

Decision Making and the Will of God

Defining God's Will

God's sovereign will = God's predetermined plan for everything that happens in the universe.

Ephesians 1:11

All things are done according to God's plan and decision; and God chose us to be his own people in union with Christ because of his own purpose, based on what he had decided from the very beginning

Revelation 4:11

4:11 "Our Lord and God! You are worthy to receive glory, honor, and power. For you created all things, and by your will they were given existence and life."

God's moral will = God's moral commands that are revealed in the Bible teaching men how they ought to live and believe.

Psalm 119:1,11 *Happy are those whose lives are faultless, who live according to the law of the LORD.*

119:11, I keep your law in my heart, so that I will not sin against you.

Psalm 40:8 *"How I love to do your will, my God! I keep your teaching in my heart."*

Romans 2:18

"you know what God wants you to do, and you have learned from the Law to choose what is right;"

God's individual plan = God's ideal, detailed life-plan which God has uniquely designed for each believer.

- This life-plan involves every decision we make and is the basis of God's daily guidance.
Proverbs 3:5
3:5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart. Never rely on what you think you know.
- This guidance is given through the indwelling Holy Spirit who progressively reveals God's life plan to the heart of the individual believer.
John 16:12
16:12 "I have much more to tell you, but now it would be too much for you to bear.
- The Spirit uses many means to reveal this life plan and He always gives a confirmation at the point of each decision.

Genesis 24:42-46

"When I came to the well today, I prayed, 'LORD, God of my master Abraham, please give me success in what I am doing. Here I am at the well. When a young woman comes out to get water, I will ask her to give me a drink of water from her

jar. If she agrees and also offers to bring water for my camels, may she be the one that you have chosen as the wife for my master's son. Before I had finished my silent prayer, Rebecca came with a water jar on her shoulder and went down to the well to get water. I said to her, 'Please give me a drink. She quickly lowered her jar from her shoulder and said, 'Drink, and I will also water your camels.' So I drank, and she watered the camels

- Believers are able to find and know the Will of God.

Psalm 119:98-100

Your commandment is with me all the time and makes me wiser than my enemies. I understand more than all my teachers, because I meditate on your instructions. I have greater wisdom than old men, because I obey your commands

- Believers can miss it by failure to discover or obey it.

Joshua 24:20

24:20 and if you leave him to serve foreign gods, he will turn against you and punish you. He will destroy you, even though he was good to you before."

- It is in harmony with the Bible and is always the most ideal decision and so brings glory to God.

Ephesians 1:11-12

All things are done according to God's plan and decision; and God chose us to be his own people in union with Christ because of his own purpose, based on what he had decided from the very beginning. Let us, then, who were the first to hope in Christ, praise God's glory!

Eight Road Signs pointing to God's Individual Will:

1. **The Bible**

Psalm 119:105

119:105 Your word is a lamp to guide me and a light for my path.

2. **Parents Proverbs 13:1**

13:1 A wise son pays attention when his father corrects him, but an arrogant person never admits he is wrong.

Matthew 15:4

15:4 For God said, 'Respect your father and your mother,' and 'Whoever curses his father or his mother is to be put to death.'

3. **Circumstances - nothing happens by chance.**

1 Cor. 16:8-9,

I will stay here in Ephesus until the day of Pentecost. There is a real opportunity here for great and worthwhile work, even though there are many opponents.

Paul was directed to stay in Ephesus by an open door.

A letter of invitation.

Finding out a need
Reading a book, etc.

4. Inner witness of the Holy Spirit.

John 14:26

14:26 The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and make you remember all that I have told you.

John 10:3

10:3 The gatekeeper opens the gate for him; the sheep hear his voice as he calls his own sheep by name, and he leads them out.

Col. 3:15 Peace of Christ

3:15 The peace that Christ gives is to guide you in the decisions you make; for it is to this peace that God has called you together in the one body. And be thankful.

1. Mature counsel from other believers.

Proverbs 24:6

24:6 After all, you must make careful plans before you fight a battle, and the more good advice you get, the more likely you are to win.

2. Personal desires.

Psalm 37:4

37:4 Seek your happiness in the LORD, and he will give you your heart's desire.

3. Common sense.

Titus 3:12

3:12 When I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, do your best to come to me in Nicopolis, because I have decided to spend the winter there.

1 Corinthians 7:36-40

7:36 In the case of an engaged couple who have decided not to marry: if the man feels that he is not acting properly toward the girl and if his passions are too strong and he feels that they ought to marry, then they should get married, as he wants to. There is no sin in this.

7:37 But if a man, without being forced to do so, has firmly made up his mind not to marry, and if he has his will under complete control and has already decided in his own mind what to do--then he does well not to marry the girl.

7:38 So the man who marries does well, but the one who doesn't marry does even better.

7:39 A married woman is not free as long as her husband lives; but if her husband dies, then she is free to be married to any man she wishes, but only if he is a Christian.

7:40 *She will be happier, however, if she stays as she is. That is my opinion, and I think that I too have God's Spirit*

We have freedom in decision making in declared and revealed limits. “it is good”, “it is better”, “she is happier” etc.

4. **Special supernatural guidance – audible voice, a vision, an angel, a dream, a prophecy, a miracle.**

Question: How can I know God’s individual will with 100% certainty as it related to a particular decision?

Answer: 1. Through agreement of the road signs.

In particular the Bible, the Holy Spirit and circumstances.

1. **By having the right results, Peace, Joy and blessing.**

Colossians 3:15

3:15 The peace that Christ gives is to guide you in the decisions you make; for it is to this peace that God has called you together in the one body. And be thankful.

Acts 13:52

13:52 The believers in Antioch were full of joy and the Holy Spirit.

James 1:12

1:12 Happy is the person who remains faithful under trials, because when he succeeds in passing such a test, he will receive as his reward the life which God has promised to those who love him.

2. **By prayer.**

James 4:2,

4:2 You want things, but you cannot have them, so you are ready to kill; you strongly desire things, but you cannot get them, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have what you want because you do not ask God for it.

“We have not because we ask not”.

3. **By personal communion with God.**

Psalm 32:8

32:8 The LORD says, "I will teach you the way you should go; I will instruct you and advise you.

Psalm 32:9

32:9 Don't be stupid like a horse or a mule, which must be controlled with a bit and bridle to make it submit."

God’s Sovereignty and Open Doors

1 Corinthians 16:8-9

16:8 I will stay here in Ephesus until the day of Pentecost.

16:9 There is a real opportunity here for great and worthwhile work, even though there are many opponents

Colossians 4:3

4:3 At the same time pray also for us, so that God will give us a good opportunity to preach his message about the secret of Christ. For that is why I am now in prison.

The term “door” refers to an opportunity for activity or ministry. Opportunities come through God’s sovereignty. The common practice of Paul indicates that most of the time the “Open Door” should be utilized as part of wise, resourceful living for the Lord. A door is used not because it is a sign, because **doors facilitate entrance.**

Decision making when Christians differ

***Romans 14:1-15**

Some principles for guidance (taken from the instructions re eating)

1. Learn to distinguish between matters of command and matters of Freedom. Romans 14:14, 20

14:14 My union with the Lord Jesus makes me certain that no food is of itself ritually unclean; but if a person believes that some food is unclean, then it becomes unclean for him.

14:20 Do not, because of food, destroy what God has done. All foods may be eaten, but it is wrong to eat anything that will cause someone else to fall into sin.

2. On debatable issues, cultivate your own convictions, Romans 14:15
14:15 If you hurt your brother because of something you eat, then you are no longer acting from love. Do not let the food that you eat ruin the person for whom Christ died!

3. Allow your brother or sister the freedom to determine his or her own convictions even when they differ from yours.

Romans 14:1-3

Welcome the person who is weak in faith, but do not argue with him about his personal opinions. One person's faith allows him to eat anything, but the person who is weak in the faith eats only vegetables. The person who will eat anything is not to despise the one who doesn't; while the one who eats only vegetables is not to pass judgment on the one who will eat anything; for God has accepted him.

4. Let your freedom be limited, when necessary, by love,

Romans 14:21

14:21 The right thing to do is to keep from eating meat, drinking wine, or doing anything else that will make your brother fall.

5. Follow Christ as the model and motivator of servanthood.

Romans 15:5-7

And may God, the source of patience and encouragement, enable you to have the same point of view among yourselves by following the example of Christ Jesus, so that all of you together may praise with one voice the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Accept one another, then, for the glory of God, as Christ has accepted you

Decision making by asking the right questions.

Is there anything wrong with this activity?

Is it beneficial?

1 Corinthians 10:23

10:23 "We are allowed to do anything," so they say. That is true, but not everything is good. "We are allowed to do anything"--but not everything is helpful.

Is it constructive?

Is it edifying?

1 Corinthians 10:24

10:24 No one should be looking out for his own interests, but for the interests of others.

Is it something I can thank God for?

1 Corinthians 10:30

10:30 If I thank God for my food, why should anyone criticize me about food for which I give thanks?"

Is it something that will glorify God?

1 Corinthians 10:31

10:31 Well, whatever you do, whether you eat or drink, do it all for God's glory.

Is it causing anyone to stumble?

1 Corinthians 10:32

10:32 Live in such a way as to cause no trouble either to Jews or Gentiles or to the church of God.

Is it worth initiating?

Is this following the example of Christ?

1 Corinthians 11:1

11:1 Imitate me, then, just as I imitate Christ.