



A Six-Week Consideration
of

Finding and Following God's Will for My Life

Week 5

In Due Time

In Due Time, God Will:

The central point of this week's emphasis is well expressed in Psalm 40. Here, David, another young man to whom God made significant promises to sustain him through a long season of "*in the meantime*" living, says that in his own gracious timing, God always does what he promises he will do. Here is how he puts it in Spirit-inspired, Messianic poetry:

¹ I waited patiently for the LORD;
he turned to me and heard my cry.

² He lifted me out of the slimy pit,
out of the mud and mire;
he set my feet on a rock
and gave me a firm place to stand.

³ He put a new song in my mouth,
a hymn of praise to our God.
Many will see and fear the LORD
and put their trust in him.

⁴ Blessed is the one
who trusts in the LORD,
who does not look to the proud,
to those who turn aside to false gods.

⁵ Many, LORD my God,
are the wonders you have done,
the things you planned for us.
None can compare with you;
were I to speak and tell of your deeds,
they would be too many to declare.

⁶ Sacrifice and offering you did not desire—
but my ears you have opened—
burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not require.

⁷ Then I said, "Here I am, I have come—
it is written about me in the scroll.

⁸ I desire to do your will, my God;
your law is within my heart."

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Week Five

Joseph is such an amazing example of all that we have been learning about the will of God. Let me remind you of how closely his life lines up with the emphasis of last Sunday's message.

He lived by faith as he patiently waiting on God to do what he had promised to do. He couldn't see God. But he kept on trusting and living accordingly. He was sure of what he hoped for and certain of what he could not see. Despite the sensory evidence to the contrary, he kept on believing that God would reward him for earnestly seeking him. He did not shrink back.

Although it may have seemed foolishly irrelevant to others, **he was faithful to his God in everything** as he lived "in the meantime" between the promises of God and the fulfillment of those promises.

He practiced incarnational presence. He didn't ask to be either a slave or a prisoner—but he brought his God into both those tasks as he made his flesh and blood, and mind and spirit a place for God to live and work in all he did.

He modeled **respectfully resisting assimilation** into the dominant culture that neither knew nor honored his God. He was fully present but was being conformed to God not to Egypt.

Joseph very graciously and generously demonstrated **sacrificial service to his enemies.** He could have been an embittered recluse showing nothing by anger and contempt for his new masters. Instead, he willingly served.

Joseph's faith in his unseen God resulted in an amazing capacity to wait actively and live dependently. I love that about him.

And now, at long last, "in due time" there is a payoff only faith and faithfulness can bring about. Like Christ, he humbled himself to faithfully serve—and at just the right time, God highly exalted him.

It is easy to become so focused on the desires and dreams we have regarding our promised future, that we side step the pre-requisite process God almost always uses to gently unfold our "mustard seed" potential to be used for his purpose and glory.



Some General Observations

There will be study resources produced each week during this series. You may download a copy of the materials from our website or pick up printed copies on Sundays.

Each week's resources will include three components:

- An outline designed to aid in taking notes to help you grasp the main points of the message. (If you miss a Sunday, we encourage you to listen to the message online.)
- A daily devotional guide for your personal reflections on some of the key passages presented in the Sunday message
- A discussion prompt to help prepare you to share your experiences in small group interactions.

The author of Hebrews wrote: *"We have much to say about this, but it is hard to make it clear to you because **you no longer try to understand.**"* We all learn in different ways. But the desire to "try to understand" is a key element in our growth and progress.

The value of the exercise for you will be in direct proportion to the time and effort that you put into it. Just going through the motions is not likely to be of any benefit to anyone. Opening your heart to allow God to speak to you, through His Word, by His Spirit, and in the honest sharing with other believers promises a significant return on the investment of your time and attention.

It is our sincere prayer that these resources, the weekly messages, your daily reflections, and your participation in a weekly small group experience will help you as you continue growing to become more like Jesus Christ. That is God's will for you.

This material is available online at:

www.monmouthchurch.org



DAILY DEVOTIONALS

Monday

Read: Genesis 41:38-40 and 42:6

³⁸ So Pharaoh asked them, “Can we find anyone like this man, one in whom is the spirit of God?”

³⁹ Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Since God has made all this known to you, there is no one so discerning and wise as you. ⁴⁰ You shall be in charge of my palace, and all my people are to submit to your orders. Only with respect to the throne will I be greater than you.”

⁶ Now Joseph was the governor of the land, the person who sold grain to all its people. So when Joseph’s brothers arrived, they bowed down to him with their faces to the ground.

Ask Yourself:

1. Thirteen years after Joseph dreamed of significance, God elevated him to a position of genuine importance. Think about what God was doing to prepare Joseph for his task.
2. How would I characterize Joseph’s role in that preparation?
3. When his brothers bow down to him, it is now 22 years after their treachery. How do I see God at work in the brothers?
4. Do I believe that God is preparing me for some higher purpose?

Pray

Dear God,

You did fulfill your promises to Joseph. You did what you said you would do. Help me to believe you will bring me to completion too.

In Jesus’ name, Amen

Tuesday

Read: Romans 8:24-25 and 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

²⁴ For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

¹⁶ Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. ¹⁸ So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

Ask Yourself:

1. What do I see as the relationship between hope and patience?
2. What has been my experience with losing hope and losing heart?
3. Do I really believe that it is possible to be inwardly enlarged as I live with daily trouble?
4. What is it that most often gets the focus of my attention, thoughts, and energy?"

Pray

Dear Lord,

I confess, too often I fix my eyes on the wrong things. I see the trouble that weigh me down and the storms that blow me around. I really do want to learn to steady my gaze on you. I want to see the real, the permanent, the hope affirming.

Help me Lord to not be distracted by all the glittering things that this present world regards as important and enduring.

In Jesus' name, Amen

Wednesday

Read: Romans 5:2-6

And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. ³ Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴ perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵ And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

⁶ You see, **at just the right time**, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.

Ask Yourself:

1. What is Paul's perspective regarding the place and purpose of hope and hardships?
2. How does Paul's perspective in this passage differ from my own view of these things?
3. What do I see as the significance of the Holy Spirit in this whole process?
4. "*At just the right time...*" Do I ever ask God to do something "*at just the wrong time?*"

Pray

Dear God,

In these verses I am seeing more of your process, your power, and your perfect timing. Help me to see beyond my self-centered plans, my comfortable preferences, and my impatient insistence. I want to be able to trust you enough to produce your finished work in me.

In Jesus' name, Amen

Thursday

Read: 1 Peter 5:5-7

In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because,

“God opposes the proud
but shows favor to the humble.”

⁶ Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up **in due time.** ⁷ Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

Ask Yourself:

1. What do I see in myself with regards to humility?
2. How do I see “*God’s mighty hand*” at work in the life of Joseph?
3. Am I aware of “*God’s might hand*” at work in the present circumstances of my own life? Where? And How?
4. What role does anxiety have in shaping my life and attitudes?

Pray

Dear Lord,

I like to be right. I like to be in control of my own fate. I want to be able to work through my own problems and find my own solutions. But that is not how you ask me to live. Your plan seems quite risky. Can I truly humble my self and wait for you to do the lifting up? “In due time...” Can I trust you with my cares? With my timing? I want to. Help me I pray,

In Jesus’ name, Amen

Friday

Read: Hebrews 10:34-38

...you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions. ³⁵ So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded.

³⁶ You need to persevere so that **when you have done the will of God**, you will receive what he has promised. ³⁷ For,

“In just a little while,
he who is coming will come
and will not delay.”

³⁸ And,

“But my righteous one will live by faith.
And I take no pleasure

Ask Yourself:

1. Do I know what the Hebrew author said his readers knew?
2. What are the “*better and lasting possessions*” I am encouraged to hold on to?
3. Do I actually believe I will be “*richly rewarded*” if I hold on to my confidence?
4. Would I rather wait “*for just the right time*” or until I “*have done the will of God?*”
What is the difference?

Pray

Dear Father,

This passage is confusing. I'd rather believe you'd not be displeased by my timidity and lack of confidence. I sometimes shrink back and back down in the face of opposition. There is an immediate reward in doing so. But I really do want to do your will and to wait for your lasting reward. Help me, I pray,

In Jesus' name, Amen

Saturday

Read: Ephesians 1:5-10

In love ⁵ he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. ⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace ⁸ that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, ⁹ he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, ¹⁰ to be put into effect **when the times reach their fulfillment**—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

Ask Yourself:

1. When I say I want to know God's will for my life, do I really want to know?
2. This passage proclaims that you have made known "*the mystery of your will*" for us. What do I think that is?
3. What in this text can I find that gives me great comfort?
4. What do I see as the timing considerations in this passage?

Pray

Dear Father,

I don't know why you chose to love me. But I believe you did. I do not see anything in me to make you want to adopt me in Christ. But you did. Your love, goodness, and grace have been lavished on me. Help me to see and believe that your plan is bigger than me.

In Jesus' name, Amen

Prep for Sunday

Read – 1 Peter 1:3-9

³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶ In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. ⁷ These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. ⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, ⁹ for **you are receiving** the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Some ABC's to Prepare for Sunday

Ask God to give you a desire to do his will.
Be still and make room for God to speak into your life.
Confess any known sins that might harden your heart.
Don't be listening for the sake of judging others.
Eagerly welcome the convicting and guidance of the Holy Spirit.
Find some specific thing to immediately apply to your life.
Go and do it!

Pray

Dear Lord,

I acknowledge that my life is largely being lived "in the meantime." I look forward to your end time. But I want to live my life confidently and faithfully in full assurance of faith that all your promises are being fulfilled already and that I am receiving the end result of my faith, your reclaiming of my inner me. Thank you for the assurance that even the hard stuff is being used by you for your ultimate purposes both in me, and for me, and through me.

In Jesus' name, Amen

My Small Group Experience

Remember: The purpose of this small group experience is to build community.

We do this as we seek to encourage and build each other up

We undermine this when we only talk ourselves up and when we put others down.

Our aim is for each person to become more like Jesus.

Let's protect one another with confidentiality.

Share Something –

Tell the group something about your week that will give them a glimpse inside your life.

Listen carefully and prayerfully to what others share.

- Share with the group an instance in your life when long but faithful waiting paid off in a rewarding fulfillment.

- Joseph's story has some wonderful twists and turns. How do you see God at work in Joseph's life through these turns making him into just the right person, in the right place, at the right time.

- Imaginatively project what Joseph might have actively done to prepare himself for the role he ended up in. Contrast that with God's preparation course for him.

- What impact did the message this week have on how you think about actively trusting God to work “*in due time.*”
- Which of this week’s daily readings or prayers spoke most clearly to you about what God is asking you to do right here, right now?
- Think about Joseph’s brothers. They lived for 22 years with a secret shame and guilt for doing what was very clearly their own will and plan to improve their future. How does that compare with Joseph’s experience over that period?
- What is something you have learned during this series that you know the Spirit is prompting you to put into your life as you become more like Jesus?

Share one way the Group can pray for you this week?
