



The Mystery of God's Will:

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

Part 3 – The “Traditional View” of God's Individual Will

The Road Map

WEEK 1: God's Sovereign Will

WEEK 2: God's Moral Will

TONIGHT: God's Individual Will

COMING UP: 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



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?



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 (Romans 11:33-36).**
- 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).**
- 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).**
- 4. Most theologians agree that we will never know God's sovereign will, also known as His secret will, until it is revealed to us in retrospect.**

God's Moral Will

Simple Definition: God's revealed commands which are found in scripture which instruct us on how we should live and believe.

1. **God's moral will flows from His holiness, and from the law of love.**
2. **God's moral will is the expression of the character of God.**
3. **God's moral will is fully revealed in the Bible:**
 - **concrete guidance for our lives;**
 - **the attitude in which we are live;**
 - **the manner or means we are to employ;**
 - **wisdom for all circumstances.**

God's Moral Will

Examples

Live on the word; do not put the Lord to the test; worship the Lord; follow the Lord; rejoice and be glad in the face of insults and persecution; be salt to the earth; let your light shine; keep the commandments of the law and teach others to do the same; do not be angry; not call anyone a fool; reconcile with your brother; settle matters quickly with your adversary; do not commit adultery; do not look lustfully upon another; do not divorce except in case of marital unfaithfulness; do not swear an oath; let your yes be your yes and your no be your no; do not resist an evil person; turn the other cheek; if someone demands your tunic, give him your cloak as well; love your neighbor; love your enemies; be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect; do not do your acts of righteousness before men; give to the needy; give in secret; pray in secret; pray the Lord's prayer; forgive others so that you can be forgiven; fast, and do it in secret; do not store treasures on earth; store treasures in heaven; resist the darkness within you; choose to serve one, either God or money; do not worry about your life, or what you will eat or drink; do not worry about what you wear; seek first the kingdom and righteousness; do not worry about tomorrow; do not judge; do not look at the speck in your neighbor's eye; take the plank out of your own eye; do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw pearls to pigs; ask, seek and knock; enter through the narrow gate; watch out for false prophets; build your house on the rock by putting the words of the Lord into practice; believe and have faith; ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest field. *(Taken from Matthew Chs. 4-9)*

God's Moral Will

**With so many people looking for God's will,
the situation really raises two questions:**

*How much time are we spending
studying, memorizing and meditating on
God's word?*

*And if God's will is readily accessible to us,
meaning that His moral will is easily ascertained,
why is that not good enough for us?*

God's Individual Will

The Traditional View that God has an individual will for each of our lives is best articulated as follows:

- 1. Rather than seeking what is best for ourselves, we should ask, “What is God's will for me in this decision.”**
- 2. God wants to communicate with us, and wants us to know His will. Therefore, we can be confident that He will make His will known for us with certainty in any situation.**
- 3. Failure to accurately discern God's individual will for our lives will lead to anxiety, frustration and discouragement.**

God's Individual Will

Definition: God's ideal, detailed life-plan uniquely designed for each person.

God's Moral Will



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Colossians 1:9: *For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding.*

Colossians 4:12: *Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

Ephesians 5:17: *Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.*

Psalms 32:8: *I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you.*

God's Individual Will

Definition: God's ideal, detailed life-plan uniquely designed for each person.

Proverbs 3:5-6: *Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.*

KJV: *In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.*

Psalms 32:8: *I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you.*

Phil 2:13: *for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.*



God's Moral Will vs. Individual Will

Moral Will

General commands and principles for life.

Revealed to apostles and prophets and found in the Bible.

Revealed by the Holy Spirit through supernatural revelation or inspiration of the scriptures.

Individual Will

A detailed plan for all decisions in a believers life.

Revealed to the hearts of believers and usually not found in the Bible.

Revealed by the Holy Spirit through inward impressions and other similar means.



God's Moral Will vs. Individual Will

Moral Will

General for all believers.

Example: You should only marry a believer - 2 Cor. 6:14a: "Do not be yoked with unbelievers."

Individual Will

Specific for one believer.

Example: You should marry Jennifer next spring in an outdoor wedding – citing Genesis 24 - finding a wife for Isaac.

God's Individual Will

How Do You Determine God's Individual Will?

- 1. The Word of God**
- 2. Circumstances (open and closed doors)**
- 3. Inner Witness of the Spirit**



God's Individual Will

How Do You Determine God's Individual Will?

Guidance by the Holy Spirit:

John 16:3: *But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.*

Romans 8:14: *because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.*

Leading to an Inner Peace:

Philippians 4:7: *And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

God's Individual Will

How Do You Determine God's Individual Will?

1. **The Word of God**
2. **Circumstances (open and closed doors)**
3. **Inner Witness of the Spirit**
4. **Mature Counsel**

Acts 16:10: After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

God's Individual Will

How Do You Determine God's Individual Will?

1. **The Word of God**
2. **Circumstances (open and closed doors)**
3. **Inner Witness of the Spirit**
4. **Mature Counsel**
5. **Personal Desires**

Psalm 37:4: Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart.

God's Individual Will

How Do You Determine God's Individual Will?

- 1. The Word of God**
- 2. Circumstances (open and closed doors)**
- 3. Inner Witness of the Spirit**
- 4. Mature Counsel**
- 5. Personal Desires**
- 6. Common Sense**
- 7. Supernatural Guidance**

God's Individual Will

How Can You Confirm God's Will?

1. Agreement of Multiple Signs, especially agreement between the Bible, circumstances and inner witness of the Holy Spirit.
2. Prayer. James 1:5 - *If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.*
3. Communion with God. The closer you are to God, the more you will instinctively recognize His voice and understand the guidance He is giving us. Psalm 32:8-9 - *I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you.*
4. Results. God will bring peace and blessing. Otherwise, God may use a closed door (or worse) to redirect your path.



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INTERACTIVE



Participate, ask questions, talk back...

What if we listened to what everyone had to say — and discovered that God can speak through us all? After all, we all learn better when we talk things out, hear different points of view, and give room for the Spirit to speak through our deliberation.

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THOUGHTFUL



Test everything, hold on to what is good...

Many hours of research are dedicated to prepare each one of our series. We explore the scriptures, the breadth of Christian scholarship, contemporary authors, and consider a wide range of sources outside of our faith.

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We all have questions. But we learn together in a way that tackles the deepest part of our doubts while making sure that our purpose is clear: to always know the reason for the hope that we have in Jesus Christ, and to be prepared to share that answer with everyone who asks us about that hope.

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