

STUDY GUIDE

BY JAMES VINCENT

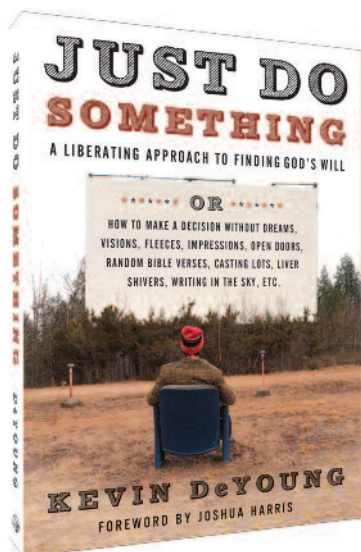
FOR

**JUST DO
SOMETHING**

A LIBERATING APPROACH TO FINDING GOD'S WILL

KEVIN DEYOUNG

RevKevinDeYoung.com



Here are eight sessions that will let you dig deeper into *Just Do Something*, authored by Kevin DeYoung. Kevin's brief book is full of practical insight; this study guide will help you understand and apply it.

Each session excerpts a key passage from a chapter ("Kevin Says"), followed by one or two key Scripture passages. Then there are several questions for personal study and a couple for use in a group study. Of course, those in a group can look at the personal study questions—they can even use some in their group discussion. And if you're having a personal study, you can also tap into the group questions.

Whether you're doing a private or group study, you'll find this guide a great tool for digging deeper into finding God's will for life.

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SESSION 1

CHAPTER 1: THE LONG ROAD TO NOWHERE
CHAPTER 2: THE WILL OF GOD IN CHRISTIANESE

Kevin Says

Tinkering means indecision, contradiction, and instability. We are seeing a generation of young people grow up (sort of) who tinker with doctrines, tinker with churches, tinker with girlfriends and boyfriends, tinker with majors, tinker with living in and out of their parents' basement, and tinker with spiritual practices no matter how irreconcilable or divergent.

We're not consistent. We're not stable. We don't stick with anything. We aren't sure we are making the right decisions. Most of the time, we can't even make decisions (page 12).

God's will of decree—what He has predetermined from eternity past—cannot be thwarted. God's will of desire—the way He wants us to live—can be disregarded (pages 19 and 22).

Key Scriptures

"I am God and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose.'" (Isaiah 46:9–10; an example of God's will of decree)

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. (1 John 2:15; an example of God's will of desire)

Think About It

1. God's will of decree means "God always gets His way." Nothing can stop Him from accomplishing His will. What does that tell you about the nature and qualities of the God of heaven and earth?
2. God's will of desire refers to what God desires from His creatures. Which of the following desires do you need to focus on so that you will be in His good will?
 - Praise the name of God (Psalm 69:30–31)
 - Be sexually pure (1 Thessalonians 4:3)
 - Be joyful always (1 Thessalonians 5:16)
 - Pray continually (1 Thessalonians 5:17)
 - Give thanks in every circumstance (1 Thessalonians 5:18)
 - Live by faith (Hebrews 11:6)
 - Do good (1 Peter 2:15)

Talk About It

1. Do you think you are usually unable to make decisions? If so, why?
2. As you begin reading this book, do you believe God has a specific plan for your life? (Be honest in your answer.) Why or why not?

SESSION 2

CHAPTER 3: DIRECTIONALLY CHALLENGED

Kevin Says

Obsessing over the future is not how God wants us to live, because showing us the future is not God's way. His way is to speak to us in the Scriptures and transform us by the renewing of our minds. . . . We should stop looking for God to reveal the future to us and remove all risk from our life. We should start looking to God—His character and His promises—and thereby have confidence to take risks for His name's sake (page 41).

Key Scriptures

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. (Romans 8:28–29)

Think About It

1. “Having faith doesn't guarantee your life—or the lives of those around you—will be all candy canes and lollipops” (page 30). What is wrong with thinking that God's will leads to perfect fulfillment in our lives? If we can't expect total fulfillment, what can/should we expect?
2. Read Esther 4, the entire account of Mordecai's mourning and petition to Queen Esther, his cousin, over the impending judgment against their people. Knowing she was about to risk death in appearing before the king (v. 16), Esther asked Mordecai for special assistance. How can fasting and other people's prayers help us in making decisions?
3. Esther's decision reminds us that doing the right thing is risky. Why does God call us at times to take risks when the outcome is unclear?

Talk About It

1. Why did you buy this book (or take this class)? Discuss any that apply:
 I want to learn how to please God. I'm timid/cautious.
 I want perfect fulfillment in life. I'm confused by choices. I'm a coward.
2. What are the advantages to being cautious in making decisions? How can someone recognize when he or she is overcautious, even timid? Discuss attitudes and actions that can help cautious people to move toward a point of decision.

SESSION 3

CHAPTER 4: OUR MAGIC 8-BALL GOD

Kevin Says

The conventional approach to the will of God—where God’s will is like a . . . Magic 8-Ball that we are supposed to shake around until some generic answer floats to the tops—is not helpful. It is not good for our decision making. It is not good for our sanctification. And sometimes it is frankly dishonoring to Christ (page 43).

Key Scriptures

What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?
(Micah 6:8)

Now listen, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.” Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. . . . Instead you ought to say, “If it is the Lord’s will, we will live and do this or that.” (James 4:13–15 NIV)

Think About It

1. In looking toward the unknown future, we should be both hopeful and humble. Why does the author say we can have these attitudes about our future (pages 47–48)?
2. What’s wrong with telling our Christians friends that we made a decision because “God told me to do this” or “It’s God’s will”?

Talk About It

1. Have you ever been angry with God because He did not tell you His plan? Have you ever been frustrated that God does not make clear his will of direction? Share with the group a time you felt this way. Do you still at times feel this way?
2. Both Robinson and DeYoung warn against Christians being passive when making important decisions. Our inactivity can be waiting on God, but sometimes we aren’t willing to decide because of (1) fear of what others might say, (2) a desire to have others praise us, or (3) disbelief in God’s providence (see page 52 top). Which of these three do you struggle with? Which do others in your group struggle with? Pray for each other about those areas that make you fear decision making.

SESSION 4

CHAPTER 5: A BETTER WAY?

Kevin Says

The decision to be in God's will is . . . the daily decision we face to seek God's kingdom or ours, submit to His lordship or not, live according to His rules or our own. The question God cares about most is not "Where should I live?" but "Do I love the Lord with all my heart, soul, strength, and mind, and do I love my neighbor as myself?" For that question, the second one, gets to the heart of God's will for your life (page 57).

Key Scriptures

"Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? . . . But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. (Matthew 6:25–26, 33)

You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore. (Psalm 16:11)

Think About It

1. Are you surprised that God's overarching will for your life is to be holy? Why or why not?
2. A key part of God's will for us is to always rejoice, pray, and give thanks (see 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18). Which one of these three actions is most difficult for you? Why is it difficult? What can you do to become more joyful, prayerful, or thankful?

Talk About It

1. Do you agree that worry is fundamentally a spiritual issue? How do you deal with feelings of worry or anxiety?
2. The author says the conclusion of the matter concerning God's will for us is this: "In short, God's will is that you and I get happy and holy in Jesus." Do you agree with his conclusion? If not, what do you think is missing?

SESSION 5

CHAPTER 6: ORDINARY GUIDANCE AND SUPERNATURAL SURPRISES

Kevin Says

We have no record in the New Testament of anyone anxious to hear God tell him what to do. Paul never sought out special words of knowledge concerning his future. He seems very concerned to know and approve God's moral will. But when he gets to a fork in the road, hesitating and pleading with God to know which way to go seems completely foreign to the apostle (page 71).

Key Scriptures

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he made the world.
(Hebrews 1:1–2)

Think about It

1. Kevin says there's a big difference between God guiding us in decision making—which He does—and God expecting us to discover His plan for our lives—which He does not. What is the difference between His guiding us toward a decision and our expecting Him to give us the answer? How should that affect your decision making . . . and your attitude toward God?
2. How does God use the Son, the Spirit, and Scripture to guide us today, according to pages 65–68?
3. Though on occasions the apostle Paul had visions (Acts 16:6–10; 22:17), an angelic encounter (Acts 27:23), and promptings (Acts 20:22–23), he typically made decisions through strategizing and thinking. Likewise, God typically works through ordinary means, Kevin writes. Why do you think God normally use nondramatic ways? Why do believers like to have a supernatural revelation before taking action, as Gideon desired (see Judges 6:36–40)?
4. God “sovereignly directs our affairs at all times,” and He does so “behind the scenes—down to the smallest detail” (page 65). Do you believe that statement? If so, what confidence does that give you about God and about your future?

Talk About It

1. Have you ever had a vision, a dream, or heard a voice that seemed to offer direction or comfort? Describe to the group what happened and what this incident meant to you. Together discuss the cautions DeYoung gives in using such special revelation for guidance (see pages 69–72).
2. Those who believe certain gifts of the early church have ceased (cessationists) and those who believe all the spiritual gifts continue (charismatics) agree that one area of guidance continues as the primary, sure guide in knowing God's direction for our lives. What is it? Why is it superior to all other would-be revelation?

SESSION 6

CHAPTER 7: TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Kevin Says

Open doors, fleeces, random Bible verses, and impressions, if construed in the right way, have their place in the Christian's life. But in my experience, these tools have been wielded for more harm than good. They are easily abused, manipulated, and lend themselves to superstition (page 85).

Key Scriptures

Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test'" (Matthew 4:7)

Think about It

1. When is the "open door" approach to making decisions okay, and when is it unwise, according to the author?
2. Of the four "tools" mentioned for making decisions—open doors, fleeces, random Bible verses, and impressions—which one do you think is most vulnerable to misinterpreting?
3. Of those four "tools" used at times to making decisions, which one do you think could be most helpful? Why?
4. Impressions, gut feelings, and hunches can be helpful, for they can come from the Lord during times in prayer. But subjective feelings also can be in error. What guideline(s) can you use to help in evaluating the tool called "impressions"?

Talk About It

1. The opening "news story" in this chapter may have seemed laughable—or you may have found it to ring true. Have you met a believer fearful of making a decision that might not be part of God's will? Have you ever been frozen with fear of doing the wrong thing or waited in vain for God to give some confirmation? Give some details to the group.
2. Give an example (either personal or someone you know) of one of these tools being used to make a decision. What was the outcome? Based on this example, what caution, if any, would you give in using a tool to help discern God's will?

SESSION 7

CHAPTER 8: THE WAY OF WISDOM

Kevin Says

Wisdom is what we need to live a godly life. . . . There are no shortcuts. We don't get secret messages that tell us whether to drop the entomology minor. God wants us to offer ourselves to Him, turn from the ways of the world, and be transformed. Then we will have something better than special revelations and words about the future—we'll have wisdom. . . .(pages 92-93)

We get wisdom by reading our Bibles (storing up God's commands), listening to sound advice (turning your ear to wisdom), and praying to God (calling out for insight) (page 91).

Key Scriptures

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may be able to discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. (Romans 12:1–2)

Think about It

1. Proverbs 2:5–6 answers the question, “What is wisdom?” What is wisdom, and how does this biblical meaning differ from the meaning most people give to the words wisdom and foolishness? Be sure to review page 89 as you consider your answer.
2. Three ways to have wisdom are to read our Bible, listen to sound advice, and pray to God our Father. Which of these is (are) hardest for you to do regularly? Why do you think that is?

Talk About It

1. After reviewing one afternoon's listing of headlines on CNN.com, DeYoung concludes, “We have plenty of information. Not enough wisdom.” What is the difference between knowledge and wisdom?
2. One of three key ways to obtain godly wisdom is to read the Bible (see “Think About It” 2 above). The Scriptures tell us what to do and not do, but beyond that, they call for a transformation. Why do Christians seem to struggle with the call in Romans 12:2 for transformation through renewal of their mind? What can believers do to become biblical nonconformists? What promises in Romans 12: 2 and Proverbs 2 can spur us on to seek wisdom and transformed minds?

SESSION 8

CHAPTER 9: WORK, WEDLOCK AND GOD'S WILL
CHAPTER 10: THE END OF THE MATTER

Kevin Says

What decision,” we think to ourselves, “is more important than picking a husband or wife? Surely, God wants to, in fact, must tell me who is the right guy for me.”

Such an approach sounds spiritual, but wisdom points us in a different direction. The four steps we applied to the job search can also be used in the pursuit of marriage. (That’s the thing about wisdom; it’s less of a detailed road map and more of a way to make decisions in many different situations) (pages 104-105).

If you are going to be anxious about one thing, be anxious to keep His commandments. If we must fear something—and we all do—fear God, not the future (page 121).

Key Scriptures

So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. (Romans 12:1–2)

Now there is great gain in godliness with contentment. (1 Timothy 6:6)

Think about It

1. “If we must fear something,” writes DeYoung, we should “fear God, not the future.” Read the instruction to fear God in Ecclesiastes 12:13. What does it mean to fear God?
2. The author concludes the book by saying that if you live for God, obey the Scriptures and love Jesus, you can “do whatever else you like, with whomever you like” and you will be walking in God’s will. Is it as simple as that, or would you add something to this instruction?

Talk about It

1. Have you looked (or are you looking) for a job and unable to land the right one initially? Tell the group about the experience. How did this build—or challenge—your faith? What can we do to remain at peace and feel contentment during the process of finding the right job? Study the following verses on contentment as you formulate an answer: Matthew 6:25–30; Philippians 4:11–12; 1 Timothy 6:6, 8.
2. The decision to marry is a key one, part of learning how best to glorify God; you can honor him both as a single person or a married individual. If you are single, which of the four steps—searching the Scripture, getting wise counsel, praying to God, and making a decision—is the hardest for you? Why? If you’re married, relate how easy or challenging the decision to marry was. (Your story will probably encourage those in the group, including your spouse.)