

The
4 WILLS
of
GOD

*The Way He Directs Our Steps
and Frees Us to Direct Our Own*



DR. EMERSON
EGGERICHS



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NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

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Introduction
“START HERE!”



You will not be surprised to learn that everyone asks the same question when I share that God has four wills.

“What are these four wills?”

I state:

Believe in Jesus Christ (John 6:40)

Abstain from Sexual Sin (1 Thessalonians 4:3)

Give Thanks in Everything (1 Thessalonians 5:18)

Submit in Doing Right (1 Peter 2:13–15)

Each of these is declared to be the will of God.

In John 6:40 Jesus said, “This is the will of My Father.”

In 1 Thessalonians 4:3 Paul states, “For this is the will of God.”

In 1 Thessalonians 5:18 the apostle pens, “this is God’s will for you.”

In 1 Peter 2:15 Peter writes, “For such is the will of God.”

These four stand out from all other Bible verses because each distinctly identifies God’s will.

Though there is more to God's will than these four, if we ignore these four wills—unmistakably highlighted—it is questionable that we will follow the other commands of God.

For this reason, I urge every believer, young or old, to “Start Here!”

I do. Again and again.

I first learned of these four wills in my twenties. Pastor John MacArthur published a book on the will of God. He shared that he found these in a book called the *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*. From there, I tracked down these same findings. Now, after decades of studying the Bible and counseling others, I can say firmly that these foundational commands of Christ and the apostles serve as a life compass.

As I look back over my life, decisions made at the major crossroads of my life were made in response to the principles of the four wills. Though I was not aware of what I refer to now as the B.A.G.S. acronym (Believe, Abstain, Give Thanks, Submit), in hindsight, I can see that these four commands served as pivotal markers. When I carried this godly “baggage,” noteworthy events ensued! Following them led me forward through confusing, trying, and rewarding moments. Sometimes the four wills positioned me to experience God's favor. At other times, they revealed shortcomings before I got derailed and lost communion with God. But, they always mattered. Like the four points on a compass, they helped me chart my life course. As a checklist, they served me well in doing and determining God's will.

Actually, there are two profound ways these four wills have served as a map. The subtitle to this book is “The Way God Directs Our Steps and Frees Us to Direct Our Own.” This book is about the two wonderful experiences that can result when each of us follow these four wills.

Result #1

God uniquely leads us when we follow these four wills. He directs our individual steps. He guides us as we trust and obey Him. He opens doors that are distinct to us. There is a triggering effect. As I say, “Follow His four universal wills and experience His unique will for your life.”

Result #2

When we follow these four wills, yet God does not seem to uniquely direct our steps, we are free to direct our own steps. We can decide for ourselves. We can do what we wish based on what seems good and best. We are permitted to do this because in following the four wills, we are near the center of God's will, and these serve as guardrails against sinful choices.

Why Did You Pick Up This Book?

But let's back up to where you might be right now in your journey. If you are like most of us, you are asking, "How can I discover God's will for my life?" Is that not why you picked up this book to read?

Upon reflection, isn't it the most significant question a person can ask? If there is a God who loves us and has a purpose for us then finding His unique will surfaces to the top as one of the most important things we can do. All of us should ask, "What is God's personal purpose for my life?"

But when this question is asked, I tenderly counter, should we be asking "What is God's will for my life?" or should we be asking, "What is God's will?"

The secret I unfold in this book is that the answer to "What is God's will for my life?" is found after we answer, "What is God's will?"

The freeing news is that if we do not receive an answer to "What is God's will for my life?" we will still be okay. We are doing the four universal wills of God. This is God's will for our life! We win either way.

However, these four are not always easy to do.

Who wants to identify with Jesus Christ in a hostile environment when it is easier to deny knowing Him and thereby enjoy acceptance and approval from the world?

Who wants to give thanks when bad things are happening and it is easier to be angry and resentful over the injustices?

Who wants to abstain from sex when it is easier to yield to our sensual cravings or yield to a culture that demands you live together first before marriage because to the secular society abstaining before marriage is antiquated and unrealistic?

Who wants to submit in doing what is right, especially to authority figures who are unreasonable, when it is easier to do wrong and gain from the wrong?

There is a price to pay.

But as I will unfold in this book, that is a small price to pay for receiving God's kind guidance and peaceful presence. We actually get to "see" the hand of the Creator of the Universe, a cosmos that is expansive, boundless, immeasurable, limitless, and infinite, show up in our tiny lives. Our minds should be boggled at how much we matter to Him and by His personal response to us. As Jesus said, "seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you" (Matthew 6:33). God enters our world by meeting our essential needs, and possibly more (Mark 10:29–30), as we pursue His revelation and purpose.

In this book, I tell story after story of how our loving heavenly Father shows up, how He Himself adds to our lives. For Him, it isn't about time, space, or matter. For Him, it is about relationship. What is most significant to Him is our heart for Him, and for us to discover His heart for us. Encouragingly, as we follow His four wills, we reveal our heart to Him and discover His heart for us.

As long as we are believing in Jesus Christ, abstaining from sexual sin, giving thanks in everything, and submitting in doing right (B.A.G.S.), God will uniquely respond to us. We will have touched and warmed His heart. And, when He does not direct our steps as we hoped and prayed, we can move forward with our godly baggage, freely doing what we wish based on what seems good and best.

Years ago I told my daughter Joy about this freedom. In her mid-twenties she was trying to figure out God's personal will for her life. At the time, she was asking God, "Should I stay in L.A. or move to Portland, Oregon?" She called me for my input and in that conversation I asked her if she had been doing the four wills. But let's hear her story in her own words.

— A Word from My Daughter Joy —

After I had been working for my dad about four or five months and living in Redondo Beach, California, I was beginning to wonder if La La Land,

where I had lived for the last year, was really the place for me. I had a couple girlfriends up in Portland, Oregon, who I knew would be fun to live near and be the type of people to push me as a person and help me grow in my faith.

I shared with my dad my desire to move, as well as my fear of being someone who was always changing and doing something new. Was I going to be a person who was never content? I also feared not following God's will, because it was something I had always heard Christians say—that many seemed unsure if they were doing it or not. At times they only seemed to mention God's will when they wanted to justify their decision. "Is it God's will that I marry her?" or "I absolutely knew it was God's will I take this job . . ." I desperately wanted a sign from God that told me Portland was where I *had* to live.

Over a hot fudge sundae, I told my dad that I was pretty sure God was giving me those requested signs. Why? *Because* recently I had seen lots of Oregon license plates and T-shirts. Totally God.

That's when my dad (probably trying to conceal his amusement at my license plate from the heavenlies story) graciously told me about the four wills of God.

The conversation essentially went as follows:

Dad: "Here's an idea . . . Why don't you look for T-shirts that say Ohio?"

Me: [crickets]

Dad: Maybe God *is* giving you a sign, but sometimes we can also see what we are looking for and say it's God because that's our desire.

Me: [more crickets]

Dad: "Joy, have you changed friend groups a lot in high school or college?"

Me: "No."

Dad: "Did you change colleges or degrees a number of times?"

Me: "No."

Dad: "So, I don't think we can conclude that you are someone who is a flake or wishy-washy, or will never be content in what you do or who you are loyal to. You may desire something new, but that doesn't mean you are someone who will never be content. What I've seen in Scripture is that there are four key passages that say 'This

is the will of God.’ If you are following those, you are free to do as you please and follow those desires—even if that desire is to move to Portland.”

Me: “So what are they?”

Dad: “Well, do you believe in Christ as your Savior?”

Me: “Yes.”

Dad: “Are you having premarital sex?”

Me: “No.”

Dad: “Do you try to give thanks to God?”

Me: “I think so . . .”

Dad: “Are you submissive to authority?”

Me: “Sounds intense but, uhh, I think so?”

Dad: “I am your boss and your father, and your mother and I are telling you that you are free to make this move. If I had reservations about your character or you moving, it would be important for you to listen to that and possibly submit to the reasons for you not going. But you are free. I don’t think moving to Portland is an issue of sinning against God’s will or not. Make plans to go. And if He doesn’t want you there, He will close that door. Have the attitude ‘if the Lord wills or permits,’ but proceed in freedom.”

There was a huge weight lifted off my shoulders. I never forgot that conversation and the delight I felt in seeing that it wasn’t as much an issue of God showing me the word *Oregon* emblazoned in the sunset for me to have permission to go; it was the issue of my obedience toward God in some key areas of my life and finding freedom to follow my desires. I was completely free.

Since then, this message helped me as I answered so many questions for young Christians through my work with Love and Respect Now. Many wanted to know if it was God’s will that they marry, date, break up with, take this step or that. I was able to encourage them, because of what my dad taught me, that God’s will isn’t a *Choose Your Own Adventure* novel, where if you choose one page over the other you’ll come to find out that, “whoops! you fell into hot lava! THE END!” This was freeing for so many.

I love what Joy shares. Liberty came to her and can come to all of us. In a sense, when we follow these four wills, God allows us the freedom to choose our own adventure.

Of course, in first hearing about this freedom, some get nervous, which I understand and will address throughout the book. This is not a license to sin. Not all choices are good or of God. For instance, as believers in Jesus Christ, we must marry someone who also believes in Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 7:39). We are not free to marry someone who rejects Jesus Christ. But when all things are equal between two good and acceptable decisions, we can go either way as long as we are following the four wills (and in the case of marriage, so is the other person!). We will not miss God's will when we are doing God's will!

What Sets This Book Apart from Other Teachings on God's Will?

After hearing me teach on the four wills, someone wrote me, "Many think there is a blueprint for a specific will that they have to figure out by prayer and listening or they will horribly miss God's perfect plan. You said 'keep these four wills and do as you please.' That is the answer, and very freeing. But many times, people don't realize that and get frozen in decisions about who to marry, where to go to school, etc., thinking there is only one answer. They wait for God to speak to them through individual signs (i.e., fleeces, small voice, open doors, etc.). I have friends who were taught that model in Christian schools. The four wills really frees them!"

In this book, I explain that we need to pray about life decisions and that God does uniquely lead. He can dramatically reveal to us to take path A, not path B, especially for those in the persecuted church. And, when things seem unclear about His will, this book helps those who fear they will miss God's will and so freeze up, failing to move forward. This book offers biblical criteria to the "frozen" for moving forward or staying put. It also helps those who aggressively but wrongly make decisions based on superficial criteria, like looking for Oregon license plates as a sign or fleece to move to Oregon. In

these pages, we will consider the biblical criteria for determining God's will based on God's will! This best enables us to make good and godly decisions over a lifetime. We can move forward or stay put with greater confidence and a clear conscience, even though none of us will make perfect decisions.

Recently we were with friends who heard my quick overview of the four wills, as well as what I reported about my daughter Joy and her experience with the four wills. One man, an intellectual and Harvard graduate and very successful businessman who loves the Lord, said, "When you gave that overview of the four wills, they sounded legalistic to me. But when you told us about Joy's experience, it brought home how freeing this teaching is. Wow. Thank you."

We must never feel bound to a religious and oppressive formula. Utilizing the four wills is not a call to enter a legalistic checklist that enslaves us but an opportunity, as Paul writes, to go about "doing the will of God from the heart" (Ephesians 6:6).

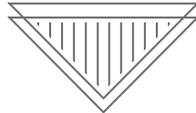
Also, when we are not fully assured which way we should go on a matter, we can meet with a godly, wise person and use the four wills as a checklist to evaluate a decision. When my daughter turned to me, the four wills guided the conversation and provided her with insight and relief.

How about you? Right now, do you have two choices in front of you? You can ask yourself and your friend, "Which decision will most hinder me from following the four wills, and which will most help me follow them? And, because I care to make a difference in my world, which choice will best enable me to help others learn and follow the four wills?" By the way, it isn't enough for a person to ask, "Should I take that job in New York given I follow the four wills?" This individual should also ask, "Should I take my family to New York for this job because that best enables them to follow the four wills?"

Are you ready to dig in? Let's start here!



Chapter 1
DISCOVERING GOD'S WILL



God Has a Will

Since some variation of the words “the will of God” or the “Father’s will” occur more than twenty times in the New Testament, it is fair to assume “the will of God” exists and can be known. The apostle Paul commands us to “understand what the will of the Lord is” (Ephesians 5:17). Jesus uses the expression when He addresses God with the words, “Your will be done” in what has come to be known as the Lord’s Prayer (Matthew 6:10). Yes, God has a will that we must discover and do from the heart.

Paul declared “the whole purpose of God” (Acts 20:27). There is a body of content between Genesis and Revelation that squarely applies to the church. In less than thirty-six months, Paul taught the Christ-followers this “whole purpose.”

We read in Jude 3, “the faith . . . was once for all handed down to the saints.” There are boundaries to this content. In fact, Paul warned: “learn not to exceed what is written” (1 Corinthians 4:6).

Epaphras was “always laboring earnestly . . . in his prayers” for the Colossians, that they might “stand perfect and fully assured in all the will

of God” (Colossians 4:12). Unfortunately, we can know and do just part of God’s will.

How important is it to learn the whole purpose of God and do it from the heart?

Consider Jesus’ words in Matthew 7:21: “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter.” Later, He adds, “For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother” (Matthew 12:50). John further emphasizes the importance of God’s will when he declares, “the one who does the will of God lives forever” (1 John 2:17). Doing the will of God, therefore, not only reveals our relationship to God, but it is also related to our eternal destiny. Concerning eternity, the writer of Hebrews states, “Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised” (Hebrews 10:35–36).

From Jesus and the apostles we learn that the will of God never ranks second to anything. For this reason, all of us should be asking, “What is God’s will?”

Most of the time when people ask, “What is God’s will for my life?” they have in mind a specific concern: career, love relationships, finances, etc. Rarely do people simply ask, “What is God’s will, His whole purpose, to which the Bible refers?” The difference between these two questions is crucial to finding God’s will for you. I believe that if you start by asking the second question—“What is God’s will?”—you will likely discern the answer to the first question, “What is God’s will for my life?”

The question, “What is God’s will for my life?” considers what I refer to as the unique will of God for me. The question, “What is God’s will?” explores what I call the universal will of God for all believers. I contend that the best way to know God’s unique will is to know and follow His universal will for all believers, and this book is about four universal wills of God, which serve as a great starting point, as I referenced in the Introduction.

God's Universal Will

The apostle John describes how following the universal leads to the unique. First John 3:21–22 states, “Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.”

There we have it. Keep God's commandments (His universal will in imperative form) and encounter His unique response to our petition. In response, God guides and provides for us at a personal level. We can experience a remarkable answer to prayer, an orchestration of events pointing to a particular course of action, or a supernatural peace in the midst of unanswered prayers. Amazing things can happen as we keep His universal commandments and then ask Him to uniquely direct our steps.

God's Four Universal Wills

Though all of God's commands in the Old and New Testament that apply to the church fall under God's will for us, God reveals in four passages, four specific wills. I refer to them as the four wills of God.

Like on a map, it is as though God declares, “Start Here!”

This doesn't mean we can ignore the rest of God's commands, only that we probably will ignore the rest if we ignore these four.

These four wills, or commands, are found in four passages that identify precisely the will of God. These four specifically declare “this is” or “such is” the will of God. These passages are matchless. No other verses identify God's will with such exactness.

What are these four?

John 6:40: “**This is the will of my Father** that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life and I Myself will raise him up on the last day” (emphasis added).

1 Thessalonians 5:18: “In everything give thanks; **for this is God's will for you** in Christ Jesus” (emphasis added).

1 Peter 2:13–15: “Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right. **For such is the will of God** that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men” (emphasis added).

1 Thessalonians 4:3: “**For this is the will of God**, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality” (emphasis added).

In other words:

Believe in Jesus Christ.

Give thanks in everything.

Submit in doing right.

Abstain from sexual sin.

These four wills are divinely highlighted in gold, so to speak. God intends for these four to stand out. Follow these and you are in the best position to have confidence He will reveal His unique will to you as you ask Him to lead you, as the apostle John taught.

God’s Unique Will

All of us long for God to uniquely lead and bless our lives. But is that a valid desire? Does God have a unique will for us?

Scripture tells us God designed us and knew us before we were born: He “knit [us] together in [our] mother’s womb” (Psalm 139:13 NIV). Even when we feel totally lost, God knows everything about us and our circumstances. As the psalmist says, “I will counsel you with My eye upon you” (Psalm 32:8). Though we may pursue or plan many things, “the LORD will continually guide you” (Isaiah 58:11) because your steps are directed or “ordained” by Him (Psalm 37:23; Proverbs 20:24).

We believe such Scriptures as these: “He will make your paths straight” (Proverbs 3:5–6), “. . . your plans will be established” (Proverbs 16:3), “the

LORD directs his steps” (Proverbs 16:9), and “if any of you lacks wisdom . . . it will be given to him” (James 1:5).

God responds to our good and personal desires. Psalm 20:4 says, “May He grant you your heart’s desire and fulfill all your counsel!” Psalm 21:2 states, “You have given him his heart’s desire, and You have not withheld the request of his lips.” We read in Psalm 145:19, “He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He will also hear their cry and will save them.”

We would be hard-pressed to argue that God is not interested in being personally involved in the believer’s life!

As the apostle John told us in 1 John 3:21–22, when we keep His commandments and do what is pleasing in His sight, then whatever we ask—as individuals in specific circumstances—we receive from Him.

Listen to three amazing stories of God actively involved in the personal lives of believers.

Sam!

Let me illustrate with a godly father and mother of a daughter that I learned about from my friend Paul Lewis. This husband and wife walked with God, trusting and obeying Him faithfully. Here’s what happened.

One summer this family of three from southern California went hiking in Oregon. As they trekked in the woods, they found a Bible lying on a huge rock. Because the Bible evidenced no weather damage, they concluded the owner had recently left it there. Though the cover had the name “Sam” on it, there was no further identification. As the father thumbed through the pages, he noticed heavy underlining, exclamation points, and devotional comments that indicated that Sam possessed a vibrant relationship with Jesus. Not knowing what to do with the Bible, the family took it home with them.

One day the parents were interceding for their daughter and felt led to pray for a future spouse. The spiritual passion of Sam came to mind, and they found this prayer surging from their hearts: “God, please send a man to marry our daughter who loves you as much as Sam, that young man.” Since Sam’s faith so clearly reflected their hopes for their daughter, they simplified the prayer over the years to “Send us a Sam!”

What parents would not smile when four years later they learned that their daughter, now in college, was dating a guy named Sam? One weekend this Sam offered to help the family move across town. While carting boxes from the house to the moving trailer, he saw a book slide out. When Sam picked it up, he was stunned to realize that he was holding his long-lost Bible. “Where did you get that Bible?” he asked in amazement. “That’s my Bible!”

Indeed, that was Sam’s Bible. Not only did God send a Sam, He sent *the* Sam! And, Sam eventually married their daughter.

Such a story should send chills up our spine!

We can receive from God what we ask from Him. We can experience the unique moving of God for our lives. He knows us by name in a very intimate way (Philippians 4:3; Revelation 21:27) and responds as though we alone exist!

\$1,500!

For Marilyn, a friend of mine from Holland, Michigan, God demonstrated His unique and wonderful will. Marilyn recounts an incident in which she and her husband found themselves \$1,500 short of what they thought they had in their bank account. When they figured out that Marilyn’s husband had mistakenly recorded one \$1,500 deposit twice, he said, “Marilyn, don’t write any more checks. I’ve really made a mess, and we are \$1,500 overdrawn.” Then they prayed together and asked for God’s help.

That night they went to their weekly church supper that cost \$10.50 for the family to eat. Marilyn asked the Lord how to pay for this since they were overdrawn and could not pay for the meal with a check. She then remembered she had fifty cents in her purse and ten dollars she was saving to put toward her husband’s Christmas present. Though she didn’t want to use the gift money, she thanked God for reminding her of it. However, that night when she came to the counter to pay for their meals, the woman said, “Someone already paid for your dinner tonight.”

Marilyn told me, “For eighteen years I had eaten at this church potluck and no one—not one—had ever paid for our family until this night!” Clearly, God understood her unique plight, small as it might seem, and responded. Emboldened by this divine moment, Marilyn asked God to

supply the \$1,500. After she told her husband about her prayer of faith, he called every day and jokingly asked, "Well, did you get a check through the mail?" Together they would laugh, though she kept praying.

Ten days later a big envelope arrived that was marked "Express Mail." Since her husband usually received "that kind of mail," she left it on the counter. When she later recognized the names of good friends on the envelope, she decided to open it. Inside she found two small envelopes. When she opened the first one, she found a check for \$1,500! In utter amazement, she opened the second envelope and found a note saying, "Accept this gift, not from us but from the Lord." When her husband came home that night and learned of the check, he was so awed that he called the family together to thank the Lord for His specific answer to their prayer.

When Marilyn decided to call these friends that very night to thank them, she was eager to learn why they gave that amount. She inquired, "Why did you send \$1,500, why not \$10 or \$100 or even \$200?" Her friend replied, "Well, we had both been impressed in our prayer time together that you had a financial need, but we didn't know how much. We decided to separate for a time to pray on our own, asking God to reveal to us how much we should give. When we came back together, the Lord had impressed upon both of us the amount of \$1,500."

Wow! Is your heart leaping at the possibilities of God answering your prayers? Do you desire God to reveal His unique will to you in ways that mirror these examples?

France

What I can say is that when we fully surrender our hearts to God's will for our lives without fear and with holy anticipation, good things begin to happen. Some people who attended my church shared their experience with me. The day Steve and Brenda Nesbitt fully surrendered their lives to serve Christ in France, they went to a local supermarket near their home in Royal Oak, Michigan. In this time of surrender to God's call to serve overseas, they prayed, "Lord, we will go to Ronchin," which is a little town outside of Lille, France. After that prayer time, just one hour later, they needed to pick some things up at the store. While they were shopping, they overheard someone

speaking French, so they engaged this person in conversation, and in passing said they were headed to France. The man asked where and they said, "Lille." The man replied, "That is where I am from!" Then Steve said, "Well actually it is a little town just outside of that." When he named the town of Ronchin, the man said, "That is exactly where I am from!"

Afterward, Steve and Brenda asked the question, "What are the odds of surrendering our lives to Jesus Christ completely and God confirming that surrender a few moments later by having some French person from the very village you are going to meet you in a store in Royal Oak?" This was no coincidence to them.

Almost three years after moving to France, something else happened. After looking at great length for a house to rent in Ronchin, the Nesbitts finally found one that was suitable. The owner was unavailable to give them the key on the day they were to move in, but said the elderly couple who lived next door had a copy of the key. When they arrived at the neighbors' place to get the key, the neighbor lady learned that Steve and Brenda were Americans from the Detroit area in the U.S. and commented, "Well, that is interesting, I have a son in Royal Oak, Michigan. You wouldn't by any chance have ever met him?" And of course they had. (And that elderly couple became like adoptive grandparents to the Nesbitt children.)

So, how can we encounter these kinds of answers to prayer? I believe when we start with the four universal wills of God we position ourselves in the best way to trigger God's moving in our lives. This book is about the triggering effect!

The Trigger

When a person lives to do the will of God, such obedience is what triggers a distinct encounter with the living God. These encounters are personal, and have no exact replication anywhere else in the world. Yes, others will experience similar leadings but just as each unique individual's name is written in the Book of Life (Revelation 3:5), each individual's leading and life story is precious and unique too.

When I say our obedience "triggers" God's active response in our lives, I do not mean some kind of mechanical process that handcuffs God. Such

an idea would be irreverent. He is not bound to us. He has no obligation to do our bidding. This is not like a series of dominos that fall in line because we have coerced God into intervening. This is not a hocus-pocus approach to God Almighty.

A better image might be that our obedience touches the heart of God who loves us and desires to show us favor and blessing. Said another way, "God things" do not happen when we refuse to follow God's will. The psalmist exclaimed, "If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear" (Psalm 66:18). Most of us know that God will not respond in the way we are describing when we do not fulfill the conditions that warm His heart toward us.

Will God respond every day, all day? No, not visibly to us or according to what we dream about. Though we long for God's personal and powerful moving in our lives with signs, wonders, and miracles on a daily basis, that won't happen. It didn't happen with the apostles or the prophets. Many years passed, even decades, between the dramatic stories we read about in the Bible. Even with our Lord, there is nothing miraculous mentioned after His birth except at age twelve when He astounded the Jewish leaders in the temple with His knowledge. From age twelve to thirty we have no record of anything supernatural happening. Then at the beginning of His ministry, at around age thirty, He turned the water into wine at the wedding at Cana.

Thus, I will not over-promise here about your experience of supernatural encounters. The Son of God lived eighteen years without any testimony that miracles transpired in His life. However, when we trust and obey Him, there will be moments here and there throughout our lives when He manifests Himself in ways that send chills up our spines with awe over His kindnesses. This happens because we have chosen to follow His will.

Though all of us must continue to grapple with "the whole purpose of God" (Acts 20:27), we must take our first step somewhere. This book urges us to start with the four wills. This places us in the best position to ask with confidence for God to uniquely listen and lead.

Let me add. Sarah, my wife, and I start again and again with these four wills as various issues and decisions arise. We have known these four wills for nearly four decades so this book isn't just for a new believer but one who has followed Christ for years, and that's why this is so exciting, rich, and meaningful. "Start Here" means "Start Here Again." Sarah and I find real joy and confidence in moving forward in life since even if we do not

receive what we ask, we know we are in the center of God's will as we actively believe in Jesus Christ, abstain from sexual sin, give thanks in everything, and submit in doing right, and help others believe, abstain, give thanks, and submit (B.A.G.S.). At the end of the day, we know that as we trust and obey these four wills we please God, and in pleasing Him we find pleasure. We are content either way! As with you, we want to imitate Christ. Jesus said, "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me" (John 6:38).

But let's consider a few questions in the next chapter that all of us need to answer for ourselves.

Do we really want to do His will?