelves, and the family is now living on meager rations and dreaming about a loaf of bread fresh from the oven. Suddenly the rain begins to pour, and the once dusty fields are becoming rivers. The father says to his young son, “Come, it’s time to sow.” Together they walk out to the barn where the father climbs into the loft and pulls down huge bags of grain.

What does the son think the father is going to do with the grain?

What did the father do with the grain?

What do you think was going through this hungry boy’s mind?

What did the father know that the son had not yet learned?

2. At the end our lives are a sum total of the decisions we have made—a harvest, if you will, of what we have sown. You can’t usually change today’s harvest by sowing good seeds today, but if you will determine to sow the right seeds day in and day out, in _____ you will reap your harvest if you _____.

3. The children of Israel walked in circles in the wilderness decade after decade because they did not learn their lesson.

Why do some people keep going in circles? _____

Do you feel like you have been going around in circles? _____

Why do you think that is? _____

What are you going to do about it starting today? _____

It is amazing and sobering to think that we are all planting seeds all the time. Sowing and reaping are not confined to putting money in an offering plate. That cheeseburger you ate, that movie you watched, that comment you made, that time you spent with your family, that book you read—everything you do is a seed that will produce a harvest (good or bad) in the future. Be careful what you plant in this season because you will eat it in the next.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 197

This week you realized you need to stop squirming, wiggling, and trying to get through with this waiting and training time as quickly as possible. Instead you need to be faithful with whatever God has given you and be patient wherever He has placed you. When you pass the test, He will lead you forward.

Chapter 19 Review

This Chapter Review can be used in a small group or class study, or in a personal journal. Answers to the questions may be written down in this study guide or in your own personal/prayer journal. Each Key Statement (☞) points out a key truth or principle made in this chapter for you to reflect on and pray about in response to the questions below.

- ☞ **It is important to realize that there is a big difference between seeking God's will and just waiting for something to happen.**

It is vitally important to understand this concept. How would you explain to someone else who seems to be waiting for God's will for their lives?

- ☞ **God told Habakkuk: "Write the vision and make it plain on tablets, that he may run who reads it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time; but at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; because it will surely come" (NKJV).**

It is time to write down the vision God has given you and watch for the seed you have sown to begin to grow.

What have you done as you have waited for this waiting time to be over?

- ☞ **At the end our lives are a sum total of the decisions we have made—a harvest, if you will, of what we have sown.**

What did you discover about the seeds you have sown?

What did you discover about the seeds you need to sow?

What do you need to do starting today to bring in the harvest God is looking for in your life?

Write a thanksgiving prayer to God as you complete this week's lessons and ask Him how you can use what you have learned to help at least one other person this week.

WEEK

20

How Do I Stay in the Will of God?

“Ah great it is to believe the dream as we stand in youth by the starry stream; but a greater thing is to fight life through and say at the end, the dream is true!”¹ Those are the words of the American poet Edwin Markham. A much wiser man, King Solomon, said it this way, “Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof” (Ecclesiastes 7:8). It is a wonderful thing indeed to discover God’s will, but a more wonderful thing to remain in it for the rest of your life and to say at the end, “I did the will of God.”

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 199)

As I sit writing this final chapter, I ask the Holy Spirit to help me to communicate to you a word that will help you to stay the course and to fulfill all that God has in store for your life. **Get ready to receive what He has shown me for you!**

Move ahead to Day 1!

Day 1

STAND IN YOUR PEA PATCH

Now after him was Shammah the son of Agee a Hararite. And the Philistines were gathered into a troop, where there was a plot of ground full of lentils, and the people fled from the Philistines. But he took his stand in the midst of the plot, defended it and struck the Philistines; and the Lord brought about a great victory.

2 Samuel 23:11–12 NAS

These men were like real-life superheroes who would make Rambo look like a Girl Scout. One of these men was Adino. My favorite one of David's mighty men was Shammah, who won an overwhelming victory against impossible odds, and through his courage and valor, God brought about a great triumph for Israel.

Live Before You Die, p. 200

(Read pages 200–201 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. It was an ordinary day in Israel. The people were going about their daily business as usual. On the outskirts of the city, in a remote field, a group of laborers was harvesting a meager crop of peas. Suddenly a shadow fell on that pea patch.

What appeared to these simple farmers? _____

How did they react? _____

What were their weapons? _____

Who were they up against if it came to a battle? _____

What did they consider the land they were working in? _____

What did they think would happen if they remained in the pea patch? _____

What did they decide to do? _____

2. Read 2 Samuel 23:11–12. Unfortunately for the Philistines there was one man in the field that day who was not just a peasant or a farmer—he was a warrior. He was one of David's "mighty men." Shammah was perhaps one of the greatest warriors who has ever lived, and this was to be his most glorious battle. His story reveals three qualities that I believe are

WEEK 20

nonnegotiable if you are to go the distance and fulfill God's will for your life: integrity, focus, and perseverance.

Define integrity: _____

Define focus: _____

Define perseverance: _____

Do you possess these characteristics? _____

Are you a real life super hero in God's army? _____

If you are not, what do you need to do to achieve it? _____

Day 2

MIND IN THE BEGINNING WHAT MATTERS IN THE END

Unlike the untrained peasant farmers who had fled the field, Shammah understood something about the tactics of warfare. Maybe this field was nothing but an ordinary pea patch, but this attack was not random—it was highly strategic. When the enemy comes to assault your life, he is not going to start with the thing you are most diligent over. He is going to attack your pea patch: that thing he figures you will not bother to defend and where he thinks you will compromise. And in that compromise he will establish a stronghold to take over your life. I'm sure you've seen this before.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 202

(Read pages 202-204 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. Having integrity means _____ the small things—and being as _____ over them as over the big things.
2. Shammah was an experienced warrior. He knew that if he compromised this little pea patch, soon the enemy would be kicking down his front door. He was fiercely determined not to give up one inch to the Philistines.

Circle other words for compromise:

Negotiate	Give Up	Bargaining	Stand Against
Hold Firm	Cooperate	Find Middle Ground	Give In
Concede	Battle Against	Discuss	Make a Deal
Agreement	Vigilant	Determined	Relentless

Have you had an issue with any of these descriptions of compromise in your own life?
_____ Explain _____

3. Read Ephesians 4:27. If we can defend even the smallest, most insignificant pea patches in our lives, the enemy will _____ be able to gain a _____.
4. How do we avoid compromise with the enemy? Complete these phrases for the answers:
 - Rather than seeing how close we can get to the cliff of sin without falling over, we should seek to avoid even the _____ of _____ (Read 1 Thessalonians 5:22).

- Rather than asking, “How much compromise is too much?” we should be constantly aiming to raise our personal standards to be more like _____.
 - (Read Philippians 2:5 and 1 John 2:6).
 - Jesus understood that murder grows from the seed of _____, and adultery grows from the seed of _____. (Read Matthew 5:28).
 - It is much better to crush the seeds of sin before they are planted than to have to try to chop down a giant redwood of evil _____ and _____.
5. Susanna Wesley gave this word of wisdom to young John Wesley. Complete this quote and glean this wisdom in your own life:
- “If you would judge of the lawfulness or unlawfulness of pleasure, then take this simple rule: Whatever _____ your reason, _____ the tenderness of your conscience, _____ your sense of God, and takes off the relish of _____ things—that to you is sin.”²
6. Integrity means being _____ with sin. When the Philistines invaded that pea patch, Shammah did not throw up his arms and meet the Philistines with a white flag.
- What did he come with? _____
- What did he come to do? _____
- Why? _____
7. What does integrity require? (Read Job 27:5-6) _____
8. Shammah showed us that having integrity means doing the right thing, even when it means _____. He stood _____, yet he stood his ____.

Day 3

HAVING INTEGRITY MEANS...

Having integrity means doing the right thing even when no one is looking. Shammah didn't fight that battle with the Philistines because he wanted to be a celebrity warrior. The rest of the Israelites had left him alone. He was not fighting like a gladiator in a stadium before a crowd of cheering fans. Yet somehow, thousands of years later, we are still talking about his glorious battle. Somehow the word got out, and everyone heard about what happened in that obscure pea patch.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 204

(Read pages 204–206 in *Live Before You Die*.)

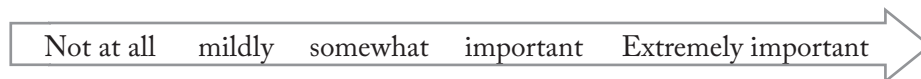
1. Read Luke 12:2–3. Write this verse in your own words. _____

How does this affect what you do when no one is looking? _____

2. Most of the time character flaws hide below the surface invisible to the casual observer. People take great care to make sure no one sees their problems or shortcomings.

What do you consider to be your character flaws or shortcomings?

On the graph below show how important is it to you to keep these flaws or shortcomings secret.



If not dealt with, these _____ infections mature into very _____ diseases!

3. Sin begins as a cute little pet, but it grows into a beast that is never satisfied. As it is fed, it only becomes bigger and hungrier; gratification becomes more difficult, and soon the pet has become the master. In the end you will either _____ the beast or it will _____ you.

Is your “pet” beginning to grow into a “beast”? _____

What do you need to do to make sure your hidden “pet” does not become your master?

4. Imagine that you had the opportunity to write your own obituary.

What would you put in it? _____

How would you want it to read? _____

5. What did Paul urge us to do in Ephesians 4:1? _____

6. In your prayer today ask God to reveal to you how to live a life worthy of His calling, a life of integrity, a life that is always minding in the beginning what really matters in the end. Then be willing to deal with what needs to be dealt with!

Day 4

DON'T GET DISTRACTED

I think it is interesting that 2 Samuel 23:12 tells us exactly where Shammah strategically positioned himself. It says, 'He stationed himself in the middle of the field' (NKJV). He wasn't standing out on the fringes, and he wasn't in one of the corners. He was right in the very center of the field. I have seen many people who were called to a particular field, but over the years they became distracted. They lost their focus and wandered to the fringes of their field and some- times even drifted into other fields they were never called to serve. If you are going to remain in the center of God's will for your life, you must resolve to stand in the middle of the field to which He has called you and remain focused without allowing the enemy to distract you from that call.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 207

(Read pages 207-209 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. What does the matador use against a one thousand pound bull?

2. Why does this strategy work? _____

3. What does our enemy know that we often forget? _____

4. Why it is so important that you choose your battles wisely? _____

5. Post this powerful truth where you will see it every day.

Don't get distracted and sacrifice what is "best" on the altar of what is "good."

6. Remember:

There are not enough hours in a day to do _____.

There are not enough years in your life to live for _____.

There is not enough blood in your veins to bleed for _____.

7. Read 1 Corinthians 9:24. What three things does Paul say a person who is running to win does?

- Sets his eyes on the _____.

- Goes for it with all his _____.
- Chooses to lay down _____ else for the sake of the _____.

Highlight the ones you are already doing. Begin to work on the ones you are not. This is not multiple choice. You must do all of them in order to win the race against time and fulfill God's call in your life!

8. Read Titus 3:9. What does Paul advise us to avoid? _____ Why? _____

9. What are some of the ways the enemy has used to distract you from doing the best?

10. The devil also has a plan for you, and his plan is to make you _____ and _____.

He would love for you to park your combine harvester to _____.

If he cannot block you, he will try to _____ you.

He will try to _____ you from your assignment.

11. How do you defeat Him?

I _____ him,

K _____ your eyes on the prize,

K _____ fighting in the middle of your field,

R _____ your race in such a way that you will win!

Day 5

NEVER GIVE UP

When Shammah made his stand in the middle of that pea patch, he was not hanging around just to get a few licks in before making an exit. For Shammah there were only two options: win or die! He stood his ground, he defended that pea patch, and 2 Samuel 23:12 tells us about the happy ending: 'The Lord wrought a great victory.' We all want to discover God's will for our lives, but once we discover it, that is not the end; it is only the beginning! Once you have your assignment from God, then you have to stand in your field and fight until God gives the victory. This requires a quality that few seem to possess—perseverance.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 210

(Read pages 210-212 in *Live Before You Die*.)

1. Define perseverance using a Bible dictionary. _____

Victory comes to those who _____ through _____ battles to the other side without _____.

Circle the words below that describe perseverance.

determination	compromise	diligence	distracted	sidetracked
diverted	preoccupied	focused	confused	resolution

2. Read Ephesians 6:13. Write this verse out in your own words.

3. What do you do when the going gets tough? _____

What do you do when the enemy begins to assail from all directions? _____

What do you do when you face financial difficulty, health problems, betrayal, abandonment, rejection, and pain? _____

Why can you do this? _____

Who wins every time? _____

Our part is not to question; our part is to _____ and _____ until God _____ the _____.

Live Before You Die Journal

WEEK 20

May we stand in our respective fields as David's mighty men did, prepared to fight to the death for God's kingdom. And when the day comes for us to leave this world, I pray that the sword will have to be pried out of our lifeless fingers. At the end may we not be found sitting in front of a television, but may we be found with our boots strapped on in the field where God has assigned us.

—*Live Before You Die*, p. 212

This week you learned how important it is to never give up, never retreat, and never surrender to the enemy. You learned how to stand and fight, and endure until the end because it is God who gives you the victory!

Chapter 20 Review

This Chapter Review can be used in a small group or class study, or in a personal journal. Answers to the questions may be written down in this study guide or in your own personal/prayer journal. Each Key Statement (☞) points out a key truth or principle made in this chapter for you to reflect on and pray about in response to the questions below.

- ☞ **Let us determine to live a life worthy of the calling, a life of integrity, minding in the beginning what matters in the end.**

This is your assignment from God, will you accept this assignment?

- ☞ **Don't get distracted and sacrifice what is "best" on the altar of what is "good."**

Beware of what is good and not of God! Give your accountability partner permission to warn you if they see you getting sidetracked from what is God by something good.

- ☞ **Victory comes to those who press through severe battles to the other side without quitting.**

Are you facing a battle in your life right now?

Remember the battle belongs to the Lord and stand your ground.

Once you have attained the victory, be ready to share your testimony with others.

- ☞ **It's about your children and your grandchildren and the future of God's eternal kingdom. So stand! Fight! And endure until the end. And God will give you the victory in Jesus's name!**

Write a thanksgiving prayer to God as you complete this week's lessons and ask Him how you can use what you have learned to help at least one other person this week.

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DEVOTIONAL

1

Saved to Serve (The Introduction)

SCRIPTURE TAKEAWAY

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service."

Romans 12:1 NKJV

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

1. What do you value in your life?
2. What are you are living for?
3. How do your choices inform your significance?
4. Is your life propelling God's eternal Kingdom forward or your own kingdom?
5. What can you do to make your life more meaningful, more significant in the Kingdom?

HOW CAN WE APPLY THIS?

The question is, what does God want you to do with your life? When looking at eternal significance, it's not about what you want. It's about what He wants for you.

We have been saved for a purpose: to further the Kingdom of God. This is not some generous favor we do for God. He has saved us at the cost of His Son's life, and as a consequence, we owe Him our service. However, all our service to Him should be based in the love we have for Him.

In John 21:15 (NKJV), Jesus said to Peter, "Do you love Me more than these?" When Peter replied, "Yes," Jesus said, "Feed My lambs." It is our love for God that is the foundation of our service. You see, **your purpose is found in building God's Kingdom, and the reason you build God's Kingdom is the love you have for Him.** That is your reasonable service.

2

Does God Really Have A Plan For My Life? (Part 1)

SCRIPTURE TAKEAWAY

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."

Jeremiah 1:5 NIV

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

1. Have you ever wondered if God really has a plan for your life?
2. How can we know that God has a plan for our lives?
3. How have others made it hard for you to believe you are God's masterpiece?
4. What would change about your life if you truly believed that God created you to change history?

HOW CAN WE APPLY THIS?

Banning Liebscher said, "Your life was meant to change the course of human history." But while it is easy to hear it, believing it is much harder. We are often like Gideon: cowering in fear, yet God called him a 'Mighty man of fearless courage!' God doesn't see us the way we see ourselves or even the way others see us...our shortcomings don't intimidate Him at all!

God saw in Gideon the potential that He created in him. He didn't see a coward; He saw a mighty man of valor! Psalm 139:14 (NIV) says, "I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Your works are wonderful, I know that full well." You are not an accident! God created you for a purpose and with intention. You are a unique creation, an intentional work of art crafted by the hand of the Master Artist.

What does God see when He looks at you? He still sees inside of you the potential He created in you when He was fashioning you in your mother's womb. "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10 NKJV). God has a dream for your life and He is calling to that potential inside of you.

3

Does God Really Have A Plan For My Life? (Part 2)

SCRIPTURE TAKEAWAY

*“Who has saved us and **called us with a holy calling**, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus **before time began.**”*

2 Timothy 1:9 NKJV

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

1. What are some examples of God’s creativity at work in this world?
2. How have you seen God’s work in your life preparing you for your calling?
3. Have you ever seen yourself as God’s Masterpiece?
4. What do you see God calling you to do?
5. How can you partner with God to see His purposes for your life accomplished?

HOW CAN WE APPLY THIS?

Where does our ability to create come from? We are created in the image of God with not only the ability but the insatiable desire to create. In the beginning, God created. This was the first thing He did. But you are special. You weren’t spoken into being, you were fashioned by His hands. Psalm 139:13 (NIV) says, “You knit me together in my mother’s womb.” God is a Master Artist, and He always sees inside you that potential He created in you. Ephesians 2:10 (NLT) declares that you are God’s masterpiece. He created you for a specific purpose.

No matter your faults or failings, He still sees your potential. He has a dream for your life, and He is calling to it! According to 2 Timothy 1:9, your calling was established before the world began. The entire world has been engineered with you in mind! Yes, God has a plan for you...a good plan that is exceedingly abundantly more than you could ask or think. He who began a good work will be faithful to complete it (Philippians 1:6).

4

How Do I Recognize God's Will? (Part 1)

SCRIPTURE TAKEAWAY

"I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye."

Psalms 32:8 NKJV

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

1. Have you ever found yourself scared you would miss God's will?
2. How do you think we can discover the will of God?
3. What has kept you from discovering the will of God?
4. Describe times you have settled for less than God's best, less than His perfect will.
5. How can you fight for God's will in your own life?

HOW CAN WE APPLY THIS?

You were created with a purpose and a plan. The great news is that God is not hiding His will from you. He has gone to great lengths to reveal His plan to you. He wants us to discover it more than we want to discover it. There are 5 characteristics of God's will that will help you to recognize it when you see it. Here are the first 3:

1. **God has a standard will and a specific will for our lives.** The standard will of God has been revealed in God's Word and it is the will for everybody in the world. The specific will of God is unique and custom made for you, but it must be navigated based on the Word of God first.
2. **God has a good will and a perfect will for our lives.** He has given us the choice of what we want for our lives. Choice 1: To remain ignorant of God's will. Choice 2: To know God's will and go our own way instead (disobedience). Choice 3: To know God's will and follow it in part but still settle for less than what God had in mind. Choice 4: To choose to contend for nothing less than God's best for our lives. The blessings of the perfect will of God are reserved for the radically obedient to His Word.
3. **God calls us to do the impossible.** You can't do it on your own, but you can do all things through Christ! This requires faith, trust and a child-like dependence on God, much like Noah when he built the ark.

Our lives must line up with God's Word. Often, what we think is the easier way turns out to be much more difficult than just following God's instructions in the first place. If we choose to use the Word of God as our compass and guide, we will be amazed at how things line up and what was so confusing becomes clear.

5

How Do I Recognize God's Will? (Part 2)

SCRIPTURE TAKEAWAY

"And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart."

Galatians 6:9 NKJV

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

1. What season are you at as you walk out God's will for your life? (birth, preparation, struggle or realization)
2. When have you had the most trouble recognizing God's will for your life?
3. Which of the five characteristics of God's will were the most difficult to believe or understand?
4. How can you keep from becoming weary in the journey toward God's perfect will?

HOW CAN WE APPLY THIS?

There are 5 characteristics of God's will that will help you to recognize it when you see it. The first 3 were:

1. **God has a standard will and a specific will for our lives.**
2. **God has a good will and a perfect will for our lives.**
3. **God calls us to do the impossible.** God often calls us to do the impossible so that when we accomplish it, He will get all the glory, honor and praise.

The last 2 are:

4. **There are times and seasons in the will of God.** Even if God has revealed His perfect will to you, between the promise and the fulfillment, there is always a process. First comes the birth of the vision, then preparation, which takes time and effort. Next comes struggle or battle, and then realization. It takes character, integrity, faith and faithfulness to make it through the struggle and the battle to the realization of God's perfect will.
5. **God is interested in our journey, not just our destination.** We need to understand that the journey is very important to God. We will not be able to fulfill God's will without the process. Seeking God's will is actually part of fulfilling His will, and the struggle is part of the process of birthing what God has for us.

DEVOTIONAL LIVE BEFORE YOUR DIE

Recognizing God's will is not a one-time event; it is an on-going part of our journey. It is crucial that we not "grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart" (Galatians 6:9 NKJV). As we persevere and trust in Him, the process will become part of His perfect will for our lives.

6

What If God Calls Me To Do Something I Don't Want To Do?

SCRIPTURE TAKEAWAY

"But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift."

Ephesians 4:7 NKJV

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

1. Have you let fear keep you from discovering God's will for your life?
2. What do you see as your passion, where you 'fit'?
3. Do you believe God could have created you to do the very thing you love?
4. What is holding you back from trusting God with your passions and dreams?
5. How can you move forward today, trusting God's grace for His will for your life?

HOW CAN WE APPLY THIS?

Many people are afraid to discover God's will for their lives. They are afraid He will call them to do things they don't want to do or that to follow God they will have to give up their hopes and dreams. However, the most effective people are not the ones trying to fit into something that is miserable for them. They are the ones doing things they love that are effortless. It is amazing to see people enjoy what would seem to be difficult or impossible to others.

When you are doing what you were created to do, there is a sweetness in the sacrifice. James 1:2 says, "Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds" (NIV). This is only possible because when we are in God's will, there is an unexplainable grace that accompanies us. Ephesians 4:7 declares that grace comes with every gift. You do not need to be afraid of what God has called you to do. The most amazing place to be is in God's will, covered by His grace.

7

What If I've Already Missed The Will Of God? (Part 1)

SCRIPTURE TAKEAWAY

"...Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

Revelation 13:8 NKJV

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

1. When your choices take you outside the will of God, what do you need to do?
2. Do you feel your mistakes will keep you from ever entering the will of God?
3. How have you seen God's redemptive work in your life?
4. What role does repentance have in your life, as a believer?

HOW CAN WE APPLY THIS?

Have you ever wondered if you have missed the will of God? People are often afraid that they have irretrievably missed the will of God. But God is not surprised by our choices, even those that take us outside His will. The biggest failure in the world, the Fall of Adam and Eve, was planned for and intentionally redeemed before God even created the world. Revelation 13:8 (NKJV) says that Jesus was "slain from the foundation of the world." Salvation is not Plan B. Before the Fall ever happened, God had already set in motion a plan to redeem.

In the same way, it is not too late for God to redeem your life. Before God created you, He took all your failures into account. God preempted your blunders with a plan to turn your tragedies into triumph. At the same time, it is important to realize that God may forgive and restore our mistakes, but the process of correcting our mistakes can be longer and more difficult than it should have been. Therefore, repentance is key, and it is for all of us, not just the unsaved, giving us the opportunity to turn our hearts back to God. This allows us to continually access God's redemption in spite of our mistakes.

8

What If I Have Already Missed The Will Of God? (Part 2)

SCRIPTURE TAKEAWAY

"Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness."

Lamentations 3:22-23 NIV

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

1. Have you felt paralyzed by the mistakes in your past?
2. What is the appropriate, biblical response to your mistakes and wrong turns?
3. How have you allowed the voice of condemnation to influence your decisions?
4. Share some examples of God's mercies that you have seen in your life.

HOW CAN WE APPLY THIS?

Repentance is not just turning away from sin, but toward God. If you turn to Jesus, you will always be facing the right way. The amazing thing is that He loves us even though we fail. He left the 99 to go after the one. Psalm 145:14 (NIV) says, "The Lord upholds all who fall and lifts up all who are bowed down." His mercies are truly new every morning (Lamentations 3:22, 23 NIV).

The important thing is to start fresh, to learn from the past but not to live in it. The truth is that if we knew in the past what we know now, we would have made very different decisions. Yet, if we live in the past, we insult the sacrifice Jesus made on the Cross. If you have received God's forgiveness, "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us" (Psalm 103:12 NIV). Jesus does not condemn you, and neither should you condemn yourself. Now move on, go forward and sin no more!

9

The Kingdom Comes First (Part 1)

SCRIPTURE TAKEAWAY

"Your Kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

Matthew 6:10 NIV

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

1. Have you been uniquely positioned to fulfill God's purposes in the earth?
2. How can you help to fulfill God's Kingdom agenda in your everyday life?
3. What are the stumbling blocks that keep you from pursuing God's Kingdom purposes wholeheartedly?
4. How can you help move God's Kingdom agenda forward today?

HOW CAN WE APPLY THIS?

God's will for your life is always going to align with His larger mission for His Kingdom, and God's Kingdom agenda is always redemption. That is what He has been working together since the Garden of Eden. Revelation 21:4 (NIV) says, "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." This is what God has been working toward since the Fall.

We have been placed in this earth to propel God's kingdom forward. Matthew 6:33 (NKJV) says, "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you." God's Kingdom is not only to be our main ambition; it should be our first ambition. It is more than a preference or privilege; it is a divine responsibility and duty for which we will be held eternally accountable.

The truth is that the purposes of God will not fail even if He has to raise someone else up to fulfill it, as Mordecai tells Esther (4:14). You have two options: be part of fulfilling God's Kingdom purposes or stand aside and watch Him use someone else.

10

The Kingdom Comes First (Part 2)

SCRIPTURE TAKEAWAY

“But seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”

Matthew 6:33 NKJV

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

1. Where do you place seeking God’s Kingdom in your hierarchy of needs?
2. How different would your life look if you sought God’s Kingdom first?
3. What is your reason for pursuing God’s Kingdom?
4. What is God calling you to do in His Kingdom today?

HOW CAN WE APPLY THIS?

If you won’t do what God has called you to do, He will pass you by. If that happens, it is you that will be the loser. One example of that is Esau, who should have been the heir. Genesis 25:34 states, “...thus Esau despised his birthright,” and that is why Jacob (Israel) is one of the fathers of our faith. The purposes of God will not fail! As it says in Matthew 3:9, “And do not think to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones.” If He has to, He will raise someone else up to fulfill His Kingdom agenda.

If you pursue God’s purposes, everything else will be provided for you. But we don’t seek God’s Kingdom to get things: for a sense of accomplishment or financial blessing. Seeking God’s Kingdom also brings eternal rewards, but that is not the reason either. We seek the Kingdom because we love the King. When our love for the King becomes the most important thing to us, that is when our priorities are in the right order.

11

The Way Up Is Down (Part 1)

SCRIPTURE TAKEAWAY

"God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble."

James 4:6 NIV

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

1. What is the quickest way to detect pride?
2. How can you keep yourself from the sin of pride?
3. Have you found yourself taking credit for things God has done in you or for you?
4. What can you do to remind yourself that your successes all come from God?

HOW CAN WE APPLY THIS?

Pride is the original sin, as seen when Lucifer fell from Heaven. Pride says: I can do this, and I will do it whether God helps me or not. True humility keeps God in the forefront of everything we do; pride takes God out of the picture.

Pride is deceptive because it is virtually invisible to the one who possesses it. Humility is the best way to detect pride. The more humility prevails in your life, the more pride you will detect in yourself.

Philippians 2:13 states clearly, "For it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill His good purpose." Human pride steals glory from God, taking credit for things that He did in us. The sin of pride is a dangerous one and if we allow it to take root, we will make ourselves an enemy of God.

12

The Way Up Is Down (Part 2)

SCRIPTURE TAKEAWAY

"Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up."

James 4:10 NKJV

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

1. Do you think that you have any pride?
2. What does humility look like to you?
3. Have you see God take you 'down' to go 'up'?
4. Share examples of your experiences with "The Way Up Is Down."

HOW CAN WE APPLY THIS?

Proverbs 16:5 declares that God hates pride and the prideful. Unfortunately, pride is the number one killer of ministries in the Body of Christ. 1 Corinthians 10:12 (NKJV) states, "Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall." Be careful not to entertain any small amount of pride.

It is important to remember that all the glory goes to God. John 15:5 (NKJV) says, "...For without Me you can do nothing." Human pride is robbery of divine glory; it is plagiarism...taking credit for someone else's work.

One of the great secrets to blessing from God is humility. God gives grace to the humble (James 4:6). Grace is a gift and an empowerment to enable and give us strength and wisdom. The paradox of God's Kingdom is that the way up is down. Humility is the path to promotion.

13

Taking Action

SCRIPTURE TAKEAWAY

“...The people who know their God shall stand firm and take action.”

Daniel 11:32 ESV

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

1. How have you let procrastination slow you down?
2. Do you see lack of discipline or perseverance in your life?
3. When have you taken a small action of faithfulness that made a difference in your walk with God?
4. What is one thing you can do to take action today?

HOW CAN WE APPLY THIS?

If you're going to fulfill God's will for your life, it's not going to happen by dreaming about it. It happens by getting up and getting going. This is not just about staying busy. It is critical action that makes a difference and gets real results.

God won't make you get up and go. Reinhard Bonnke said, "God will lift you out of the deepest pit, but He won't lift you out of an easy chair." If you are so afraid of missing the target, you never take a shot, and you will never hit the target. Taking action isn't a matter of trial and error; it is a matter of faithfulness. There is always something to do, even if it is small. Your response to the opportunity God sends your way determines the next opportunity God gives you.

14

The Poison of Unbelief (Part 1)

SCRIPTURE TAKEAWAY

"Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall."

Proverbs 16:18 NKJV

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

1. Have you overestimated your own knowledge or ability?
2. When has your pride led you to a disaster?
3. What can you do to look to God instead of your own reasoning?
4. How have you seen pride lead to overconfidence in yourself or others?

HOW CAN WE APPLY THIS?

One of the most dangerous enemies of the will of God is the poison of unbelief. But before we can look at unbelief, we first have to acknowledge that we trust ourselves too much. Humans are extremely prone to horrendous errors in reasoning. We often take great pride in our technological ability and the vast knowledge we have acquired, but pride is a completely irrational delusion.

You probably are less intelligent and more biased than you realize. Be more skeptical of yourself. Being aware of our limitations will infuse us with a healthy dose of humility. It is only we trust God, not ourselves, that we can look at the poison of unbelief.

15

The Poison of Unbelief (Part 2)

SCRIPTURE TAKEAWAY

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding.”

Proverbs 3:5

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

1. When have you found yourself derailed by unbelief?
2. Share an experience of trust and faith in God that was a defining moment for you.
3. What would have happened if you allowed unbelief to overwhelm you in those moments?
4. How can you choose to walk in faith instead of unbelief?

HOW CAN WE APPLY THIS?

We don't know very much as individuals and as a species, and we are all trusting that our reason is correct. It's not if you will be a person of faith; it's where you will put your faith. Faith is not an excuse to turn our brain off. It is not a substitute for reason; it is in a separate category than reason. It is about trusting a person – Jesus Christ.

Faith is not belief without evidence; it is trusting in what you know to be true. If Satan can inject unbelief into your life, he can derail your life from God's plan and will. The problem isn't too little faith; it is too much unbelief. Unbelief is a poison. Faith has the potential to move mountains; unbelief has the possibility to nullify that power!

If you want to live a life of following God, your journey will be punctuated by defining moments of trust and faith in God. Whether you fulfill God's will for your life is dependent on your response to these defining moments.

16

The Poison of Unbelief (Part 3)

SCRIPTURE TAKEAWAY

"Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, 'Why could we not cast it out?' So Jesus said to them, 'Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.'"

Matthew 17:19-20 NKJV

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

1. Have you ever experienced unbelief keeping you from being able to believe the Word of God?
2. When have you thrown yourself completely into the will of God, with no backup plan?
3. How can you distance yourself from unbelief?
4. What do you need to do today to 'put all your eggs' into God's plan for you?

HOW CAN WE APPLY THIS?

Unbelief is the enemy we need to get out of our system. It keeps our faith from mixing with the Word (Hebrews 4:2, 6), and it aborts the will of God. Unbelief cripples you. When it comes to the will of God, that small bit of apprehension is unbelief.

You don't need to get rid of all your questions. Faith looks like a child looking to a father for provision. Put your trust in God and not yourself. When do you know you have gotten rid of unbelief? When you put all your eggs in God's basket. Cast out unbelief, and give yourself 100% to God's will and plan. As you do, you will break into a place of effectiveness you have never seen

17

Hearing God's Voice

SCRIPTURE TAKEAWAY

"To You I will cry, O Lord my Rock: Do not be silent to me, lest, if You are silent to me, I become like those who go down to the pit."

Psalms 28:1 NKJV

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

1. Have you felt as though hearing God's voice was difficult?
2. When have you felt as though God's voice was so clear?
3. What type of discipline can you implement today to help you hear God's voice daily?
4. What can you do to increase your sensitivity to God's voice?

HOW CAN WE APPLY THIS?

Most people don't hear God because they are not paying attention. The reality is that God is always speaking to us if we will just condition our ears to hear from Him. But you can only hear God when you are in His presence. Diligence is so key. You have to persist daily to cultivate the relationship with God.

The more time we spend alone with Him, the easier it becomes to immediately hear and recognize His voice. As we recognize His voice, we fall more and more in love with Him. Get alone with Jesus, cut out the noise and let your heart fall more and more in love with him. That is the key to hearing God's voice.

18

Excuses and Fear (Part 1)

SCRIPTURE TAKEAWAY

"The little foxes that spoil the vines."

Song of Solomon 2:15 NKJV

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

1. How have you been hurt or sabotaged by the 'little foxes' in your life?
2. When have you used the excuse, "I am waiting on the Lord, I don't want to get ahead of God or I don't have enough money" in your walk with God?
3. How have these excuses kept you from moving forward?
4. How can you stop yourself from using and believing these excuses?

HOW CAN WE APPLY THIS?

The biggest enemies of God's will are deceptive traps that keep people from realizing how they are missing God's best. Outward sins and moral failures are easy to avoid, but the so-called 'little things' that are actually the biggest threat to you fulfilling God's will in your life.

It is crucial that you know what they look like and prepare for them. Second Corinthians 2:11 states that we are not ignorant of the devil's devices. This gives us a tactical advantage, but we have to use it. Some of the most dangerous enemies keeping you from achieving your destiny are excuses. These seem like legitimate limitations, but they are actually just meant to slow you down. Don't allow excuses to hold you back from God's best today.

19

Excuses and Fear (Part 2)

SCRIPTURE TAKEAWAY

“But Moses said to God, ‘Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?’ So He said, ‘I will certainly be with you. And this shall be a sign to you that I have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain.’”

Exodus 3:11, 12 NKJV

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

1. How have you seen fear cripple you or others?
2. Have you seen excuses keep you or others from moving forward?
3. What is the truth that God says about your situation that will combat the excuses of the enemy?

HOW CAN WE APPLY THIS?

There are three more excuses that you will be tempted to believe. If you believe them, they will keep you from walking out the plan of God for your life. One is “But I don’t have enough...” talent, experience, intelligence, ability, etc. Moses thought the same thing (Exodus 3). He was convinced that he couldn’t do it, but he made the mistake of thinking it was all about him. The truth is that God isn’t looking for the most qualified. He is looking for the ones that will follow, yield and obey. Then God will make up any lack you have.

Another excuse is “But I am not ready yet.” The truth is that delayed obedience is disobedience. This is the most common reason people miss the will of God. Reinhard Bonnke said, “Those who forever seek the will of God are overrun by those who do it.” Sometimes doing nothing is worse than failing. Don’t fall into this trap!

The most common excuse is “But I’m afraid.” When people get to the end of their lives, their number one regret is not taking enough risks. Fear is a serial killer of dreams. You don’t have to be immune to fear, but face your fear. This is courage, and it is courage that will keep you from being held back by limitations that are really just excuses.

20

Wilderness (Part 1)

SCRIPTURE TAKEAWAY

*“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil;
for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.”*

Psalm 23:4 NKJV

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

1. How have you experienced God’s faithfulness in a dry, desolate place?
2. What would you say to someone about how to cope during a wilderness season?
3. Have you found yourself ‘panicking’ in a wilderness season?
4. What does God’s Word say about the wilderness?

HOW CAN WE APPLY THIS?

Wilderness is a metaphor for lonely, dry and difficult places. This wilderness is not your final destination. God is with you. Trust Him, obey Him and follow Him. He will lead you out.

Whether in the wilderness or other places, God’s primary concern is not our comfort but our conforming to the image of His Son. Following the call of God does not guarantee we will have an easy road, but wildernesses are not meant to kill you but to make you stronger. And it is how we respond to the difficult seasons in the wilderness that has powerful implications for our lives.

There are several important tips for surviving in a wilderness—whether natural or spiritual. First, Don’t Panic! You Serve a good God, and your life is in His hands. He is your source. You must have a positivity of faith and a will to live. This is the earnest determination to believe God. If you can trust in the hardest of times, you will be on your way out of the wilderness.

21

Wilderness (Part 2)

SCRIPTURE TAKEAWAY

“And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.”

1 Corinthians 12:26 NKJV

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

1. How do you think assessing your wilderness will help you in your journey?
2. Have you experienced the fellowship of the saints in your wilderness? Describe the impact they have had.
3. How do you think you can help others in their wilderness experiences?
4. Describe how the Word of God or the comfort of the Holy Spirit have helped you in a wilderness time.

HOW CAN WE APPLY THIS?

While in a spiritual wilderness, there are survival tips that will both make your journey easier and help you go through the wilderness as quickly as possible. The second survival tip is: Assess your situation. Figure out what kind of wilderness you are in. Was it caused by sin? If so, the answer is to just repent. The second type is the wilderness of Promotion. Before promotion, there is process. If we resist the process, we resist the promotion.

Part of assessing your resources is to take stock of your resources. There are three resources we must take advantage of: The Word of God, the Fellowship of the Saints and the Comfort of the Holy Spirit. The Word of God is an oasis that refreshes. The fellowship of the saints is based on the idea that the wilderness does not have to be lonely; we should travel together. First Corinthians 12:26 (NKJV) says, “And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.” God created us to be in community. Lastly, don’t forget about the comfort of the Holy Spirit. God Himself is with you, and you are not alone.

22

Wilderness (Part 3)

SCRIPTURE TAKEAWAY

“...Over everything the glory will be a canopy. It will be a shelter and shade from the heat of the day, and a refuge and hiding place from the storm and rain.”

Isaiah 4:5, 6 NIV

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

1. How can you apply these natural survival tips of finding shelter, building a fire or drinking water to your spiritual wilderness?
2. Have experienced God's presence as your shelter?
3. How has God been water or nourishment for your journey?
4. Do you think these six survival tips will be helpful in walking through your wilderness season?

HOW CAN WE APPLY THIS?

There are several more survival tips for going through a wilderness time. Survival tip #3 is: Build a shelter to protect you from the elements. God's presence is our safe place, our shelter, and never is He with us more than He is in the wilderness. He says, “I will never leave you and never forsake you!” (Hebrews 13:5). The next survival tip, number four, is: Build a Fire. Israel did not start its own fire; it came from God's presence. We have to steward the fire and keep it burning through our worship.

The fifth survival tip is: Drink water. Water is often a picture of the Holy Spirit. The most refreshing thing you can do is to pray in the Spirit. Drink deeply of the Holy Spirit by praying in the Spirit as much as possible. The final survival tip, number 6, is: Find nourishment. The source of nourishment is the Word of God. When I talk about the Word, it is from an understanding that Jesus is the Word. It doesn't just involve reading the Bible, but also spending time with Christ Himself. Jesus the perfect example of everything in the Scripture.

How Do I Stay In The Will Of God?

SCRIPTURE TAKEAWAY

“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for His appearing.”

2 Timothy 4:7, 8

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

1. Have you seen people start strong and not be able to finish?
2. What do you plan to do to finish your race strong?
3. What is the impact of Integrity, Focus and Perseverance on your ability to fulfill God's will for your life?

HOW CAN WE APPLY THIS?

It's heartbreaking to realize that not everyone who starts the race will end. There are three nonnegotiable qualities that are essential to fulfilling God's will for your life. The first is integrity. This is guarding and being as careful over the small things as you are over the big things. If you compromise over small things, that means that big things are next. Next is focus.

Stay focused, and don't allow the enemy to distract you from your purpose and from God's will.

The third quality is perseverance. Ephesians 6:13-14 says that once you have done all you can to stand, keep standing! Great victories are made up of great battles, but victory only comes to those who press through great battles. If you let go of the calling God has for your life, you will never see it fulfilled in your life. So, stand firm and don't let go. Fight and endure to the end, and you will fulfill God's will for your life.