

FINDING YOUR COMPASS: WHAT IS GOD'S WILL FOR MY LIFE?

Small Group Discussion Guide

Based on Romans 12:1-2

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Open your time together in prayer, asking God to give your group clarity, honesty, and a willingness to be transformed as you dig into His Word. Encourage everyone to bring their Bible and to participate openly. There are no wrong answers in the discussion questions — only honest ones.

KEY PASSAGE

****Romans 12:1-2****

Paul urges believers, in light of God's mercy, to offer their bodies as living sacrifices — holy and pleasing to God — as their true worship. He then calls them not to be conformed to the world's patterns, but to be transformed by the renewing of their minds, so that they can discern and approve God's good, pleasing, and perfect will.

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THE SERMON

These are the core truths to keep in front of your group throughout the discussion:

****1. God's will is less about a destination and more about a transformation.****

We spend so much energy trying to locate God's will like a hidden treasure map, when God is primarily concerned with who we are becoming in the process.

****2. Mercy is the starting line, not performance.****

Paul anchors the entire conversation about God's will in the mercy of God. We cannot pursue His will from a place of fear and anxiety. We pursue it from a place of security in His love and grace.

****3. Surrender is the condition, not the reward.****

We often want God to show us the full blueprint before we commit. But God asks us to surrender first, and then He guides us step by step.

****4. The world is actively shaping you — unless you are actively resisting it.****

Conformity to the world's mold is the default setting. Transformation requires intentional, ongoing renewal of the mind through Scripture.

****5. Much of God's will has already been revealed.****

We do not have to guess about honesty, integrity, love for our neighbor, gratitude, and humility. When we faithfully do what God has clearly commanded, we position ourselves exactly where He wants us.

****6. Your job is to follow the Shepherd today — not map out the entire trail.****

Clarity comes after surrender and transformation, not before. Trust precedes direction.

ICEBREAKER

Use this question to ease the group into conversation. Keep it light and accessible.

Think about a time in your life when you desperately wanted a clear answer about a major decision — a career choice, a move, a relationship, or something else entirely. Without going into too much detail, how did that season of uncertainty make you feel?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Work through as many of these as time allows. Questions are organized to move from observation to personal reflection to practical application.

SECTION 1: The Starting Line — Mercy

Romans 12:1a | Ephesians 2:4-5 | Lamentations 3:22-23

****1.**** The sermon opened with the idea that many believers treat the search for God's will like a cosmic game of hide-and-seek — assuming God has hidden a specific target for every decision and that a wrong turn could ruin everything. Have you ever felt that way? What did that mindset do to your relationship with God?

****2.**** Paul begins his instruction about God's will with the phrase "in view of God's mercy." Why do you think Paul anchors this conversation in mercy before he gives a single instruction? What changes about how you approach God when you lead with His mercy rather than your own performance?

****3.**** The sermon described two very different workers: one who walks on eggshells under a volatile boss, and one who works freely and confidently in a family business run by a loving parent. Which of those two descriptions more accurately reflects how you currently relate to God when you are seeking His will? Be honest.

****4.**** Read Lamentations 3:22-23 together. The passage describes God's compassions as new every morning. How does the daily renewal of God's mercy change the way you approach each new day of seeking His guidance?

SECTION 2: The Condition — The Living Sacrifice

Romans 12:1b | Luke 9:23 | Galatians 2:20

****5.**** The sermon described the phrase "living sacrifice" as one of the most challenging concepts in the passage — because a living sacrifice keeps wanting to crawl off the altar. In your own life, what is the area you find hardest to place fully on the altar? What keeps pulling you back off?

****6.**** The sermon used the image of a smartphone factory reset to describe total surrender. We often give God partial access — Sunday mornings, crisis moments, charitable giving — while keeping certain areas locked away. What does a "partial reset" look like in your own walk with God? What areas tend to stay password-protected?

****7.**** The sermon made this statement: "We often want God to show us the whole map before we commit to the journey. But God says, 'Surrender to me today, and I will guide you step by step.'" Do you agree with that? Why is it so difficult to surrender before we see the outcome?

****8.**** Read Luke 9:23 together. Jesus uses the word "daily." What does it look like practically in your weekly routine to take up your cross daily? What habits or rhythms help you return to surrender when you drift?

SECTION 3: The Catalyst — De-programming and Re-programming

Romans 12:2a | Colossians 3:2 | Philippians 4:8

****9.**** The sermon described the world's mold as a very specific operating system running in the background of our lives — constantly defining success as wealth, status, performance, and the approval of others. Where do you most clearly feel the pressure of that mold in your own life right now?

****10.**** The Greek word for "transformed" in Romans 12:2 is the same word used to describe a caterpillar becoming a butterfly — a complete inside-out change. In your experience, what has produced the most genuine transformation in your thinking and your desires? What has been the most effective tool for renewing your mind?

****11.**** Read Philippians 4:8 together. The passage gives a very specific filter for what we allow our minds to dwell on. Practically speaking, how does what you consume daily — social media, news, entertainment, conversations — either support or undermine the renewing of your mind? What adjustments might need to be made?

****12.**** The sermon made the point that conformity to the world is the default setting — it happens automatically if we are not actively resisting it. Do you agree? What does active resistance look like in your daily life?

SECTION 4: The Promise — Moving from Hidden to Revealed

Romans 12:2b | Micah 6:8 | 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

****13.**** The sermon said: "We often treat God's will like a hidden treasure map, but the Bible treats God's will like a compass." What is the difference between those two images? How does thinking of God's will as a compass rather than a treasure map change the way you approach decision-making?

****14.**** The sermon listed several things we do not have to guess about when it comes to God's will — honesty and integrity in the workplace, love for our neighbor, care for the vulnerable, and a life of gratitude. Read 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 together. How often do you focus your search for God's will on the big, unclear decisions while overlooking these clear, revealed commands? What would change if you gave as much energy to obeying what is already revealed as you give to discovering what is not yet clear?

****15.**** Read Micah 6:8 together. The prophet summarizes God's revealed will in three phrases: act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly. Which of these three is most challenging for you personally right now, and why?

****16.**** The sermon made this statement: "If you are honoring God, loving people, and walking in integrity, and you have to choose between two different scenarios, He gives you the freedom to choose, saying, 'Whichever you prefer — I trust you.'" Does that idea bring you relief or does it make you uncomfortable? What does your reaction reveal about how you view God?

SECTION 5: The Conclusion — Trust the Shepherd

Psalm 23:3 | Isaiah 30:21 | Philippians 1:6

****17.**** The sermon closed with the image of hikers following a guide through fog — not needing to see two miles ahead, only needing to keep their eyes on the guide three feet in front of them. Where in your life right now do you need to stop trying to see two miles ahead and simply keep your eyes on the Shepherd in front of you?

****18.**** Read Philippians 1:6 together. The verse expresses confidence that God, who began a good work in you, will carry it on to completion. How does that promise speak to your current season of uncertainty or waiting? What would it look like to live from that confidence this week?

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

Encourage each group member to choose at least one of these to commit to before your next gathering.

****1. Audit Your Inputs.****

For one week, pay close attention to what is shaping your mind on a daily basis. Keep a simple log of the media, conversations, and content you consume most. At the end of the week, ask yourself honestly: Is this renewing my mind or reinforcing the world's mold? Bring your observations back to the group.

****2. Identify Your Altar.****

Prayerfully identify one specific area of your life that you have been withholding from full surrender. Write it down privately. Spend time this week in prayer, intentionally placing that area on the altar before God. You do not have to have it all figured out — simply begin the act of surrender.

****3. Focus on the Revealed Before the Unrevealed.****

Write down the three areas from Micah 6:8 — act justly, love mercy, walk humbly — and beside each one, write one concrete, specific way you will live that out in your daily life this week. Do not move on to asking God about the unclear decisions until you have taken a step of obedience in the areas He has already made clear.

****4. Practice Daily Surrender.****

Each morning this week, before you check your phone or begin your routine, spend five minutes in prayer using this simple framework: Thank God for His mercy. Offer Him your day as a living sacrifice. Ask Him to renew your mind and guide your very next step. Keep it simple. Keep it consistent.

****5. Memorize the Passage.****

Commit Romans 12:1-2 to memory this week. Write it on a notecard, put it on your bathroom mirror, or set it as a reminder on your phone. Let the words of the passage itself become part of the renewing of your mind.

CLOSING PRAYER GUIDE

Close your group time by praying through these four movements together. You may pray as a group, in pairs, or have one person lead:

- ****Gratitude**** — Thank God for His mercy that is new every morning and for the security we have in Christ.
- ****Surrender**** — Ask God to reveal any area of life being withheld from Him, and express a willingness to place it on the altar.
- ****Renewal**** — Ask the Holy Spirit to actively renew the minds of each person in the room, replacing the world's programming with the truth of Scripture.

- ****Trust**** — Ask for the faith to follow the Shepherd one step at a time, trusting that He who began a good work will carry it to completion.

FOR FURTHER STUDY

If your group wants to go deeper during the week, consider reading through these passages and reflecting on how each one connects to the themes of the sermon:

- Romans 8:28-29 — God's ultimate purpose in all things is conforming us to the image of His Son
- Jeremiah 29:11-13 — God's plans for His people are rooted in hope, and He is found when sought wholeheartedly
- Proverbs 3:5-6 — The connection between wholehearted trust and a straight path
- John 10:27 — The sheep of the Good Shepherd hear His voice and follow Him
- James 1:5 — The invitation to ask God for wisdom without fear of rejection

This guide was developed from the sermon "Finding Your Compass: What Is God's Will for My Life?" based on Romans 12:1-2.