

GOD'S WILL

Three aspects/types:

1) GOD'S SOVEREIGN WILL

"God's secret plan to determine everything that happens in the universe". God's sovereign will is secret, certain, and ultimately leads to God's glory (Prov 16:33; Dan 4:35; Rm 11:33-36; Eph 1:11; Prov 21:1; Rm 9:19; Acts 2:23, 4:27-28; Rev 4:11).

2) GOD'S GENERAL MORAL WILL

"Revealed commands in the Bible that teach how people ought to believe and live". The Bible contains 100% of this will; not secret, we are expected to learn and obey it. We have choice, so we can miss out through ignorance or disobedience, so it is not certain.

God's moral will is recorded in the Bible and applies to all believers (Rm 2:18; I Thes 4:3, 5:18; 2 Cor 6:14).

The only way to learn God's moral will is to learn God's Word by: reading (I Tim 4:13), careful consideration (2 Tim 2:7), search & inquiry (1 Pet 1:10-11), diligence in study (2 Tim 2:15), meditation (Ps 1:2; Joshua 1:8), memorization (Ps 119:11), and learning from Bible teachers in oral and written form (Phil 4:9; I Cor 12:28-29; Gal 6:6). The Bible student should progress from "milk" to "meat" (1 Cor 3:1-4; Heb 5:12-14).

3) GOD'S INDIVIDUAL WILL

There are 3 different viewpoints:

- 1) **Ideal, detailed life-plan uniquely designed for each individual** - includes God's moral will, but also includes specifics on everything in life (e.g., whom you should marry, where you should live, where to work, what car to drive, etc.).
- 2) **No detailed plan, but God wants us to learn and obey His Word, and as long as our decision is within God's general moral will, He approves and blesses us.**

- 3) Middle view: **God leaves many decisions to our freedom (within His general moral will), but has some specific plans/missions for us.**

Gary Friesen's Principles of Decision Making - "the way of wisdom":

- 1) In those areas specifically addressed by the Bible, the revealed commands and principles of God (His moral will) are to be obeyed.
- 2) In those areas where the Bible gives no command or principle (non moral decisions), 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.
- 3) In nonmoral decisions, the objective of the Christian is to make wise decisions on the basis of spiritual expediency.
- 4) In all decisions, the believer should humbly submit, in advance, to the outworking of God's sovereign will as it touches each decision.

MAKING WISE DECISIONS

(What is the Wise thing for me to do?)

Proverbs 3:5-6 says "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 (smooth)".

What guidance does God provide to help us make wise decisions?

Prayer (ask God for wisdom) (James 1:5-8; Luke 11:5-10)

- 2) **BIBLE** (Ps 119:105; II Tim 3:15-17)

- 3) **Holy Spirit** (I Cor 2:10-12; Jn 16:13; Rm 8:14; Gal 5:18)
- 4) **Counsel from Godly people** (Prov 11:14, 12:15, 13:10, 13:20, 15:22, 24:6)
- 5) **Conscience** (Acts 24:16; Rm 2:15)
- 6) **Personal Research** (Neh 2:11-16; Joshua 2; Lk 14:28-32); **analyze what would bring the most glory to God and support His purposes** (I Cor 10:31; Mat 22:34-40; Mat 28:18-20)
- 7) **Personal desires** (Ps 37:4 versus Rm 7 & Jer 17:9)
- 8) **Circumstances (open/closed doors)** (I Cor 16:8-9; Col 4:3); **“Fleeces/Signs”** (Judges 6; Acts 1:21-26)
- 9) **Results/experience** (Pv 30:24-28)
- 10) **Common sense** (wisdom →Proverbs)
- 11) **Inner impressions** (Ez 1:1-3)
- 12) **Supernatural means** (Acts)

For further reference:

Dr. Gary Friesen, Decision Making & the Will of God, Portland: Multnomah Press, 1980.