



The Mystery of God's Will:

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

Part 5 – Freedom To Choose & Responsibility

The Road Map

WEEK 1: God's Sovereign Will

WEEK 2: God's Moral Will

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

WEEK 4: Critiquing the Traditional View

TONIGHT: Freedom to Choose (The Alternative 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

- Certain – it will be fulfilled.**
- Detailed – includes all things.**
- Hidden – except when revealed by prophecy.**
- Supreme – without violating free will or human responsibility.**
- Perfect – working all things together for God's glory and our good.**

We cannot discover God's Sovereign Will before it happens, only as it is revealed.



God's Moral Will

Revealed in Scripture.

Encompasses all His commands regarding how we are to live and respond in faith.

Also Encompasses:

- **attitude**
- **means / methods**
- **wisdom**

*God's Moral Will is readily available to us.
It is us who (seem to) believe it is not enough for us.*



God's Individual Will – Traditional View

In every decision, God has an ideal will for each individual believer.



God's Individual Will – Traditional View

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**
7. **The Lack of Any Scriptural Support**



God's Individual Will – Traditional View

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)

Responding to the Critique

BUT . . .

Doesn't God have a plan for me?

Doesn't God know the hairs on my head?

Doesn't every Christian have a unique purpose?

Doesn't every Christian have unique giftings or talents?

Doesn't God need me?

Doesn't God care about me and everything I do?

Doesn't God promise me that all things will work together for good?



So What Then? The Alternative View

DECISION MAKING:

- 1. Where God commands (Moral Will), we must obey.**
- 2. Where there is no command, God gives us freedom (and responsibility) to choose.**
- 3. Where there is no command, God gives us wisdom to choose.**
- 4. Occasionally (and not very often at all), God gives us special revelation and guidance.**



The Alternative View - Freedom

Freedom to Choose Using Wisdom and Responsibility

God's Moral Will

**Freedom
To
Choose**

(with Wisdom
and Responsibility)



The Alternative View - Freedom

Why Freedom (in Wisdom)?

**How did the Apostles make decisions in the early church?
Most often, they used wisdom, and made decisions
within the bounds of freedom.**

The Apostles' Words:

“It is good...”

“It is better ...”

“We thought it best...”

“It is fitting...”

“We thought it necessary...”

“It is not desirable...”



The Alternative View - Freedom

Why Freedom (in Wisdom)?

**How did the Apostles make decisions in the early church?
Most often, they used wisdom, and made decisions
within the bounds of that freedom.**

Example – Regarding Marriage:

I Corinthians 7:25-28; 36-39

“Now about virgins: I have no command from the Lord, but I give a judgment as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy. Because of the present crisis, I think that it is good for you to remain as you are. Are you married? Do not seek a divorce. Are you unmarried? Do not look for a wife. But if you do marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. But those who marry will face many troubles in this life, and I want to spare you this.”

The Alternative View - Freedom

Why Freedom (in Wisdom)?

**How did the Apostles make decisions in the early church?
Most often, they used wisdom, and made decisions
within the bounds of that freedom.**

Example – Regarding Marriage:

I Corinthians 7:25-28; 36-39

“If anyone thinks he is acting improperly toward the virgin he is engaged to, and if she is getting along in years and he feels he ought to marry, he should do as he wants. He is not sinning. They should get married. But the man who has settled the matter in his own mind, who is under no compulsion but has control over his own will, and who has made up his mind not to marry the virgin—this man also does the right thing. So then, he who marries the virgin does right, but he who does not marry her does even better. A woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, but he must belong to the Lord. In my judgment, she is happier if she stays as she is—and I think that I too have the Spirit of God.”

It's Still Hard to Let Go

BUT . . .

Doesn't God have a plan for me?

Doesn't God know the hairs on my head?

Doesn't every Christian have a unique purpose?

Doesn't every Christian have unique giftings or talents?

Doesn't God need me?

Doesn't God care about me and everything I do?

Doesn't God promise me that all things will work together for good?



God's Will in Concert

God's Moral Will

**Freedom
To
Choose**

(with Wisdom
and Responsibility)



God's Will in Concert

God's Sovereign Will

God's Moral Will

Freedom
To
Choose

(with Wisdom
and Responsibility)



God's Will in Concert

God's Sovereign Will

God's Moral Will

Freedom
To
Choose

(with Wisdom
and Responsibility)





WELCOME TO EXODUS INTERACTIVE FORUM

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.

[Read more](#)

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.

[Read more](#)

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.

[Read more](#)

THANK YOU FOR BEING PART OF
EXODUS INTERACTIVE FORUM.

WE WELCOME YOU TO SEND
FEEDBACK, QUESTIONS OR
COMMENTS, AND WE WOULD
LOVE TO HEAR HOW EXODUS HAS
IMPACTED YOU. EMAIL US AT:

INFO@EXODUSPODCASTS.COM

WANT MORE INFORMATION?

VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT:

WWW.EXODUSPODCASTS.COM

- ALL OF OUR PODCASTS
- POWERPOINT SLIDES
- PODCAST TRANSCRIPTS
- BLOG UPDATES
- REFERENCE MATERIALS

© 2013 EXODUS INTERACTIVE FORUM.
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

YOU MAY FREELY DISTRIBUTE WITHOUT ALTERATION.