

Decision Making In the Will of God

I. Prerequisite To Decision In the Will of God:

- A. How does God speak and guide us today? Hebrews 1:1-2, John 14:25-26, John 15:26-27, John 16:12-15, 1 Corinthians 2: 6-13, 2 Peter 1:16-21, Psalm 1:1-3, Psalm 19:7-14, Psalm 119:
- B. The Sovereign Will of God- God's comprehensive care and control of the entire world. Nothing happens unless God allows it, or ordains it. This will can only be discovered through looking backwards to the present. God does not give us a knowledge of this will ahead of time. We can only discover it by looking backwards to the present. The only exception to this is when God has spoken prophecy. Even then we do not get the full picture. For example, if I want to know what is going to happen within the next 2 minutes, hour, rest of the day or tomorrow, I have to wait 2 minutes, an hour, rest of the day, or until tomorrow to find out. God controls it, but He does not give me a moment to moment detail of that information. Therefore, I discover the sovereign will of God from looking backwards to the present. This will is not for me to figure out, but to rest in as I experience it in my life. (Ecclesiastes 3:1-11, 7:13-14, 9:1,11:1-6, Lamentations 3:37-38, Colossians 1:17, Hebrews 1:1-3)
- C. The Moral Will of God- God's direction into sanctification. The ways in which God would have us to think, desire, speak, behave, relate, serve etc. in order to walk in manner worthy of the Lord. The commands that we are to follow in order to be holy and live a God-honoring life. Areas of life where God has determined what is right to think, desire, speak, behave, relate, serve etc. and those areas where God has determined what is wrong to think, desire, speak, behave, relate, serve etc. These issues are spelled out in the bible. The moral will of God is discovered through studying God's Word. As you study and learn what is right and wrong you must align your life to those standards accordingly. (Romans 12:2, 2Timothy 2:15, 3:16-17, Psalm 1:1-3, Psalm 19:7-14, 1Thessalonians 4:1-8, Titus 2:11-15, Ephesians 4:17-31, Colossians 3:1-25)

D. The Non-Moral Will of God- Areas of life where God does not give a command or prohibition. Issues that the bible does not classify as either right or wrong. You have the freedom to decide the path you will take. However, the choice must be made in faith or the person is sinning. (Romans 14:22-23) When making decisions on non-moral issues one has to use wisdom and not allow his freedom to choose become a license to sin (See Romans 14 and James 4:13-17). This will is discovered through research of the topic, wise counsel, and weighing the pros and cons of the matter knowing that God is not going to tell you what direction to take since He has given you the freedom to choose. However, the outcome of your decision is controlled by the sovereign hand of God. We choose but God decides. (Romans 14:22-23, 1 Corinthians 6:12, James 4:13-17, Ecclesiastes 11:1-6)

II. Big Picture of Decision Making In the Will of God: We must learn to make good, Godly decisions. In order to do this we must categorize between moral and non-moral issues. Moral issues are spelled out in the bible. These issues are stated as either right or wrong in the Word of God. With these issues you only have to decide if you will or will not obey. Non-moral issues are issues that the bible does not classify as either right or wrong. You have freedom to decide the path you will take. However, the choice must be made in faith or the person is sinning. (Romans 14:22-23) When making decisions on non-moral issues one has to use wisdom and not allow his freedom to choose become a license to sin (See Romans 14 and James 4:17).

- A. Some decisions are clearly stated as right and wrong in Scripture. One should decide to obey God's Word by faith (See John 14:15).
- B. Some decisions are made by one's biblically ordained authority. The biblically ordained authorities are husbands, parents, employers, church leaders, and government. You must comply with their decisions within the parameters of their God-given authority. Therefore, God's will in those situations is that you follow the orders of the authority within the parameters given by God (See Ephesians 5:22-6:9, Colossians 3:18-4:1, Titus 2:5-3:2, Hebrews 13:17, 1 Peter 2:13-3:7, and Romans 13:1-7).
 - 1. One should submit even if the decisions seem unreasonable or a matter of preference (See Ephesians 5:24 and 1Peter 2:18-20).
 - 2. One should submit to the decisions while communicating openly in love (See Proverbs 27:6a).

3. One should submit to decisions without attempting to manipulate authority. Here are some examples:

Open and Unloving Ways

1. Verbal Anger
2. Temper Tantrum
3. Physical Violence
4. Making a Public Scene
5. Nagging
6. Begging
7. Shaming
8. Criticizing
9. Threatening
10. Bribing
11. Whining
12. Crying
13. Going on Strike

Closed and Unloving Ways

1. Physical Withdrawal
2. Silence
3. Flattery
4. Pouting
5. Uncooperative
6. Talking behind back
7. Sighing
8. Slowing down/stop helping
9. Looking sad
10. Insincere favors or gifts

- C. One should not submit to the decisions if they are in direct violation of the Word of God. Even then one should try to give a biblical alternative before respectfully declining to submit. If necessary, accepting to suffer for righteousness' sake (See Acts 4:19; 5:29, Daniel 1:8-13, 1 Peter 3:13-17, and 4:12-19).
- D. Where the bible does not categorize an issue as right or wrong you have the freedom to choose preferentially. These are issues that we categorize as non-moral. These issues have no moral implications; the choice is based upon your preference (See Romans 14: 1-23 and 1Corinthians 8:1-13).
- E. Although you may have freedom to choose preferentially in issues that are categorized as non-moral, do not allow you freedom to become a license to sin against God by allowing that which you have chosen to lead you into sin. Let your freedom of choice be used as a license to serve God by allowing that which you have chosen to lead you into holy living, i.e. entertainment, food, job, ministry service, husband, wife, church worship (See 1Corinthians 6:12-20, 1Peter 2:16, Romans 14:13-21, and 1Corinthians 8:4-13).

F. These decisions should be made by using biblical principles like the following:

1. One should make sure that he is controlled by the Holy Spirit (See Psalm 66:18, 1 John 1:9, Proverbs 28:13, Ephesians 5:18, and Galatians 5:16).
2. One should identify any and all biblical principles that may apply to the issue (See Romans 12:2, 2Timothy 3:16-17, Psalm 1:1-3, and Proverbs 19:2-3).
3. One should seek to gather as much relevant data as possible—i.e. books, magazines, articles, website info etc. (See Proverbs 14:8, 15, 16).
4. One should seek wisdom from persons who are knowledgeable in that area in which they are seeking to make decisions. One should get counsel and information. One should not seek to get the person to make a decision for them. (See Proverbs 11:14, Proverbs 20:5, Proverbs 19:20, and Proverbs 15:22).
5. One should weigh the pros and cons of his alternatives and then make a decision according to the alternative that seems to have more pro's than con's (See Proverbs 14:15-16).
6. He must accept by faith that he has not sinned in his choice. He must accept the consequences that come with the choice (See Proverbs 16:1, 9).
7. He must accept that God will either allow it to go forward as chosen or God may re-direct as He sees fit—we choose God decides (See Proverbs 16: 1, 9 and James 4:13-17).

(Insights adapted from Rich Thomson, the Book *Decision Making And The Will of God* by Gary Friesen)

Decision Making Exercise

1. Identify the issue or issues whereby you have to make a decision.
2. Determine if the issue is a moral or non-moral issue.
3. Determine if the issue is to be addressed by those who are in authority over you.
4. Research the Scripture to see what it has to say on the issue both directly and indirectly. Write down what you find.
5. Research any and all forms of information to gather relevant data on the issues. Write down what you find.
6. Talk with people who have expertise on these issues and write down what you find.
7. Identify the pros and cons of each alternative and write down what you find.
8. Make a decision in faith. Write down your decision and explain why you chose that alternative instead the other alternatives.

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