

Sunday Night Equipping – God's Will (part 3)

The Traditional Approach ...

Why is this sooo crucial? There is scarcely anything that more dramatically influences our daily lives than our understanding of how to know the will of God...

This week we will begin with a look at what is typically being taught in the church today. I myself followed this sort of understanding and taught one like it to others, but have found it to be inadequate both biblically and practically. But we'll study it to learn from it...

God wants to reveal His will to you more than you want to know it. It is able to communicate His will to you, and desires for you to know it and experience decision making with certainty. While this world seeks to know whether its choices were the best/most profitable, a Christian's one concern is to please the Lord in decisions made. The key is "knowing God's will and doing it." **Proverbs 3:5-6** "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight."

Experiencing God Chart – Knowing and Doing the Will of God (Blackaby and King)

1. God is always at work around you.
2. God pursues a continuing love relationship with you that is real and personal.
3. God invites you to become involved with Him in His work.
4. God speaks by the Holy Spirit through the Bible, prayer, circumstances, and the church to reveal Himself, His purposes, and His ways.
5. God's invitation for you to work with Him always leads you to a crisis of belief that requires faith and action.
6. You must make major adjustments in your life to join God in what He is doing.
7. You come to know God by experience as you obey Him and He accomplishes His work through you.

I. **What is God's Will?**

1. Sovereign Will – God's secret plan that determines everything that happens in the universe. Nothing can frustrate God's Sovereign will. What He has decreed will come to pass.
 - a. **Daniel 4:35** ^aAll the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, But ^bHe does according to His will in the host of heaven And *among* the inhabitants of earth; And ^cno one can ¹ward off His hand Or say to Him, ^dWhat have You done?"
 - b. **Revelation 4:11** ^aWorthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You ^bcreated all things, and because of Your will they ¹existed, and were created."
 - c. **Ephesians 1:11** ¹also we ^{2a}have obtained an inheritance, having been ^bpredestined ^caccording to His purpose who works all things ^dafter the counsel of His will,

- d. **Romans 9:19** ^aYou will say to me then, "^bWhy does He still find fault? For ^cwho resists His will?"
 - e. **Acts 2:23** this *Man*, delivered over by the ^apredetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, ^byou nailed to a cross by the hands of ¹godless men and put *Him* to death.
 - f. **Acts 4:27-28** "For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy ^{1a}servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both ^bHerod and ^cPontius Pilate, along with ^dthe ²Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, ²⁸ to do whatever Your hand and ^aYour purpose predestined to occur.
2. Moral Will – God’s revealed commands in the Bible that teach how man ought to believe and live. God will never lead you to do something He has forbidden in His moral will. The moral will includes all commands and principles of scripture...
- a. Ex 20 – the Ten Commandments
 - b. **1 Thessalonians 4:3** For this is the will of God, your sanctification; *that is*, that you ^aabstain from ¹sexual immorality;
 - c. **1 Thessalonians 5:16-18** ^aRejoice always; ¹⁷ ^apray without ceasing; ¹⁸ in everything ^agive thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.
 - d. **Ephesians 6:6** ^anot ¹by way of eyeservice, as ^bmen-pleasers, but as ^cslaves of Christ, ^ddoing the will of God from the ²heart
 - e. **1 Peter 2:15** For ^{1a}such is the will of God that by doing right you may ^bsilence the ignorance of foolish men.
 - f. **2 Corinthians 6:14** ^aDo not be ¹bound together with ^bunbelievers; for what ^cpartnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?
3. Individual Will – God’s ideal, detailed life plan uniquely designed for each person. There are many things which the moral will of God does not declare—specific situations in which a person must make a decision. These are to be guided by God’s individual will for that person’s life. Sometimes it is referred to as God’s “perfect” will to reflect that it includes not only that which is in harmony with the Scriptures, but also sure to bring happiness and spiritual success to the individual (ideal life plan).
- a. “Center of God’s Will” bullseye! Attempt to be at “very center of God’s will”
 - b. **Ephesians 1:1** Paul, ^aan apostle of ^bChrist Jesus ^{1c}by the will of God, To the ^{2d}saints who are ³at ^eEphesus and ^f*who are* faithful in ^bChrist Jesus:
 - c. **Colossians 1:9** For this reason also, ^asince the day we heard *of it*, ^bwe have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the ^{1c}knowledge of His will in all spiritual ^dwisdom and understanding,
 - d. **Colossians 4:12** ^aEpaphras, ^bwho is one of your number, a bonds slave of Jesus Christ, sends you his greetings, always ^claboring earnestly for you in his prayers, that you may ¹stand ^{2d}perfect and ³fully assured in all the will of God.
 - e. **Romans 12:2** And do not ^abe conformed to ^bthis ¹world, but be transformed by the ^crenewing of your mind, so that you may ^{2d}prove what the will of God is, that which is good and ³acceptable and perfect.
 - f. **Proverbs 16:9** The mind of ^aman plans his way, But ^bthe LORD directs his steps.

- g. Marriage – **II Cor 6:14** – has to be a believer... if you miss “the one” you must still remain married even with “God’s 2nd best” – reside within the “permissive will of God” but now you have fallen short of God’s best for you. This brings with it the understanding that some decisions carry more permanent consequences... choose a bad car, you can get a new one, but the choice of a spouse is irreversible (due to God’s moral will against divorce).
- h. **Charts Contrasting Sovereign, Moral, and Individual Will of God from p38-39 Friesen**

II. How do we know God has an Individual Will?

1. Reason – If God has designed and planned the tiniest of snowflakes, surely He has an ideal life-plan for His children. God “knows the plans He has for us” and surely expects us to discover what that plan is. God knows all possible situations (Matt 11:21-22) and knows what we will do, so it is only reasonable to conclude God has an ideal plan for each of our lives that would like for us to follow.
2. Experience – history (many great men and women of God say they knew God’s individual will for their lives and they accomplished it) and personal testimony – situations where we have “felt a sense of peace” regarding a decision – and “just knew” it was the right thing to do.
3. Scriptural Examples
 - i. Jesus (John 8:42, 7:17, 8:26)
 - ii. Paul (Gal 1:1, Acts 13:1-2, 16:6-7, 10)
 - iii. Phillip (Acts 8:26-29)
 - iv. Ananias (Acts 9:10-11)
 - v. Peter (Acts 10:19-20)
 - vi. Joseph (Gen 50:20)
4. Scriptural Teaching
 - i. Col 1:9-10
 - ii. Rom 12:1-2
 - iii. Prov 3:5-6
 - iv. Eph 2:10
 - v. Gen 24:14 – take a look at this...
 - vi. Judges 6:36-40

III. How do we come to know God’s Will?

1. MISCONCEPTIONS
 - i. God doesn’t give all the details at the beginning...
 - ii. God doesn’t want to make you miserable
 - iii. All Christians are called to know and do God’s special will for their lives, not just missionaries/pastors.
 - iv. God’s will is not only known by the aged
 - v. Don’t always be looking for “lightning flashes” – God many times speaks through the “still quiet voice” – inward impressions...
 - vi. Some believe that God’s individual will is only applicable to the “big decisions of life” but it extends to small things too (every big decision is preceded and brought to pass through many smaller events and decisions).

2. ROAD SIGNS

- i. Bible – indispensable as a road sign (objective)
- ii. Circumstances – open and closed doors (interpreting situations, but maintaining caution – closed door might be cracked)... “put out a fleece”
- iii. Inner Witness – God’s peace which transcends understanding (Phil 4:7)... Impressions or “holy nudges” or feelings or pressure – difficult to gauge if the impression is truly from God...
- iv. Mature Counsel – talking to other godly men and women – difficult when given conflicting advice...
- v. Personal Desires – at salvation God gives us new desires... they can be an indicator of what God wants you to do... (be careful though...)
- vi. Common Sense – God is a God of order. Go against only if Lord gives you very clear and definite leading otherwise
- vii. (Special Guidance) – audible voice, vision, angel, dream, miracle, etc

IV. How can we be Certain of God’s Individual Will?

1. Agreement of the Road Signs – lining up of Bible, Circumstances and H.S. Leading
2. Results – more retrospective
3. Prayer – spending quality time listening to the voice of God (still, quiet voice)
4. Communion with the Lord – Communication is effective in closeness (distance issue)
“Nothing replaces closeness to the Lord: not formulas, not books on God’s will, not seminars, not college of Bible school degrees, not even perfect church attendance. The closer you are to Him, the closer you will be to finding certainty in the knowledge of His will.”

While all of this teaching is done in sincerity and a desire that God be glorified, it fails to really describe the Biblical Instruction given us on “God’s Will and Decision Making.” Next week I’d like to present an overarching problem with the traditional approach...