



## *The Mystery of God's Will:*

*Decision Making and the Question of Whether God Has An Individual Will For Your Life*

*Part 1 – God's Sovereign Will*

# Why Study God's Will

1. The words “it’s God’s will” are among the most abused words in the Church today.
2. Many of us spend so much time and effort searching for God’s individual will for our lives. If it exists, we should learn how to find it more efficiently. If there is no such thing, we should stop looking for it.
3. Many Christians cannot articulate the tension between God’s sovereignty, His will, and our free will. This leads to a lot of bad theology and bungled witnessing attempts.
4. Christians have so many questions about God’s will, strongly suggesting that most of us do not know much about the will of our Father.

# A Look Ahead...

**TONIGHT: God's Sovereign Will and His Moral Will**

**COMING UP: Traditional View of Finding God's Individual Will for Your Life**

**Critique of the Traditional View (Does God Really Have an Individual Will for Each Person?)**

**God's Guidance in Our Lives**

**Doing the Will of God**

**Tough Questions About God's Will**



# Last Week We Asked...

*What questions do you have about God's will, either in general, or for your own life?*

*If you are someone who is seeking God's will for your own life, why is it so important that you find it?*





# Questions About God's Will: In General

*What is the definition of the word "will"? Can we ever know fully what God's will is? Is there such a thing as the perfect will of God? Where in the Bible is the idea of multiple "wills" of God? Does God have specific plans, down to the day and the minute? How specific or vague (general) is God's will? Does God's will change? If so, how is that accomplished (Prayer? Sin? Fasting? Righteousness?) If God's will can change, does He know that it is going to change? Does He plan to change it? Can you change God's will? Do we have the right to change God's will (do we know better than God?) If God's will cannot change, then why is an individual responsible for sin? Does man have the ability to thwart or hinder God's will? If someone else changes God's will, do their actions change God's will for me? Can I force God's will? How small can things be and still be included in God's will? Does God ever will bad circumstances or trials to happen to make us stronger? Does God's will include sin? Does it include pain, suffering, the fall, and the cross? Is it God's will if I am born with a disease? If all our days are written like the Bible says, and God chooses us, then why does he punish the people he doesn't choose? (It seems like God creates "sinners" and then punishes them for being so.) If God knows what will happen in the future and knows that He has the ability to shape the future, then does God's will include all events? How is the Old Testament calling different from today? Does God have a will / plan for events after the second coming? Does God have a will for non-Christians?*



## Questions About God's Will: Individual Will

*How do I know God's will for my life? Does God get involved in every aspect of my life? Does he care about every simple decision I make? If not, what are my prayers supposed to be like? Should I just ask God to bless me in all of my projects? Is there a "perfect" plan for my life? How can I discover it? What if I don't have a will? Do we all have the same will? If God does have a certain will for us, what consequences are in store for those who disobey? Will God be mad at you if you don't do His will or if you can't figure out His will? How do you know if He calls you to full time ministry? How do we test what God's will is for our lives? Is it a sin or just a preference to not follow His will? Can we pray to change God's will for my life? How can I tell the difference between God's will and my own will? Can my will be God's will? People have told me that God totally wanted them to have something like a parking spot (I don't think I agree.) Has anyone here ever heard God's voice as a call to do something? Is it true that if I have a passion for something then it is probably God's will? If something keeps coming up in conversation, or on TV, could that be God, or is that coincidence? Can we discern God's will based on a feeling? If the most important thing is to love God and others, what does that entail?*



## Questions About God's Will: What You Really Want to Know

*Will I ever get married? Does God care who I marry? Does God have a specific person for me to marry (like a soul mate) or are there many positive choices? Does He ask some to remain single? Is there a mate out there for everyone? Was it God's will for me to marry the person I married? Does God have a will for my finances? Is it okay to make money and live comfortably? What if what I want to do is a childhood dream, something secular, and not something like saving Africa? What's the difference between a search for purpose and the pursuit of happiness? Is it God's will that I eat at Alberto's?*





# Questions About God's Will: Why Do You Want to Know God's Will?

1. **God is the wisest Being so it is best to seek wisdom from the source of true wisdom.**
2. **So I can know exactly what to do and won't have to figure it out or guess at what you are supposed to do.**
3. **To be able to please God by doing specifically defined acts that He wants accomplished.**
4. **To know you have a specific purpose; to know your life has a specific meaning to it**
5. **To have freedom/peace of mind so that one can do whatever you are supposed to do and not feel guilty over the thought that you are not doing the will of God.**





# God's Sovereign Will

*If God is truly sovereign, and nothing is outside of His will, how can we have free will?*

1. It is impossible for us to fully understand the relationship between God's sovereignty and man's free will. Only God truly knows how the two work together.
2. Scripture is clear that God knows the future (Matthew 6:8; Psalm 139:1-4) and that, because of His sovereignty is in control of all things (Colossians 1:16-17; Daniel 4:35).



# God's Sovereign Will

*Matthew 5:8b: "...for your Father knows what you need before you ask him."*

*Psalms 129:1-4: "O LORD, you have searched me and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O LORD."*

*Colossians 1:16-17: "For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together."*

*Daniel 4:35: "All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back his hand or say to him: 'What have you done?'"*



# God's Sovereign Will

*Job 42:2: "I know that you can do all things, no plan of yours can be thwarted."*

*Ephesians 1:11: "In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of Him who works out everything in conformity with the purposes of His will."*





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- 3. The Bible also says that we have a free will. God does not force us or cause us to do anything (James 1:13-14). We are completely responsible for our own actions (Romans 3:19; 6:23; 9:19-21).**



# God's Sovereign Will

*James 1:13-14: "When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; 14but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed."*

*Joshua 24:15: "But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the river, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD."*

*Matthew 23:37: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing."*

*2 Peter 3:9: "He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."*



# God's Sovereign Will

*Romans 9:19-21: "One of you will say to me: "Then why does God still blame us? For who resists his will?" But who are you, O man, to talk back to God? "Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, 'Why did you make me like this?'" "Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for noble purposes and some for common use?"*

*Acts 13:48: "When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed."*

*Then, a few verses later we read...*

*Acts 14:1: "At Iconium Paul and Barnabas went as usual into the Jewish synagogue. There they spoke so effectively that a great number of Jews and Gentiles believed."*





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- 4. How these facts work together is impossible for a finite mind to comprehend (Romans 11:33-36).**



# God's Sovereign Will

*Romans 11:33-36: "Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor? Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him? For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen."*



# God's Sovereign Will

God's  
Sovereignty

Free Will





# God's Sovereign Will

**Emphasis on God's  
Sovereignty**

**God Has Predetermined  
Everything, We Have No  
Real Free Will**



# God's Sovereign Will

**Emphasis on God's  
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**God Has Predetermined  
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**Emphasis on Our  
Free Will**

**God is Anxiously Awaiting  
The Outcome While We  
Exercise Our Free Will**



# God's Sovereign Will

Determination

God's Sovereignty ← → Free Will

Knowledge



# God's Sovereign Will

## *So Can We Figure Out God's Sovereign Will?*

**One thing that almost all theologians agree about is that God's sovereign will cannot be known by us in advance, only as it unfolds in our time. (The one exception would be prophecy, when God let us know in advance what He will cause to come about.)**

*Deuteronomy 29:29: "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law."*

*Romans 11:33-34: "Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?"*







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Set apart Christ as Lord...

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