

KNOWING GOD'S WILL

A Study Outline



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I. BIBLICAL FACTS ABOUT GOD'S WILL

- A. God's will is to be pursued (Psalm 143:8-10).
- B. God's will is continuous, on-going, and not sporadic (Isaiah 58:11).
- C. God's will can be resisted (Jonah 1:3).
- D. God can overcome resistance to His will (Jonah 3:1-3).
- E. God wants you to know His will (Acts 22:14).
- F. God's will is always good, always pleasing, and always perfect (Romans 12:2).
- G. God's will can be understood (Ephesians 5:15-17).

II. WHY DOES GOD WANT YOU TO KNOW HIS WILL?

- A. Because He wants you to understand His priorities (Matt. 6:33)
- B. Because He wants to be free from worry about the future (Matt. 6:34)
- C. Because He wants you to understand and know Him (Jer. 9:24).
- D. Because He wants you to depend on Him (1 Pet. 5:7)
- E. Because He wants you to experience His goodness (Jas 1:17).

III. OBSTACLES TO KNOWING GOD'S WILL

- A. Fear of consequences. The believer may not want to know God's will for fear that God will impose something terrible on him.
- B. Lack of knowledge. The believer may not know how to discern God's will (Proverbs 19:2a).
- C. Impatience. Not waiting for God but acting too quickly on your own (Proverbs 19:2b).
- D. Emergency-only thinking. Thinking that God reveals His will only when we face big or critical decisions.
- E. Paralysis-by-analysis. Thinking that we must understand all the details of God's direction (Proverbs 3:5, 6; Isaiah 55:8, 9).

IV. WHAT DOES "GOD'S WILL" MEAN?

- A. *God's Sovereign Will.* God's total plan that determines everything that happens in the universe. It includes everything revealed and not revealed in the Bible.
- B. *God's Moral Will.* God's moral commands that are revealed in the Bible teaching mankind how they ought to believe and live.
- C. *God's Individual Will.* God's ideal, detailed life-plan uniquely designed for each person.

V. GOD'S SOVEREIGN WILL

- A. This includes everything God chooses to do. It may be disclosed in the Bible or hidden from us for a reason. Because he is God he can do whatever he pleases (Dan. 4:35)
- B. Example: It is God's will that Jesus Christ return again to earth but He has not revealed the exact date to us.

VI. GOD'S MORAL WILL

- A. God's moral will defines our:
 1. Worship (John 4:24)
 2. Fellowship (Hebrews 10:25)
 3. Discipleship (John 15:8)
 4. Service (Romans 14:17-18)
 5. Witness (II Peter 3:9)
 6. God's moral will defines our purpose (1 Pet. 4:11).
 7. God's moral will defines our values.
 8. God's moral will defines our methods.
 - a) They are to be consistent with God's Word (II Timothy 3:16)
 - b) They are to be used wisely (Ephesians 5:15-17)

VII. TEN MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT GOD'S INDIVIDUAL WILL

- A. *The Psychic Concept.* God's will is always revealed through my feelings.
- B. *The Mystic Concept.* God's will is always revealed through supernatural signs.
- C. *The Cookbook Concept.* God's will is always found by following a systematic procedure.
- D. *The Shell Game Concept.* God is hiding His will and we must find it.
- E. *The Syllabus Concept.* God reveals His will for an entire life of an individual, much like a teacher hands out a syllabus for an entire college class.
- F. *The Celestial Killjoy Concept.* God is a cosmic scrooge who sends those seeking His will to places like an obscure African jungle where the heat is unbearable, the language unspeakable, the food indigestible, and the snakes inhospitable.
- G. *The Bionic Missionary Concept.* God only reveals His individual will to superhuman Christians whom He calls to be missionaries.
- H. *The White-Hair Only Concept.* God reveals His individual will only to those who are older, more mature Christians.
- I. *The Presidential Problem Concept.* God reveals His will only for the earthshaking choices in our lives (who to marry, what career to pursue, etc.).
- J. *The Dot Concept.* God's will is like a "dot" in that I must discover His specific will for *everything I do* as an individual. God makes all decisions based on His individual will for me, and I make none

VIII. SEVEN WAYS TO DISCOVER GOD'S INDIVIDUAL WILL

- A. *The Bible.* While the Bible does not reveal God's individual will for every decision the believer is to make (the dot concept), whom to marry, what career to pursue, etc., it does reveal God's moral will (the circle). Within God's moral will we are free to make choices.
- B. *Circumstances.* Open and closed doors are two most obvious ways that God uses to reveal His will for you. For instance, if you apply for a job, and several turn down your application, you should probably conclude that God is closing doors and saying, 'No.'

- C. *Inner Witness*. The inner witness is that ministry of the Holy Spirit in which He guides the believer through personal impressions, and inner peace within the heart, to reveal God's individual will.
- D. *Mature Council*. God's individual will can be revealed through other mature, Bible-believing Christians whose walk is consistent with God's word. However, the Holy Spirit is to be the final Counselor.
- E. *Personal Desires*. Our real desires will correspond perfectly to His will when we are living in obedience to His Word.
- F. *Common Sense*. Sometimes you may feel that you are being led to do something which doesn't make sense to you. Guidance, which appears to go against common sense, should be followed only if the Lord gives you very clear and definite leading.
- G. *Special Supernatural Guidance*. This type of guidance can come through an audible voice, an angel, a vision, a trance, a dream, a prophecy, or a miracle. The book of Acts records only a handful of such experiences (Acts 8:26; 9:3-6; 10:3, 10; 13:2; 16:9-10). With the completed Word of God, and the indwelling Holy Spirit, a strong case can be made that such guidance is no longer needed; however, we should not say that this type of guidance never occurs.

IX. THREE PRIMARY PRINCIPLES OF GOD'S WILL

- A. *Principle #1*: In those areas specifically addressed by the Bible, the revealed commands of God (His moral will) are to be obeyed.
- B. *Principle #2*: In those areas where the Bible gives no command or principle, the believer is free and responsible to choose his own course of action. Any decision made within the moral will of God is acceptable to God. The objective of the Christian is to make wise decisions on the basis of spiritual expediency. Refer to the previous topic "*Seven Ways to Discover God's Individual Will*."
- C. *Principle #3*: In all decisions, the believer should humbly submit, in advance, to the outworking of God's sovereign will as it touches each situation.

Where to Get More Information

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