



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

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

*Part 4 – Critiquing the “Traditional View” of an Individual Will*



# The Road Map

**WEEK 1: God's Sovereign Will**

**WEEK 2: God's Moral Will**

**WEEK 3: God's Individual Will – The Traditional View**

**TONIGHT: Critiquing the Traditional View**

**COMING UP: God's Guidance in Our Lives**

**Doing the Will of God**

**Answering Your 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

**There is an intricate relationship between God's sovereign will, and our own free will:**

**God assures us that He is in control of all things,  
and knows all things,  
but that we still have free will.**

**To do the Lord's will,  
we do not need to be concerned about  
“discovering” God's sovereign will.**

**God's sovereign will is not revealed to us  
until it has happened.**





# God's Moral Will

**God's moral will is revealed in His Word.**

**It encompasses all His commands regarding how we are to live and respond in faith.**

**It also encompasses specific directions on matters, as well as the attitude, method and wisdom we are to employ in situations which are not specifically addressed in scripture.**

**THE REAL QUESTION:**

**Why Is God's Moral Will  
Not Good Enough For Us?**

**Why Do We Always Search For More?**

# 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 spec in your neighbors 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 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



# God's Individual Will

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





# 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

## *Critiquing the Traditional View*

1. **The Problem of Ordinary Decisions**
2. **The Problem of Equal Options**
3. **The Problem of Immaturity**
4. **The Problem of Time Wasted, also known as  
“not feeling led...”**
5. **The Problem of “Fleecing”**
6. **The Problem of Subjectivity**

# God's Individual Will

## *Does Scripture Support an Individual Will?*

### Proverbs 3:5-6:

**[NASB] - *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 (guide) thy paths.***

**KJV's rendering is problematic. A better understanding of the phrase to "make your paths straight" implies that the Lord will smooth your way, and make you successful.**



# God's Individual Will

## *Does Scripture Support an Individual Will?*

### Psalm 32:8:

[NASB] - *I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you.*

[KJV] - *I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.*



# God's Individual Will

## *Does Scripture Support an Individual Will?*

### Proverbs 16:9:

[NASB] – *The mind of man plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps.*

### John 10:27:

[NASB] – *My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.*



# God's Individual Will

## *Does Scripture Support an Individual Will?*

### Romans 12:1-2:

*[NASB] – Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.*

### The Context of Romans:

- Chapters 1 – 11: Doctrine
- Chapters 12 – 16: Right Living



# God's Individual Will

## *Does Scripture Support an Individual Will?*

### Ephesians 5:15-17:

[NASB] – *Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.*

### The Context of Ephesians Ch. 5:

“Be imitators of God.”

“Walk in the Light, not in the darkness”

“Learn what is pleasing to the Lord”

“Do not participate in . . .”

“Do not get drunk . . .”

# God's Individual Will

## *Does Scripture Support an Individual Will?*

### Colossians 1:9:

*[NASB] – For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,*

*“ . . . so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light.”*

*(Colossians 10-12)*

# God's Individual Will

## *Consider the Context*

**Romans 12:1-2:**

**[NASB] – *Therefore I urge you . . .***

**Ephesians 5:15-17:**

**[NASB] – *Therefore be careful . . .***

**Colossians 1:9:**

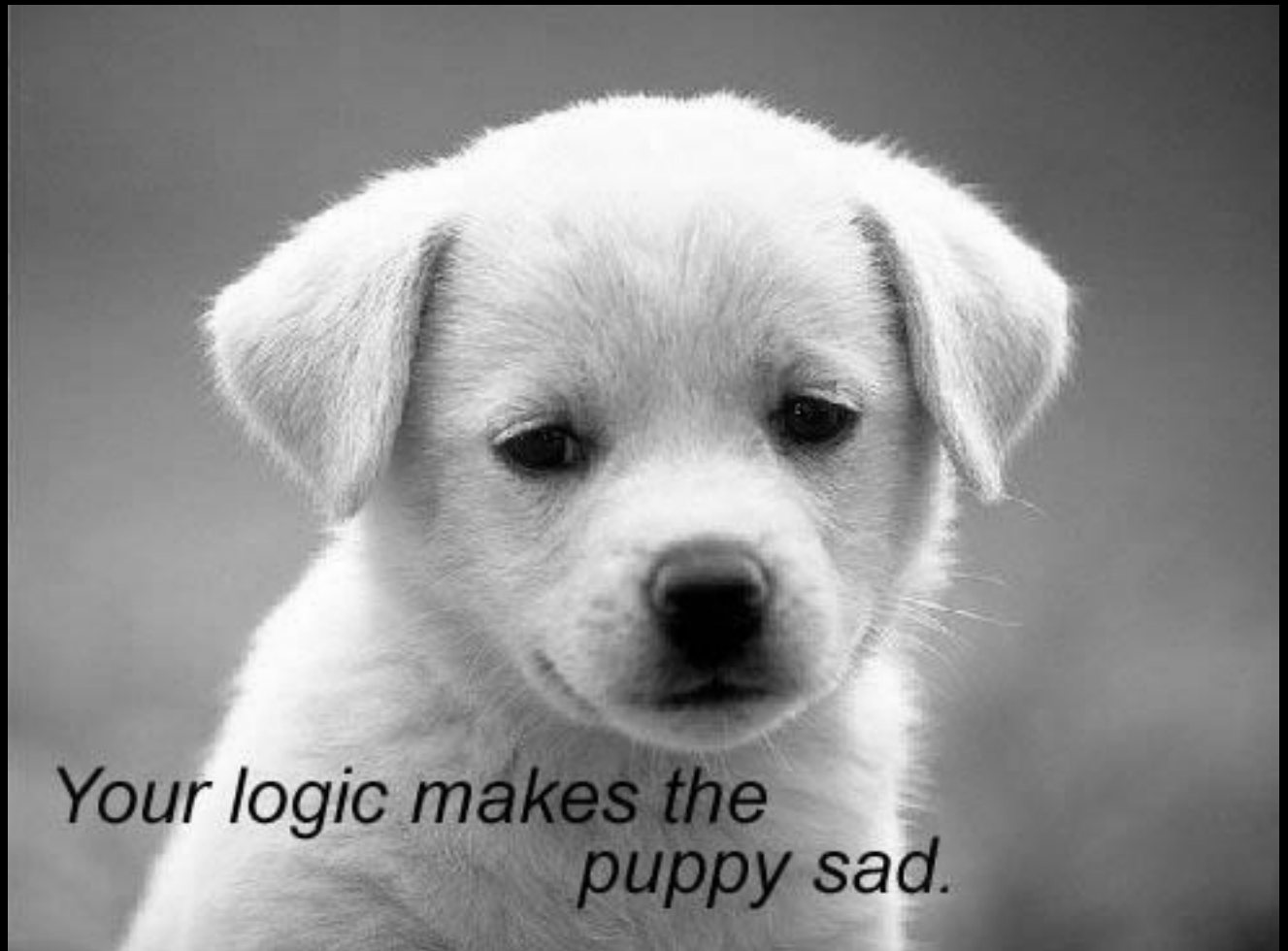
**[NASB] – *For this reason also . . .***





# God's Individual Will

*Is This Puppy In Trouble . . . ?*



*Your logic makes the  
puppy sad.*

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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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## FAITHFUL



Set apart Christ as Lord...

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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