

This study guide can be used for individual Bible Study, small group curriculum, or family studies.

**Small Group Leaders Note:**

The purpose of this study guide is to draw you and your group into conversation and discussion of God’s Word and its application to our lives. The questions are posed in a specific order and each of the questions has a specific purpose. As you become familiar with the purpose of each question, this will help guide the flow of the discussion.

**A high-level view of the five basic questions and their functions:**

1. Introduction (*lean in*). The goal of this first question is to get everyone in the group to “lean in” and get involved. It is normally easy to answer, fun and creates a sense of energy—so much so that you’ll see group members sometimes physically lean in as they engage in the discussion.
2. Observation (*look down*). This is an observation question. It is designed to help group members “look down” and see the relevant details and facts in the Bible passage being studied. This question establishes a solid foundation for the rest of the study. Regardless of how much time someone has spent studying God’s word in their lives, everyone in the group can get involved simply by taking an observant look at what the passage says.
3. Evaluation (*look up*). What do we learn about God from this passage? This is the ultimate goal of every Bible study—to get a clearer picture of the God we worship, so that we can serve and love Him better.
4. Understanding (*look out*). This question helps group members “look out” and see the principles of the Bible passage through the lens of the world today. It builds a bridge between the facts of the passage and our understanding of it as it relates to our lives and culture.
5. Application (*look in*). Here is where group members begin to “look in” and see what God might be nudging them to change in their lives. During this part of the study, group members move from “knowing” to “doing” what God’s word says. It’s the final step of all Bible study: life change—of being transformed into the likeness of Christ.

Adapted from the Liquid Curriculum series



## Week One

It is said that wisdom is the application of knowledge. It is also said that wisdom is the ability to live life skillfully. However you define it, the truth is, we all need to grow in wisdom. None of us has it all figured out. This is the first time 'round for all of us. If we were perfectly candid we would have to admit that we all need help. We all doubt and we're all searching for answers. Augustine said, "Doubt is the origin of wisdom." Because we doubt, we are driven to seek out answers, to seek for wisdom. But where ought we look for those answers?

The book of Proverbs is unique in all of Scripture. It is designed as an instruction manual...and its subject is wisdom. The first nine chapters lay out foundational principles for us as we seek out the wisdom that God has for us. In this sermon series Pastor Brian will focus on some of the major choices we are faced with in life. As we all come to these forks in the road, we must make a choice. That is where the pursuit of wisdom comes in.

But, in addition to these large watershed moments in life, there are many other choices we face. There are so many smaller decisions we must make on a daily basis. Where do we look for help in making these decisions? We all want to make decisions that are pleasing to the Lord. But the question is, how do we know what it is God wants us to do? The framework for making wise decisions that please the Lord falls within the biblical concept of "The will of God."

In Colossians 1:9-10 Paul says:

*"...that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will. In all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects..."*

Clearly, the first step for the Christian in decision making, in making wise choices that honor God, is to learn what God wants us to do. But that's not enough. Then we need to do it. We must decide and even commit to walk in a "manner worthy" if we truly desire to please God.

Again, the way we typically refer to seeking after what is pleasing to the Lord is discerning "the will of God." But what does it mean that God has a will? And what does it mean for us to seek it out? Does it mean that God has a roadmap that He has planned out for our lives—and it is our job to discover that roadmap and follow it? Or, does it perhaps mean that God has revealed principles in scripture that we are to pattern our lives after? So, as a supplement to these large "fork-in-the-road" choices our sermon series will highlight, the exploration of the will of God in all areas of life is what we will explore in this study guide.

1. Describe a time when you could not sense God's direction in a big decision you had to make. How did it turn out?

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2. Read Psalm 25:4-5, 9; 119:105; Prov 1:7. What can be seen as the starting place for seeking the will of God? Is this where we normally start our quest for finding God's will? Why or why not?

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3. When you say, I am praying for God's will about something, what do you really mean? What kind of answer or guidance are you expecting? What kinds of answers or guidance have you received in the past?

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4. Where does the world suggest we go for advice and counsel for making decisions? How often have you heard the prompt in popular media (and especially Disney movies) to "follow your heart"? What does the Bible say about this advice (Jer 17:9; Rom 3:10-12)?

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5. How much do you rely on your own good sense when making decisions? How much do you trust yourself? Who do you look to for wise counsel? What would it look like in your life to more fully rely on God and His wisdom for decisions you make?

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**Going Deeper:**

1. Read 1 Thess 5:16-18. What is the nature of the activities and actions that are prescribed here as God's will for us? Do you see these activities focused on "advice" in specific circumstances? Or, do they point us in a different direction for seeking God's will?

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2. Read Romans 12:1-2. What do you see here as a prerequisite for being able to discern God's will? What is the role of *transformation* in preparing us for being able to understand the thoughts and perspective of God?

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## Week Two

If we are to understand what the will of God really means, we must look to God's Word to tell us. There are 3 different ways the term "the will of God" is used in scripture. The first is what is described in theology as God's sovereign, or "**decretive will.**" This is the idea that whatsoever God in His sovereignty *decrees* come to pass, will indeed come to pass. God commands and it is so.

When God said "Let there be light," did light have an option whether or not to come into being? No, God sovereignly controls the universe. An example of this might be:

*"...for I am God, and there is no one like Me. Declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things which have not been done, saying, 'My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all my good pleasure'"*  
(Isa 46:9-10).

This is God in His sovereignty ruling the universe. We cannot resist or disobey or confound this aspect of God's will.

A second way the term "God's will" is used in scripture is what is known as the "**preceptive will**" of God. This is the idea that God has revealed through *precepts* or laws how He wants us to behave.

Sometimes the first type—the Decretive will of God—is referred to as the "hidden" will of God. I don't necessarily like that description because we can sometimes get the impression that God is hiding something from us. But what "hidden" means is that it is simply not readily apparent because God does what God wants, and doesn't always let us know what that is going to be.

But this second type, the "preceptive" will of God, is called the "revealed" will of God because it is something that He has clearly revealed to us. Some examples of this would be that we should not covet, steal, kill, worry, or gossip. God has revealed through His precepts what He wants and doesn't want us to do. These are God's laws—written on tablets of stone in the Old Testament and written on our hearts in the New.

Examples of this would be what God has given us in the Ten Commandments. He codified, or "put into law" that which was pleasing to Him all throughout the Mosaic Law. We also see this in many commands given to us in the New Testament as well.

Unlike the first kind of will, this "will" can be disobeyed. We break God's law every day when we sin. So, you can start to see why it's important to be clear and precise whenever we see the term "God's will" in scripture, in order to understand what is really in view.

The third way scripture uses the term "God's will" is known as "**the will of disposition.**" This describes God's attitude or preference about something. It reveals what is pleasing to Him. This is what God desires, or would *prefer* to happen in certain situations.

Examples of this would include:

*“This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim 2:3-4).*

God desires, or it would be His preference, that all people come to faith and be saved. But this is clearly not like the other two examples of “will.” Does God sovereignly decree that all men will be saved? No, otherwise we would have Universalism—where everyone is saved.

Or, does God make it a law that all be saved? So, if some are not saved, then they are breaking God’s law in being lost? No, this is clearly a third distinct way the term “God’s will” is used in scripture.

So, these are the 3 categories we see in scripture for how the term “God’s will” is used (decretive will, preceptive will and the will of disposition). It is important that when we discuss the subject of knowing God’s will, we are able to distinguish what precisely we are referring to.

1. Are you a rule follower by nature, or a rule breaker? What are some examples from your life?

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2. Read Isa 46:9-10. What kind of “will” of God is this passage focusing on (decretive, preceptive, disposition)? Read 1 Thess 4:1-3. What kind of “will” is this passage focusing on? Read Ezek 33:11. What kind of “will” is in focus here? Why is it important to be able to distinguish between these different kinds of “wills”?

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3. Read Prov 2:3-5. What do we learn about the quest for wisdom? How must we seek it? What do we receive when we do (v.5)? How is the knowledge of God related to wisdom?

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4. Read 1 Cor 1:18. What does the world think of the things of God? Describe how you think an unbeliever would explain the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. Why do you think an unbeliever thinks so differently than a believer?

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5. What does it mean to have “the mind of Christ” (1 Cor 2:16)? How do we get the mind of Christ? How does having the mind of Christ affect our decisions?

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**Going Deeper:**

1. Continue reading from above, 1 Cor 1:18-25. What is the wisdom of the world? What is the wisdom of God? What is the foolishness of God? What do you learn about wisdom from this passage?

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2. Re-read Col 1:9-10. We mentioned this briefly last time, but focus in on the phrase “so that” in the beginning of verse 10. What does this “so that” imply? Will we not be able to walk in a manner worthy until we are filled with a knowledge of His will? How does the knowledge of His will affect our ability to walk in a manner worthy?

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## Week Three

The first idea we must acknowledge when seeking out God's will is that *God has revealed His will to us*. God has indeed spoken.

Throughout history, the ways that God has communicated His will to mankind has varied. Before there was any scripture, God revealed His will through direct revelation. God literally spoke to people (audibly). Usually the message was given to a single individual who would pass along to others whatever content God wanted revealed. The means of revelation included visions, visitations from angels, theophanies (manifestations of God in human form), or simply the audible voice of God (see Genesis 28:12-16; 32:1-2, 24-30; 35:1). This is known as "special revelation." Another way God has revealed Himself is through what is called "general revelation" (through nature, history, creation, conscience, etc).

God's *special revelation* was eventually written down on paper (Ex 17:14; 24:4; 34:27-28), His people now had two sources from which they could know His will.

First they had the book of the Law:

"This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success" (Josh 1:8).

...and then also additional instruction that God gave by further direct revelation. An example of this would be in Joshua 1:1-9, where God spoke directly to Joshua with instructions for the people.

Over a period of some 1500 years, God's will was fully written down (2 Pet 1:19-21). But then, God did something amazing. He went the next step to reveal Himself and His will to us. He showed up in person. Jesus Christ is the full and most complete revelation of God.

After God had revealed Himself fully in the human person of His Son, Jesus Christ (John 1:14, 18), the book we call the Bible was then completed (Rev 22:18-20). Since God's "special revelation" culminated in His Son, believers now have in scripture the full disclosure of God's will until the Second Coming of Christ.

God has provided for us all that we need in order to make decisions that are pleasing to Him! God has revealed His will to us. We have all that we need to live lives that are pleasing to Him.

*"Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence" (2 Pet 1:2-3).*

1. What significant speech, public announcement (or proclamation) do you remember having heard that affected you the most (“I have a dream...”; “one small step for man...”; the announcement that Kennedy or Elvis had died; the shuttle Challenger exploding, the Berlin wall coming down, the twin towers and 911, shelter in place—Covid-19, etc.)? Why was this particular message so significant for you?

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2. Read 2 Pet 1:19-21. What sort of confidence can we have in the Scriptures as the very words of God? What authority does that give them for regulating how we live our lives? Do you think we always take that authority seriously? Why or why not?

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3. Read 2 Tim 3:16-17. We normally look to this verse to bolster our confidence in the inspiration (divine origin) of the Scriptures. But what does this passage imply about how we understand God’s will? What two key words do we find in v. 17 that help us comprehend the effect scripture has on us and on our walk with Christ?

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4. In contrast to the 3 ways we discussed last week that scripture describes God’s will, how do we typically use the phrase “seeking the will of God” today? What do we really mean? In other words, when I talk about a decision I am making and I say I don’t know if it’s God’s will if I take this job, or to buy this house. It seems I am saying something completely different than what we see in those 3 uses. Or, when someone is counseling me and says “everything happens for a reason—you know, God has a plan for you.” What are they really saying? When we say we are trusting God’s plan for our life, what does that imply?

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5. Respond to the reality that God has spoken. What does that truth require of us (in our behavior, in our interactions with others, in setting our priorities, etc.)?

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**Going Deeper:**

1. What does it mean that God has fully revealed Himself in the Son (John 1:14, 18; John 14:9)? What are the ramifications of this outlandish claim?

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2. Take another look at 2 Peter 1:2-3 above. What does it mean that we have been granted everything pertaining to life and godliness? According to this verse, how do we access this “everything”?

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## Week Four

We saw last time how God has clearly revealed Himself and His will to us. And we know the source of God's will...the Bible. But the next question is, what does that "will" look like? Does it consist of general principles God wants us to live by or is it a specifically designed individual plan for each of our lives? There is a big difference between these two approaches.

In how we typically discuss the will of God and what it means to seek it out, many of us reveal that we basically believe that God has what is referred to as a "specific will" or an "individual will" for each of us. We may not realize we believe this, or perhaps have never truly thought much about it. But many of us have been exposed to the idea that God has a plan He designed for each of us that we are supposed to discover and follow. This is sometimes called "the traditional view."

Examples of this might look like someone asking, "How do I know if God wants me to marry this person?" Or, it might be someone asking for prayer over whether or not God is leading them to attend a specific university, or to take a specific job. What we are revealing by those kinds of questions is that many of us believe that God has a specific plan, or roadmap that He has designed for us. And it is our job to figure out what that plan looks like.

The question is...where did we come up with that idea? The source for much of this thinking can be traced back to a very popular verse:

*"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future'" (Jer 29:11).*

The question is, do we really understand that verse properly? Is it possible we have perhaps taken that verse out of its context and applied it in a way that was never intended?

It can be really easy to grab a verse here and there and make it say what we want it to say. I have heard people use Colossians 2:21 as an incentive to support their diet and motivate their weight loss...*"Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!"* Just so you know, that's not at all what the verse is talking about.

We need to read the Bible with a very important truth in mind. The Bible was not written to us. The Bible was written to the people in Galatia, in Philippi, and Thessalonica, etc. Every book of the Bible has a specific audience, time, and setting, in which and to whom it was written.

An important distinction that might help us understand this better is to see that the Bible was written for us, but it was not written to us. What that means is that we are, in essence, reading someone else's mail when we read the Bible. We need to do some careful work to correctly understand what the message of the Bible truly is—so that we can then properly apply it to our lives.

For example, when we read in Genesis 12:1...*"Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father's house, To the land which I will show you..."*

Does that mean we all are supposed to pack up everything we own and head off to Israel? Obviously not. No, we understand that, in context, this was a command given to Abraham by God in a specific period of his life. Yes, there are timeless truths we can derive from this and other passages that we can apply to our lives. But we need to first understand how these passages were intended to be read—so that we understand what they truly mean—so we can avoid misapplying specific truths in Scripture to our lives imprecisely, and sometimes hold onto “promises” from God that are not really promises at all.

Let’s take a closer look at Jeremiah 29:11...

1. When you were in college, what was your “plan” for your life? What did you think your life would look like in 5 years, in 10 years? How did those plans work out?

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2. The context in which Jeremiah 29 occurs is a very specific historical situation in the life of Israel. And the message is being given to a very specific people going through a specific situation. Pause here and read Jeremiah 29:1-10. We see that God has judged Israel for her unfaithfulness and sentenced them to 70 years in Babylon. In Jeremiah 29, the prophet is comforting God’s people who are in exile telling them that they should go ahead and build houses and live in them. They should not believe their leaders who are advising them to rebel against Babylon. They should get married and live their lives, because this captivity is a punishment from God. But Jeremiah goes on to say that when the 70-year captivity is over (v. 10) God will keep His word and return them to their land. Read Jer 29:10-14. With that context in mind, discuss what this section of scripture is referring to. To whom was it written (who is the “you” in verse 11)? Historically, what precisely is God promising Israel?

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3. Let's jump back a few chapters to the time just prior to when Jerusalem was conquered by Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar was on their doorstep and the people of Israel were terrified and were trying to figure out what to do. Again, the people were not understanding that this coming judgment was from God. Read Jeremiah 21:1-10. Notice the parallel (but reverse) language in 21:10, and compare it with 29:11. What is God "promising" Israel in this passage? This is the exact opposite message we see in Jeremiah 29:11...given to the same people just a few years earlier. The question is, why don't we hold on to this promise in 21:10 and apply it to ourselves, like we hold on to the promise in 29:11? Why do you think it is so tempting to grab ahold of the message God is giving Israel in 29:11 and apply it more broadly to ourselves?

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4. In order to apply any text in scripture to our lives we have to first, determine what it meant to the original audience. We can then extract timeless truths that apply to every audience throughout time; and only then can we apply it to our lives today. So, what timeless truths can we draw out of Jeremiah 29:11? God is sovereign and in control of history. He has a plan for His chosen nation Israel, in that they are the major players in the outworking of His plan of salvation for the world. God loves His people and wants the best for them. When reading this passage in context, what should we (21<sup>st</sup> century Gentile believers) walk away holding on to? Where have we perhaps taken this passage too far?

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5. Jer 29:11 expresses something we desperately want to believe is a promise for us; and even though it was not written to us, we make it our screensaver, and put it on bumper stickers. Why do you think it is so easy for us to take this passage, which God is directing to Israel, and appropriate it as a promise for ourselves?

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**Going Deeper:**

1. What do we typically mean when we say that God has a plan for our lives? What does that plan include? Where do we get the idea that God has this detailed plan?

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2. Can we say that just because God was working in history with His chosen nation Israel to bring them back from captivity—which was all part of a very specific detailed plan He had for that group of people—can we extrapolate from that that He also has an individual plan for whether or not we should buy a new car? Or, what school we should attend—or what person we should marry? How do we “hear” from God the answers to these questions? Where does simply applying the principles of wisdom play into our decision making?

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## Week Five

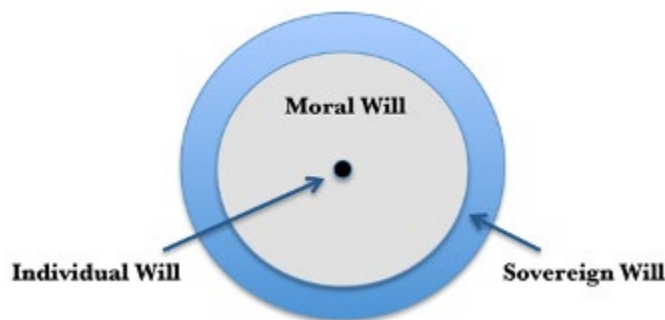
Campus Crusade used to use a slogan, “God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life.” The way that slogan is worded leaves us with the impression that God has mapped out how He wants our life to go. He has this individualized plan that is uniquely suited for us. It would then be our job to discover and follow that plan.

But what if we tweaked that phrasing a bit and said, “God loves you and has a wonderful plan—and you can be a part of that plan.” When we do that, it takes the focus off of us and our individual lives, and places it where it should be—on God and His overall redemptive plan. And on the fact that He wants to enlist us to join Him in that plan.

What if the plan that God has is not an individual plan for how each of our lives should ideally go? What if He has instead given each of us the opportunity to grow in wisdom to be able to make choices that honor Him and that help transform us into His image? But that it is up to us to make those choices?

There are 3 major views when it comes to understanding the will of God that Gary Friesen describes in his book, *Decision Making and the Will of God*. The first view is what we have been describing so far. It is called the “**specific-will**” view (or the “traditional view”). It is that God has a road-map all laid out for us. And it is our job to discern where exactly that map goes. The question we need to keep in the back of our mind is; is this view what we find in scripture?

Here is a graphic that illustrates what this view looks like:



So here we see the largest circle (in blue) representing all God allows to happen—even things that He would prefer not to happen—things like evil and disobedience. All of this falls within His sovereign will.

Then the gray area depicts what God does want to happen. We call this His moral will.

The dot in the center, according to this view, would then represent God’s ideal, detailed life-plan uniquely designed for each person. The idea, according to this view, is that the Holy Spirit, who progressively reveals God’s plan for our life through a variety of means, guides us to make decisions in accordance with some blue print or road map that represents how He would like our life to go.

The premise is: “choosing apart from God’s perfect will (‘missing the dot’) will likely result in experiencing God’s second best, or simply living within God’s permissive will.”

This is sometimes called the traditional view—even though it really only came around in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This view is in contrast to what is called “the wisdom view.” This is what we will explore next week.

1. Describe a decision you had to make in your life that you know you needed help with.

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2. When you are seeking God’s will for a decision you must make, what is your process? Do you pray; look for open/closed doors; put out “fleeces”; ask others for counsel; listen for a still small voice, etc.? What are some examples of this in your life?

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3. Read Prov 6:20-23. What is our source of guidance according to this proverb? How does God’s word guide us? Does it address every situation that might arise in our lives, or does it give us principles to live by? How does seeking wisdom provide all we need for making good, godly decisions?

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4. By what criteria do those around you make decisions? Are the criteria different for your friends who are in the church vs. outside the church? How do those criteria reveal our priorities?

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5. What decisions are you facing right now that you need to seek out God's direction in?

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**Going Deeper:**

1. When have you unmistakably heard God's voice in your life? What was the situation? How did it turn out?

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2. What is the role of faith (not having all the answers) in how we make decisions? How should our view of God's sovereignty play into those decisions, as well as the confidence (or lack of anxiety) with which we make those decisions?

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## Week Six

The first view we looked at last time is called the “specific-will” view. This is the view that sees God having a specific road-map already in mind for you, and your job is to discover it. When we believe God has this “plan,” we invariably end up endlessly searching for this elusive ideal, when no such roadmap might actually exist.

The second view is sometimes called the “**wisdom view.**” Here is a graphic that describes this view:



The larger circle still represents God’s overall sovereign will. The next circle represents what God has revealed in laws and teachings in Scripture.

The white area of God-given freedom and responsibility represents the huge area of space according to this view that we have available to us for making decisions that are pleasing to God—this includes decisions about which He has not revealed specific instructions.

In this view, God does not have a detailed life-plan uniquely designed for each person. Rather, He gives us wisdom and gives us freedom to choose according to that wisdom (Gen 2:16-17; 1 Cor 7:19; 1 Cor 7:39; 1 Cor 6:12); As long as we are obeying the moral will of God, we are free to choose under the safety of God’s commands. Believers should trust that God is sovereign and that He always works things together for good.

The way John MacArthur puts it in his booklet, *Found: God’s Will* is: God wants us to be 1) saved, 2) Spirit-filled, 3) sanctified, 4) submissive, 5) suffering. These are all specific things about which scripture says “for this is God’s will for you.” As long as you are doing these things, then the implication is that you are indeed, in God’s will. You are pursuing God and you are living a life of choosing to be filled with the Spirit—in other words you are submitting your will to His will on a moment by moment basis.

So, if those five things are true of you then he says, when you face a decision...do whatever you want.

How can he possibly say that? He can say that because if you have aligned your life and your desires to what God has clearly revealed He wants, then you have the heart of God. You can be confident that God will give us the desires of our hearts. But hear this...He will not only grant to us what we desire, but He will give us the desires in the first place. Our desires ARE His desires.



*“Delight yourself in the LORD; And He will give you the desires of your heart” (Ps 37:4).*

This is a much simpler way to view the will of God, and to live our lives. God has given us principles to live by in scripture. He has given us mechanisms to pursue godly wisdom. When we pursue wisdom and apply wise decision making in the choices we make, we can be confident that God will bless those decisions. This is why this is called “the wisdom view.” Knowing God’s will is not some mysterious quest that we can never be sure of. It simply involves seeking after and desiring the heart of God.

This is not to say that God does not deal with us personally, nor that He might not influence us to take one path over another. It is whether or not God, as a rule, has chosen to guide us via individualized plans. Or, if perhaps, the way of wisdom is more in line with how He desires we make our decisions.

There is a third view Friessen mentions called the “**relationship view.**” This view argues that God may indeed have an individual plan for individuals, but that they should not be unduly stressed to find it. This view says we must seek a deep intimacy and strong communion that makes it possible for us to know God, and thus, we will then know God’s will. This is somewhat of a hybrid between the first two views, but still suffers from the flaw that the choices we make might happen according to some predetermined plan. So we won’t be spending time exploring this view. We will go into much more depth next time unpacking the “wisdom view.”

1. What decisions have you made that, at the time, you thought you were being led by God to make...but then looking back, perhaps years later, you are now not so sure were the best choice, or perhaps you were not really hearing God’s voice?

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2. What does communication with God look like for someone who takes the specific-will view? How does it differ for one who holds to the wisdom view?

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3. Describe the freedom the wisdom view gives the believer? Describe also the responsibility it gives us.

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4. What does “wisdom” mean to the world? What does it mean to the believer?

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5. What do you think it means to passionately seek after the heart of God? Is this something you think all Christians do? Is this something you have experienced? What would you need to do differently for this to be true of you?

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**Going Deeper:**

1. How do you see our character and faith developed more through God allowing us to make choices according to the principles of wisdom, rather than Him designing a path we simply need to discover?

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2. What does it mean to be responsible, mature, citizens of the kingdom? In other words, how does the wisdom view grow us in our faith?

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## Week Seven

The “wisdom view” seems to be much more in line with how the Scriptures deal with the issue of what it means to discern God’s will. Let’s dive a little deeper into what this view entails.

The way Friesen lays out the Wisdom view is by describing 4 principles:

**First:** The Principle of Obedience.

This may be stated: Where God commands, we must obey. The way he puts it is: “Since the moral will of God contains His complete revelation for faith and life, expresses God's own character, and touches every aspect and moment of life, it is fully able to equip believers for every good work.”

*"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work" (2 Tim 3:16-17).*

The idea is that God has given us in scripture everything we need to obey Him and live a life pleasing to Him.

**Second:** The Principle of Freedom

It is obvious that God's moral will does not specifically address every decision we make. That would be impossible. For not only are there too many decisions to prescribe, there are choices that are required in our modern setting that were unknown in the biblical world— which car to buy, what television program to watch, etc. It is those kinds of decisions that are governed by principles two and three.

The Principle of Freedom can be expressed like this: Where there is no command, God gives us freedom (and responsibility) to choose.

This principle argues three things:

- 1) There are some decisions which have multiple options, any number of which may be acceptable to God.
- 2) The final decision made must not be in violation of God's moral will (in purpose, attitude, or execution).
- 3) God will not dictate to the believer what he must do in regards to every little choice. The individual is free to make the decision.

**Third:** The Principle of Wisdom

The other side of the coin is that freedom entails responsibility. If God is not going to dictate every choice we make, then believers are not only free to choose, we are required to

choose. That raises a critical question: On what basis is the Christian to make his decisions in freedom areas?

That basis, in a word, is wisdom. And the Principle of Wisdom is: *Where there is no command, God gives us wisdom to choose.*

**Fourth:** The Principle of Humble Trust: When we have chosen what is moral and wise, we must trust our sovereign God to work all the details together for good.

1. What are the top three most significant decisions you have ever had to make?

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2. Discuss the principle of obedience. What does this look like in the life of the believer? What has it looked like in your life?

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3. Discuss the principle of freedom. How does this principle make the specific-will view unnecessary?

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4. Discuss the principle of wisdom. Discuss this principle in light of the verse we discussed two weeks ago (Ps 37:4).

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5. Discuss the principle of humble trust...and how this is perhaps the most important principle of all?

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**Going Deeper:**

1. One person might say, "I am praying for God to reveal His will for me in a certain situation." Another might say, "I am praying for wisdom to make a good choice in this situation; a choice that would honor God." What is the difference between the two approaches?

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2. Now when you pray for God's will in some matter, what will that look like for you?

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