

Sunday Night Equipping – God’s Will (part 9)

Understanding God’s Guidance

Overriding Principles:

1. In those areas specifically addressed in the Bible, the revealed commands of God (His moral will) are to be obeyed.
2. In those areas not specifically addressed in the Bible, the Christian is free to choose, but must remember that he/she is responsible for the decision that is made and ought to make a decision with spiritual expediency in mind.
3. In all decisions, the believer should humbly submit, in advance, to the outworking of God’s sovereign will as it touches each decision.

Comparing and Contrasting God’s Sovereign and Moral Wills: (see fig 26, p229).

Sovereign Will

1. God’s secret plan that determines everything that happens in the universe
2. Mostly hidden
3. Cannot be learned in advance
4. Cannot be “missed” – should be humbly accepted
5. Indirectly Ideal Plan: Though it includes evil acts and foolish decisions, it will ultimately lead to God’s glory

Moral Will

1. God’s revealed commands in the Bible that teach how men ought to believe and live
2. Totally revealed
3. Should be learned for guidance
4. Can be “missed” through ignorance or disobedience
5. Directly Ideal Pattern: Includes only those behaviors and attitudes which conform to God’s character thereby glorifying Him

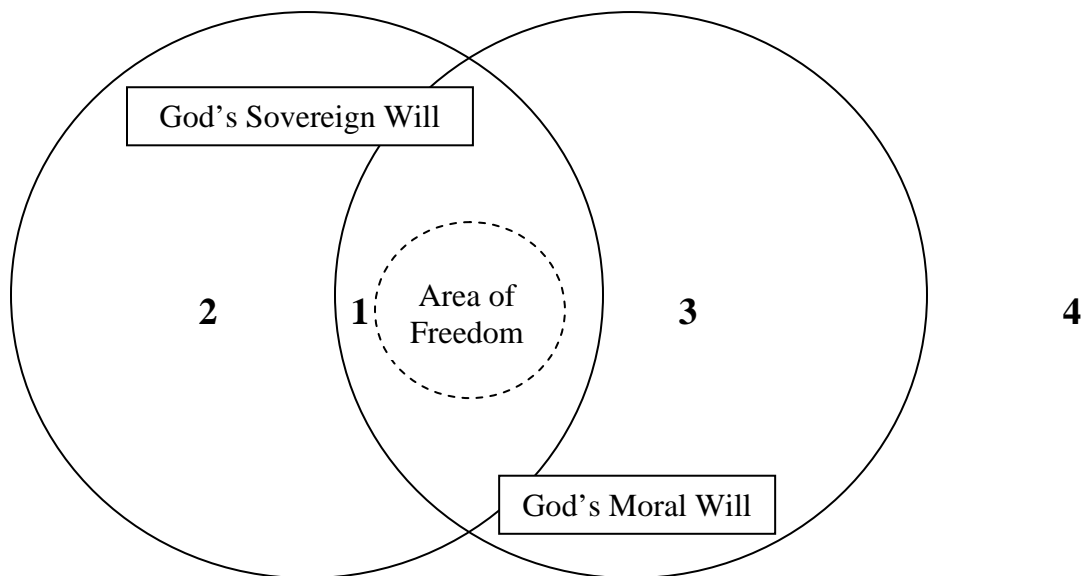
Four Distinctive Ways God guides: (fig 27, 230)

Sphere:	<u>Moral Guidance</u> In moral conduct	In nonmoral decisions	God secretly guides believers	God has supernaturally guided believers
Nature:	God directly guides believers	God mediately guides believers	By sovereign control over all events	By divine voice, angel, dream, or miracle
Means:	By revealed commands and principles	By acquired wisdom	According to His sovereign will	According to special revelation
Principle:	According to His moral will (Bible)	According to spiritual expediency	<u>Special Guidance</u> In unique cases	
	<u>Wisdom Guidance</u>	<u>Sovereign Guidance</u> In all things		

Observations:

1. Four kinds of guidance are distinctive at each point of definition
2. Moral and Special are Direct means, Wisdom is Indirect, and Sovereign is Imperceptible in advance
3. Moral and Wisdom have Active roles, while Sovereign and Special have Passive roles
4. Special guidance is deliberately worded in past tense. God is capable of communicating by special revelation (as He has done in the past), but it is not normative. Christians should neither seek nor expect special guidance of this kind in making decisions.
5. Final decisions should be explained/defended on the basis of moral guidance (“God’s Word says...”) and wisdom guidance (“It seemed best...”), w/ attitude of submission to God’s Sovereign will – probably best expressed concretely through prayer. To be pleasing to the Lord a decision must conform to God’s moral will in goal, motive, attitude, and means.

Relationship Between Aspects of God’s Will (See fig 28 on page 232)



1. Action done in fulfillment of both the sovereign and moral wills of God
2. Actions outside God’s Moral Will, yet fulfilled in God’s Sovereign Will.
3. Anything desired or permitted by God (in His moral will) that has not or will not come to pass
4. Any potential, sinful action that does not come to pass
5. The broken-line circle – area of MORAL FREEDOM (non-moral action that comes to pass)

Paul's Plans as Shown in Romans

- Such a theologically deep letter has been the site of many a theological discussion, but interestingly it is Paul's comments at the beginning and end of this letter that have huge significance as it relates to our discussion of God's Will and Decision Making!
- **2 Tim 3:16-17** All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;¹⁷ so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. – *this includes plans and itineraries!* ☺
- **Read Rom 1:8-13**
 - See appropriateness of making plans (**1:13**)... God neither commanded Paul to go to Rome nor forbid him from going on such a journey.
 - Paul prayed about his plans (**1:8-10**)
 - Paul submitted himself to God's sovereign will (**1:10**)
 - Paul was prevented, but he saw these circumstances ultimately to be contributed to God's sovereign will. Accordingly, he was able to accept delay w/o frustration.
 - Paul's plans were based on Spiritual Goals
 - Provide spiritual ministry to Roman believers (**1:11**)
 - Further establish and encourage the church in Rome (**1:11-12**)
 - To receive encouragement from them (**1:12**)
 - To win unbelievers to Christ (**1:13-15**)
- **Read Rom 15:20-29**
 - Paul arranged his goals according to PRIORITIES
 - It is not until the end of Paul's letter to Rome that he lets them in on his priorities – only after establishing the importance of the gospel, does he then explain his plans in light of that!
 - (1) Complete the task of evangelizing Greece (**15:22-23**) – probably unfinished work in establishing reproducing, spiritually healthy and mature churches in the area.
 - (2) Trip to Jerusalem (**15:25**) – financial gift symbolized the experiential reality of the truth Paul had been declaring and defending: the unity of the Jewish believers and Gentile believers in one Body – the Church (**Eph 2:11-22**). Paul's desire to help the Jews see the wonderful “mystery” which God revealed through His apostle to the Gentiles (**Eph 3:1-10**).
 - (3) Ultimate Goal of getting to Spain – going where the gospel hasn't been
 - (4) Pit stop in Rome – gain support for missionary efforts to Spain

Paul – model of one engaged in long-range plans, yet utilizing whatever present opportunities. He made sure that his goals were rightly aimed and motivated, and then made every effort to persevere in those plans, all the while submitting to the Sovereign Will of God at each point. It is interesting to note that Paul did eventually make it to Rome, but in chains – even then, this time was utilized to write a major portion of the NT!