STUDENT STUDY GUIDE | November 8, 2026

EPHESIANS

WHOSE WILL WINS?

Based on the message by Chad Everett

"We have the opportunity to decide which of these wills have the final say in our lives."
— Chad Everett

THE ROADS CHURCH

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OVERVIEW

Whose will is actually winning in your life?

It's easy to say you want God's will. But what happens when His Word challenges something you want, a relationship you value, the approval of your friends, or the future you've imagined for yourself?

In Ephesians 1:1, Paul introduces himself as an apostle of Jesus Christ “by the will of God.” His calling wasn't based on what he wanted or what other people thought he should do. God's will established his assignment.

Pastor Chad taught about four wills that can influence our lives: God's will, our own will, Satan's will, and the will of others. Each involves choices, intentions, and purposes. Although God's will is greater than anything that opposes Him, we still face decisions about whose will we are going to follow.

Consider Saul. He was determined to destroy the Church. He approved of Stephen's death, persecuted believers, and traveled toward Damascus intending to arrest followers of Jesus. Yet even as Saul pursued his own plans, God's purposes were not being defeated. The believers scattered by persecution continued spreading the Gospel, and Saul himself was approaching an encounter with Jesus that would completely change his life.

One encounter with Jesus changed Saul's direction. The man who tried to stop the Church became an apostle called to serve Jesus Christ.

That same Jesus calls us to surrender our will to His. Following Him isn't just about knowing what Scripture says, attending church, or agreeing that God's ways are best. It's about choosing His will when our desires, emotions, friendships, and circumstances pull us in another direction.

The question isn't simply whether you believe God's will is greater. It's whether your everyday choices show that His will has the final say in your life.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Read → Respond → Reflect → Pray → Live It

Read each Scripture passage carefully and answer the Respond questions directly from God's Word. Use the Reflect questions to examine your actual choices, relationships, attitudes, and priorities. Don't settle for the answer you know a Christian is supposed to give. Be willing to identify where your life doesn't agree with what you say you believe.

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal where you need to surrender your own will and trust God's purposes. Then take a specific step of obedience that puts His Word into practice. This study isn't just about understanding whose will should win. It's about choosing to live that way.

KEY WORDS & DEFINITIONS

- **Will — *thelēma*:** A choice, intention, or purpose. What someone wants and intends to accomplish.
- **By — *dia*:** Through; the means by which something happens.
- **Apostle — *apostolos*:** Someone sent out with a message and an assignment.
- **Persecution — *diōgmos*:** Harassing, mistreating, or attacking people because of their beliefs.
- **Consenting — *suneudokeō*:** Agreeing with or approving of something.
- **Havoc:** Causing serious destruction or damage.
- **Scattered — *diaspeirō*:** Spread out into different places, like seeds being sown.
- **Suddenly — *exaiphnēs*:** Happening unexpectedly, without warning.
- **Surrender:** Yielding your own desires, plans, or control to another's authority.

SECTION 1 — FOUR WILLS THAT IMPACT OUR LIVES

FOCUS

Paul was called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, not by his own ambitions or the approval of others. Every day, different influences compete for our decisions: God's will, our own will, Satan's will, and the will of others. The question is which will we allow to direct our lives.

READ

Ephesians 1:1–2; Galatians 1:10; Matthew 6:9–10

RESPOND

1. According to Ephesians 1:1, how does Paul identify himself, and whose will established his calling?
2. What does the phrase “by the will of God” tell us about the source of Paul's assignment?
3. In Galatians 1:10, whose approval does Paul contrast with serving Christ?
4. What does Paul say about being a servant of Christ if he is still trying to please people?
5. According to Matthew 6:9–10, what does Jesus teach His disciples to pray concerning God's Kingdom and will?

REFLECT

1. **Who actually controls my decisions?** Think about your friendships, entertainment, dating relationships, social media, and the way you spend your free time. Do you intentionally seek God's will in these areas, or do you make your own choices and expect God to be okay with them? What specific evidence from your life reveals the answer?
2. **Am I willing to disappoint people to obey God?** Where do you change your behavior, language, opinions, or standards depending on who you're around? Are there things you participate in, laugh at, post, or remain silent about because you want to fit in? Whose approval matters most when obeying Jesus makes you unpopular?

3. **Does God get to challenge what I want?** When Scripture confronts a desire, relationship, ambition, or habit, do you surrender it or look for reasons to justify keeping it? Are you following Jesus on His terms, or only when His direction agrees with your preferences?

PRAY

Ask the Holy Spirit to expose where your desire for acceptance, control, or personal satisfaction is directing your decisions more than God's Word. Pray for the courage to seek His will even when it conflicts with what you want or what others expect.

LIVE IT

Identify one area where you regularly allow your own desires or someone else's approval to influence your choices. Find what Scripture says about that area and make one specific decision this week that demonstrates God's will has greater authority.

READ MORE

John 6:38

SECTION 2 — GOD'S WILL IS GREATER THAN THE WILL AGAINST US

FOCUS

Jesus told Peter that Satan wanted to sift him like wheat, but Jesus had prayed that Peter's faith would not fail. He also spoke of Peter returning and strengthening others. Satan had intentions for Peter, but those intentions did not have to determine his future. Opposition, failure, disappointment, and fear may influence our thinking, but they don't have to have the final say. Our confidence belongs in Jesus and His purposes.

READ

Luke 22:31–32

RESPOND

1. According to Luke 22:31, what did Jesus reveal about Satan's intentions toward Peter?
2. What did Jesus say He had prayed for Peter?
3. What specifically did Jesus pray would not fail?
4. What did Jesus say Peter would do after he returned?
5. What responsibility did Jesus give Peter concerning his brothers?

REFLECT

1. **Do I believe my circumstances more than God's Word?** When you experience rejection, struggle academically, face conflict at home, or feel like you're falling behind everyone else, what determines how you see yourself and your future? Do fear and disappointment carry more authority in your thinking than what God has spoken?

2. **Where am I allowing failure to define me?** Is there a mistake, temptation, repeated struggle, or disappointment that convinces you there's no point in trying to grow spiritually? Do you respond by turning toward Jesus and His Word, or by withdrawing, making excuses, and accepting defeat?
3. **Am I so focused on my own problems that I stop strengthening others?** Jesus told Peter to strengthen his brothers. When you're having a difficult season, do you become consumed with yourself, or do you still look for opportunities to encourage, pray for, and support others? Who needs you to help strengthen their faith right now?

PRAY

Ask Jesus to strengthen your faith when circumstances seem overwhelming. Bring Him the fears, failures, and disappointments that influence your thinking. Pray for the confidence to trust His purposes and the willingness to strengthen others rather than becoming consumed by your own struggles.

LIVE IT

Identify one situation where fear, disappointment, or failure is influencing what you believe is possible. Write down what is happening and what Scripture reveals about Jesus' response to Peter. Choose one action that demonstrates continued faithfulness, and intentionally encourage someone else who is struggling.

READ MORE

Matthew 26:39

SECTION 3 — PERSECUTION CANNOT STOP GOD'S PURPOSES

FOCUS

Saul was determined to destroy the Church. He approved of Stephen's death and persecuted believers, entering homes and dragging men and women to prison. Although persecution scattered Christians from Jerusalem, they continued spreading God's Word wherever they went. The enemy intended destruction, yet God's Kingdom continued advancing. Following Jesus doesn't guarantee a comfortable life free from opposition, but we are called to remain faithful to His purposes even when obedience becomes difficult.

READ

Acts 7:54–60; Acts 8:1–4; Mark 4:26

RESPOND

1. According to Acts 7:54–58, how did the crowd respond to Stephen, and what connection did Saul have to what happened?
2. What did Stephen pray while he was being stoned, according to Acts 7:59–60?

3. According to Acts 8:1–3, what happened to the believers following Stephen's death, and what did Saul do to the Church?
4. What did the scattered believers continue doing according to Acts 8:4?
5. What illustration does Jesus use for the Kingdom of God in Mark 4:26, and how does it connect with the believers being scattered and spreading God's Word?

REFLECT

1. **Do I only follow Jesus when it doesn't cost me anything?** When classmates mock biblical beliefs, friends reject godly boundaries, or someone makes fun of your faith, do you stand firm or change your behavior to avoid being different? Where do you allow the fear of rejection to silence your witness?
2. **Am I using difficult circumstances as an excuse to stop obeying?** When school gets stressful, friendships become complicated, or life doesn't go your way, do you pull away from prayer, Scripture, serving, or sharing Jesus? Are you waiting for life to become easier before you take your relationship with God seriously?
3. **Am I more concerned with protecting my comfort than advancing God's Kingdom?** The scattered believers continued sharing the Gospel even after losing the comfort of remaining in Jerusalem. If following Jesus requires you to step outside your friend group, change a routine, give up an opportunity, or speak up when you'd rather remain silent, are you willing? What are you protecting that competes with obedience?

PRAY

Ask God to give you courage to remain faithful when following Jesus is uncomfortable or unpopular. Pray that difficult circumstances will not become excuses for disobedience and that you will recognize opportunities to share His truth wherever He places you.

LIVE IT

Choose one situation where you usually remain silent, blend in, or avoid doing what's right because of social pressure. Decide in advance how you will respond according to God's Word. Then follow through this week, even if it costs you approval or comfort.

READ MORE

Acts 22:20

SECTION 4 — ONE ENCOUNTER WITH JESUS CAN CHANGE EVERYTHING

FOCUS

Saul was traveling to Damascus to arrest followers of Jesus, fully committed to carrying out his own intentions. But suddenly, a light from heaven interrupted his journey, and Jesus spoke to him. Saul was pursuing his own will while unknowingly approaching an encounter that would completely change his direction. God's purposes were not limited by Saul's plans. The man who persecuted believers would become an apostle of Jesus Christ. One encounter with Jesus can change everything.

READ

Acts 9:1–6; John 1:5; Isaiah 48:3

RESPOND

1. According to Acts 9:1–2, what was Saul planning to do when he reached Damascus?
2. What suddenly happened as Saul approached the city?
3. What question did Jesus ask Saul, and how did Jesus identify Himself?
4. How did Saul respond to Jesus, and what instructions did Jesus give him?
5. What does John 1:5 say about light and darkness, and what does Isaiah 48:3 reveal about God's ability to accomplish what He declares?

REFLECT

1. **Do I really believe Jesus can change anyone?** Think about someone at school, in your family, or in your friend group who seems completely uninterested in God or openly opposed to Christianity. Do you pray for that person with genuine faith, or do you assume they will never change? What does Saul's encounter reveal about the limits you've placed on what Jesus can do?
2. **Do I stop trusting God when I don't see immediate results?** When you pray for a relationship, a family situation, or someone to encounter Jesus, do you lose confidence because things appear to be getting worse? Are you allowing what you can see to determine what you believe God can accomplish?
3. **Am I willing for Jesus to interrupt my plans?** Saul was pursuing what he wanted until Jesus confronted him. When God's Word challenges your direction, attitude, relationship, or future plans, do you genuinely ask what Jesus wants you to do? Or do you resist because you already know what you want? What is God revealing that you are unwilling to change?

PRAY

Pray for someone you know who needs an encounter with Jesus. Ask God to strengthen your faith in His ability to transform lives, even when circumstances appear impossible. Invite the Holy Spirit to reveal where your own plans or attitudes need to change.

LIVE IT

Write down the name of one person you are believing God can reach. Pray intentionally for that person throughout the week. Also identify one area where God's Word is challenging your current direction, and take a concrete step of obedience rather than waiting until you feel ready.

READ MORE

Acts 8:1–3

SECTION 5 — SURRENDER YOUR WILL AND TRUST GOD'S PLAN

FOCUS

Jesus came to accomplish the Father's will. Even in the garden of Gethsemane, facing what was ahead, He prayed, “Nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.” Jesus demonstrated that surrender isn't simply believing God's will is better; it's allowing His Word and purposes to direct our choices even when we want something different. God's will is greater than every opposing will, but are we willing to surrender our own will to Him?

READ

John 6:38; Matthew 26:39; Matthew 6:9–10; Acts 9:6

RESPOND

1. According to John 6:38, why did Jesus come down from heaven, and whose will did He come to accomplish?
2. In Matthew 26:39, what did Jesus ask the Father, and how did He express His surrender?
3. According to Matthew 6:9–10, what did Jesus teach His disciples to pray about God's will?
4. In Acts 9:6, how did Saul respond to Jesus, and what instructions did he receive?
5. What do John 6:38 and Matthew 26:39 reveal about Jesus' commitment to the Father's will, even when obedience was difficult?

REFLECT

1. **Where is God's will not winning in my life?** Don't answer with what you think sounds spiritual. Think honestly about your private conversations, dating relationships, online activity, entertainment, attitudes toward your parents, and the choices you make when nobody is watching. Where do you know what God's Word says but continue choosing what you want? What are you unwilling to surrender?
2. **Do I want God's will, or do I just want God to give me what I want?** Think about your prayers concerning friendships, relationships, sports, grades, college, career plans, or your future. Are you genuinely asking God to direct your life, or are you asking Him to make your plans successful? If following His will means giving up something you deeply want, are you willing to obey?
3. **What am I refusing to surrender right now?** Is it a relationship you know is leading you away from God, a habit you keep justifying, an attitude toward your parents, a need for approval, or a plan you're determined to control? What is the specific act of obedience you know you need to take? What is keeping you from doing it today?

PRAY

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal where your choices, intentions, and purposes are not aligned with God's will. Be honest with Him about what you want to control or refuse to surrender. Pray for a heart that genuinely desires His will and the courage to obey when His direction challenges your own. Make Jesus' prayer your own: “Not as I will, but as You will.”

LIVE IT

Make a surrender decision, not just a surrender statement.

Identify one specific area where your will is competing with God's Word. Write down what you want, what Scripture says, and what obedience requires.

Then take the necessary step this week. That might mean ending a compromise, setting a boundary, apologizing, forgiving someone, changing what you consume online, having an honest conversation, or choosing to obey even when no one else understands.

Don't settle for saying you want God's will. Make a decision that demonstrates it.

READ MORE

Isaiah 48:3

FINAL ENCOURAGEMENT

“We have the opportunity to decide which of these wills have the final say in our lives.” — Chad Everett

God's will is greater than the will that opposes you. Saul's journey to Damascus reminds us that even when circumstances seem to be moving in the wrong direction, God's purposes can still be at work. One encounter with Jesus can change everything—including the direction of your life.

You don't have to wait until you're older to live surrendered to Jesus. Right now, your friendships, relationships, decisions, and future are opportunities to choose His will over your own. Don't just learn what God's Word says. Let it change how you live. **Whose will wins? Let your choices answer that question.**