

**"God's Will and Our Disordered Lives"****II Timothy 3:16-17**

What I here to talk with you about this morning is extremely practical – God's will as it relates to our disordered lives. As we contemplate together what it means to have an ordered life as opposed to a disordered life, surely an understanding of God's will would be a good thing to add to the mix?

Perhaps a parallel area would be our level of understanding of the sovereignty of God. Stated differently, our level of belief in the sovereignty of God. If we have read the Bible much, we can all nod in agreement that God is sovereign. We can know that in our head. But if we truly believe that God is sovereign, rather than just having that as head knowledge, it will truly affect how we live, and how we face the circumstances of everyday life. I would guess that you all know Romans 8:28-30, which reads: *And we know that all things work together for good for those who love God, for those who are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the first born among many brethren; and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.*

If we believe absolutely that a sovereign God controls every aspect of the circumstances to which I experience, that they have been carefully curated to provide me with the maximum opportunity to grow in Christ-likeness (which is what those verses say, how can that not affect how I view those circumstances? Of course, it will! What peace I have available to me if only I truly believe in God's sovereignty! What order can emerge out of the chaos in my life if I am just believing that God is in control! That belief can make what is happening in my present life take a big step towards the orderly.

But what about the future? I can see how believing in God's sovereignty can help me make order out of the chaos of my present circumstance, but what about the things that are not yet in my present? What about the things that will happen to me? What about the decisions I have to make? How am I supposed to know what to do about the future? If you have ever pondered your future, and who hasn't, you have probably asked yourself, "What is God's will for me in this? If that future involves a decision I need to make, which alternative shall I choose?" If I can only know God's will for me, I can have some order in my life. But how will I know God's will? How will I get that comfort and order in my life that would come with being certain of God's will?

There are certainly a number of competing views about how to know God's will for me, especially if I need to make some kind of a decision about the future. Some say, "just follow your heart". Others say, "pray until you have a peace about one of the choices." Still others say, "listen quietly and God will direct you toward His will". Another voice says, "look for God to open doors and close doors." Then there are those who suggest seeking after a sign from God in decision making – basically various forms of Gideon's fleece. If this happens, or that happens, I will choose option A. If all else fails, trust your fortune cookie. I can tell you, throughout my life as a committed believer, I have thought or done every one of these, with the possible exception of trusting in the fortune cookie. So, which one is right? How can we make right decisions? How can we know God's will for us?

First, we have to define what we mean by God's will. Theologically, there are two aspects to God's will. The first is His **declared** will, or what He has told us that He desires for us and of us, what He wants in our character and our actions. This aspect of God's will is entirely encapsulated in the scriptures. When the canon of scripture was closed, that was it. We don't need to wonder if there are other books of the Bible yet to be unearthed. Certainly, a God who can create all of the matter in the universe with just a thought is capable of making sure that what He wants to communicate to us in His Scriptures is complete. Just as God inspired the words that are used in the Bible as told in II Timothy 3:16, He inspired what it would take to complete it. In fact, scripture itself warns us in Revelation 22 not to add to God's word, and not to take away from God's word. So, God's **declared** will for us is completely contained in the Bible.

The second aspect of God's will is His **determined** will, or His **sovereign** will. We know from scripture that nothing happens outside of God's will – Matthew 10:29 tells us that not even a single sparrow falls to the ground outside of God's sovereign plan and will for the unfolding of history. If any other alternative were the case, God would not truly be sovereign. Contemplating the sovereignty of God is a weighty undertaking. Certainly, the sovereignty of God can give us a sense of well-being in many instances. God is absolutely trustworthy with every aspect of the circumstances of our lives, and we really don't have to worry about things that we can't control anyway (although that is easier said than done sometimes).

We can trust in God's sovereignty and find comfort in it. But going deeper into the sovereignty

of God can really start to twist your head around. For example, was it God's will that Adam and Eve should sin in the Garden of Eden? Hmm. It was certainly **not** God's **declared** will – God had told Adam to stay away from that fruit. But since God is sovereign, it was within His sovereign will that Adam should choose to sin. If we say otherwise, we are saying that God is not really sovereign. You might say that man's free will, yours and mine, exist within God's sovereign will. You could picture it as if your free will, every choice that you could make, is inside a little bubble. That bubble exists within or inside the much bigger bubble of God's sovereign will. No choice you could make would result in you being outside of God's sovereign will. Was it God's will that I should commit the sins that I have committed in my life – every single sin? Certainly not in God's **declared** will – God told me through His word not to sin as I have. But, it was within God's **sovereign** will, or it would not have happened!

Consider this: God has at His disposal an infinite number of ways to stop me from sinning. Many could involve just removing me from the earth. In 2013, 45-year-old João Maria de Souza was crushed by a cow falling through the roof of his home in Caratinga, Brazil. The cow had climbed onto the roof from an adjacent hillside and fell through. Both his wife, who was lying in bed right next to him, and the cow, were unharmed. Now, I don't mean to make light of this tragic death, and I don't mean to say that God removed this man from earth specifically to stop his sinning. I only point this out to show an alternative God could use to stop me from sinning, if He so chose. He is sovereign. But apparently it is more important to God for me to have free will than to stop me from sinning. Please don't hear me making light of my sin or saying that my sin doesn't matter. Or worse, that God condones my sin. Nothing could be further from the truth. In God's **declared** will, I am exhorted over and over to righteousness and a life that would be pleasing to God. I don't have to guess at what is pleasing to God. But the fact that we make the choices that we do, and even that we find ourselves in the circumstances we do, is in God's sovereign will. Is your head spinning yet?

I am highlighting the differences between these two because it is important as we read God's word to determine the difference as we come upon references to God's will. Various places in scripture, we will see the phrase "God's will" or "the will of God", and for us to determine the right meaning for us, and to make the right application in our lives, we have to know which aspect of God's will we are talking about. It is just like when you read through the book of Acts – it is imperative that you recognize if you are reading something that is descriptive or prescriptive. Is the narrative describing what happened, descriptive, or is it describing what we should do as believers, prescriptive? If you don't know the difference, when you read that Paul

could heal someone by sending them a hanky he had touched, or you read that God spoke to Paul in an audible voice and told him what to do next, you will think that is normal for the Christian today. You will be expecting those things to happen in your day-to-day life. Those are descriptions of the history of the early church, not direction for our own thoughts and actions. Conversely, when you read that Peter told the Gentiles to repent, be baptized, and they would receive the Holy Spirit, we can take that as prescriptive, telling us as Gentiles today what we should do to be saved.

But back to the will of God. Up to this point, I may have been asking you to take my word for it that there is a difference between the declared will of God and the sovereign will of God. So, let's go to the source of truth, God's Word. Let's look together at some references to God's will in God's Word, and see if we can determine a distinction between God's declared will and His sovereign will. I am going to read a passage that cites some aspect or example of God's will, and I would like you to see if you can determine in your own mind whether the example from Scripture is one of declared will or sovereign will. Are you ready for a quiz?

While I normally would encourage you to turn to passages if I am referring to them in Scripture, I am going to cite a number of them in the next few minutes, so don't feel like you have to turn there if you don't want to. First, let's consider Romans 1:10, in which Paul is writing to the church in Rome. The verse is talking about how Paul is praying, and it ends with: ***Romans 1:10 if perhaps now at last by the will of God I may succeed in coming to you.*** So what do you think? Is this passage referring to the declared will of God, or the sovereign will of God? Is this passage declaring to us what God wants in our character or actions, or is it a description of what God is doing according to His unfolding plan? Reading it again in part, ***if perhaps now at last by the will of God I may succeed in coming to you.*** I would say this sounds like an example of God's sovereign will.

How about another example. Let's consider I Corinthians 1:1. Paul is greeting his brothers and sisters in Christ at the church in Corinth. ***I Corinthians 1:1 reads Paul, called as an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother.*** Does this sound like God's will for our character and actions, or does it sound like part of God's unfolding plan? Again, I would say that this sounds like Paul is referring to the will of God here as part of God's unfolding plan. It was God's sovereign will, or part of God's unfolding plan, that Paul would be an apostle of Jesus Christ. Another clue here is that the action is listed in past tense. Paul was **called**, according to the sovereign will of God.

Let's do another one. I Thessalonians 5:18. Is this one telling us God's will for our character or actions, or is it a description of God's unfolding plan? **1 Thessalonians 5:18** reads *in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus*. Ahhhhh! Now we have one that is telling us what God wants in our character or actions – it even says *for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus*. This is an example of God's declared will for us! This is telling us what He wants to see in us!

Are you seeing a pattern here? If the passage is telling us what God wants in our character and actions, it is God's declared will that we would be that way or do that thing; it is prescriptive for us. If the passage is describing God's will with no direction or action on our part, and especially if the passage is an expression of the actions of God in past tense, then it is an expression of the sovereign will of God. Let's try some more:

**I Thessalonians 4:3-7** **3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification;** This could be looking backward or forward, at God's sovereign will or His declared will, so let let's go on - the verse continues: *that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; 4 that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, 5 not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God; 6 and that no man transgress and defraud his brother in the matter because the Lord is the avenger in all these things, just as we also told you before and solemnly warned you. 7 For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification.* God's declared will.

**I Peter 4:19** starts out *Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God* Does God exhort us to seek suffering in His Word, which would be in line with His declared will for us? No; this passage is referring to God's sovereign will. How about **Mark 3:35** *"For whoever does the will of God, he is My brother and sister and mother."* God's declared will – it is a reference to what we should be being and doing. It is God's declared will that we would obey Him, as in John 14:15 *If you love Me, you will keep My commandments*. What about , **I Peter 2:15** *For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men.* Again, a reference to the declared will of God. How about **Ephesians 6:6** *not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.* Notice the emphasis on doing – the declared will of God.

So, why am I spending so much time on this? Why do I parse out God's will in Scripture into

His declared will and His sovereign will? An understanding of the difference is critical in our investigation of the will of God and an orderly life. Can I know God's **declared** will? Absolutely! He has given us the entirety of His declared will in the Bible you have in front of you! Essentially, any imperative in the New Testament is the declared will of God in our lives. **I can only know God's declared will from scripture**. Can I know God's sovereign will? The answer is surprisingly simple: **I can only know God's sovereign will from hindsight**. *Only in hindsight!* For example: it is God's sovereign will that you are here this morning. I know this with absolute certainty. How do I know that? Well, you're here! If it weren't God's sovereign will, you wouldn't be. It's that simple.

Now let's get back to living an orderly life. You can't live an orderly life if you are constantly filled with uncertainty. One of our greatest sources of uncertainty is the future. What does it hold? The pressure of uncertainty is really turned up when I have a decision to make. What about the will of God when I have to make a decision? **I John 2:17 says *The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.*** If I have a decision to make, I certainly want to make it according to God's will, don't I? After all, according to this verse, "the one who does the will of God lives forever". How can I conduct my decision making so that I can be sure it is in accord with God's will?

Let's get down to the meat of it. Our problem with decision making and the will of God is that while we have God's declared will entirely encapsulated in His Word, what we really want to know God's sovereign will. We want to know the future, generally for our own personal benefit. We can't! We can only know God's sovereign will in retrospect. What are some reasons that we want to seek God's sovereign will? There are some good and valid reasons. For example, I want to submit to God and to please Him. So, I may pray for God to show me His will in various ways so that I can conduct my life in complete submission to God and His plan. OK. I would think any of us who are serious about our faith would say that we agree with this perspective.

However, there are some reasons that wanting God to show me His sovereign will, or what He has in store in the future, appeals to our flesh, rather than our desire for holiness. What? Praying to God in a way that appeals to our flesh? May it never be, you say! Here are some reasons that we can want God to tell us His sovereign will for us: First, we are generally lazy. If God would just tell me what to do, I wouldn't have to think about it. I wouldn't have to weigh out the alternatives. I wouldn't have to develop wisdom. Most importantly, I wouldn't have to search God's declared will in Scripture to see what God has already said about the alternatives

before me.

A second fleshly reason we want to know God's sovereign will is that it removes the responsibility for the decision from us. If God told me to marry this person or take that job and it goes south, it is God's fault, not mine. I have someone to blame. And ever since Adam, we are all looking for opportunities to shift blame. A third reason we want to know God's sovereign will is that we assume that if He tells us what to do, then the outcome will be perfect, all sunshine and meadows and unicorns and pixie dust. We generally assume that God's will and our desires, no matter what they are, are closely aligned. But maybe that is not the case. Maybe it is God's **sovereign** will that you are in store for serious problems because that is the best or only way you will grow in Christ-likeness. Maybe it's God's sovereign will that the new car you prayed about and then bought is a true lemon, the very worst one that has ever come off the assembly line, because He wants you to witness to every mechanic in a 50-mile radius! Or maybe it is God's sovereign will that your children will walk far from the faith, because you need new levels of understanding of laying your cares at His feet, of just being faithful to Him and trusting Him with the outcome.

We can't know God's sovereign will in advance. We can't know what He has in store for us, or know the details of why He does what He does. He has no responsibility or obligation to tell us. We can only know what He has already told us in His scriptures. Going back to Romans 8:28-30 that we spoke of earlier, we can know that He will use everything – every little and big thing – in believers' lives to conform His followers to the image of Christ.

So let me touch on some things I mentioned in the introduction – the ways that we try to know God's sovereign will. What does God's **declared** will have to say about us wanting to find out His **sovereign** will? For example, "just follow your heart", which seems to find its way into virtually every Hallmark movie ever made – what does God's word say about what is "naturally" in our hearts? Jeremiah 17:9 says *"The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?"* Or how about Matthew 15:19 *"For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders.* I ask you, should I really follow my own heart? God's Word says no! So, biblically, the "just follow your heart" is among the worst things you could do in decision making.

What about, "pray until you have a peace about one of the choices." Are we instructed in God's *declared will* to pray in this way? In fact, are we ever instructed to have our actions driven by

emotion or sensation, rather than by the principles advanced in God's Word? The only time God's word supports seeking peace is related to unity in the body and between people, and has nothing to do with decision making. For example, 1 Peter 3:11 says *They must turn from evil and do good; they must seek peace and pursue it.* This verse is an exhortation to peace with one another, not peace within ourselves. In fact, doing what is in God's declared will many times involves very little peace in our own hearts at all. When would you have peace about approaching a brother or sister who is caught up in sin? Or when would your elders have peace about trying to reconcile a brother or sister in Christ back to God through church discipline? Not much peace in that, beyond knowing you are doing what God has directly instructed you to do in His declared will.

Despite this, many of the ways we seek to determine the sovereign will of God involve emotions or sensations. Let me tell you, emotions and sensations can't be trusted. How can you tell if God is telling you something, or that sensation you are having is just some bad pizza from the night before? You can't! So if you are waiting for some divine nudge from God, some sensation or emotion to tell you what to do, better to pick up your Bible and read it to get direction! Scripture never directs us that our emotions provide any moral direction at all. None. In fact, scripture directs us to do right many times in spite of how we feel about it, not because of it. There is another problem with relying on emotions or sensations for providing moral direction, if indeed that is how we were to determine God's will – what if you are wrong? What if you misinterpret that indigestion as a word from the Lord and you make the wrong decision, away from God's will? You would be sinning! The God we serve is not a God of vague nuance where we must guess what constitutes sin, as opposed to what it takes to follow Him and please Him. He tells us right here in His word what He wants and what is best for us, in His declared will.

Let's go back to another way we sometimes try to make decisions. What about, "listen quietly and God will direct you toward His will". It is certainly true that God says in Psalm 46:10, "*be still, and know that I am God...*", but is that really applicable to decision making? The context has to do with exalting God, not decision making. In God's **declared** will, we are never exhorted to passivity. For example, according to **Romans 2:13** *for it is not the hearers of the Law who are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified.* We are exhorted to action, not passivity. Again in **James 1:22** *But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.* But, to be a doer of the Word, you must go through the diligent work of knowing what God's Word says!



Back to the introduction, and the ways that we try to get order in our decisions that are counter to scripture. What about, "look for God to open doors and close doors." This one is particularly interesting. It is not wrong for us to pray to God for something that we want. For example, I am sure that we all want our children to be saved and to grow in Christ-likeness. It is not wrong to pray for that. In fact, it is part of God's declared will that we should lay our burdens at Christ's feet, like in I Peter 5:7, where we are told to cast all our anxiety on Christ, because He cares for us. And in **James 5:13: *Is anyone among you in trouble? Let him pray.***

So where in Scripture does this idea of open doors and closed doors come from? Is this something we should be praying with respect to our future, and particularly as we try to make decisions? Paul said in **Colossians 4:3 *And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains.*** Paul was asking the Colossians to pray for an opportunity for him, but Paul wasn't advocating passivity or asking for God to make a decision for him. He was praying that it would be in God's sovereign will that they might be able to spread the gospel effectively. So, praying for God to open doors and close doors as a means of telling us what to do is not supported in scripture. After all, how can you tell the difference between God closing a door because He wants you to move on, and God closing a door because He is giving you the opportunity to develop patience and perseverance? We simply can't know that until we can assess it in hindsight.

The last example I gave in the introduction about how many make decisions is to lay out a modern-day fleece or to look for a sign. I heard the story of a woman who was lying in bed on a Saturday morning wondering if she should go visit her daughter in another state. She rolled over and looked at her digital clock, and the time was 7:47. She took that as a sign that God was telling her to go see her daughter, since Boeing used to make an airliner called the 747. Is that how God speaks to us? I would have been more impressed if her digital clock had read "767". Looking for a sign is generally linked to the occult and sorcery in scripture. God made it clear in the Old Testament in Deuteronomy 18:9-14 that occult practices are condemned, and in Leviticus 19:31 He indicates that associating with these kinds of practices would defile the nation of Israel. Jesus said in Matthew 16:4 that a wicked and perverse generation looks for a sign. Isn't looking for a modern-day Gideon's fleece similar to that?

I hope you are getting the idea by now that we can't know God's sovereign will in advance. We can only know His declared will. If we want something, we can certainly pray that if it is in God's will, He would grant it, but that is not the same as asking Him to make a decision for us or to tell

us His sovereign will in advance. If we want God's direction, we need to go to His declared will. So why don't we use scripture more in our decision making? Some think that God's word has nothing to say about their particular decision. This is simply not true. God's word is chock full of direction in decision making for all kinds of decisions, big and small. We just need to become better at applying it.

So let me lay out for you a hierarchy for decision making in keeping with the will of God. Based on what we have looked at thus far, our decision making needs to be based on God's declared will, not asking Him to tell us His sovereign will. So, the first step in decision making: is there a chapter and verse that applies directly to my decision? For example, ladies, does God's word have any direction for you in picking out what clothes you would wear this morning? Yes it does. Scripture directs us in **I Timothy 2:9** and elsewhere to pursue modesty, and to not tempt our brothers in Christ to sin. Scripture also supports not drawing prideful attention to ourselves, to consider one another more highly than we consider ourselves. Another example of applying chapter and verse: suppose I am a young man considering who to pursue in marriage. **II Corinthians 6:14** says ***Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?*** If I am that young man, and my attention is drawn to an unbeliever, I need to redirect my attention. By the way, marriage is not a particularly good form of evangelism.

What if I am trying to make a decision, and after diligent searching, I can't find chapter and verse, what next? The second step is to apply the overarching principles of scripture. An overarching principle of scripture is when we link concepts from several passages to give direction when there is not a single verse that does that. Let's consider an example of a husband buying a car for his family. Let's say that he has always wanted a Corvette. And, let's say that through some turn of events, he has the money for that particular car. Now, let's say that his wife is pregnant with their first child. Can you see where I am going? There is not a single verse that says which car to buy. However, a husband is to love his wife sacrificially (**Ephesians 5:25**), and a husband is to live with his wife in an understanding way (**1 Peter 3:7**), and all believers are to consider others as more valuable than themselves (**Philippians 2:3**), so perhaps that minivan is the better choice.

So, what if we are trying to make a decision, and after diligent searching, we don't have direction from either chapter and verse or the overarching principles of scripture? According to Proverbs 15:22, ***Without consultation, plans are frustrated, But with many counselors they***

**succeed.** We need to seek Godly counsel from those who are good at applying it. Many times, in business and personally, I have sought out godly men for their advice. And, many times, even after diligent searching of God's Word on my part, they have been able to point out things I hadn't considered. I would also point out that, if it is a decision that involves some moral dilemma, we should seek the direction of our local spiritual leaders – our elder board.

So, I have searched diligently for what scripture has to say about my decision in chapter and verse and in overarching principles, and I have consulted wise counselors, and still the alternatives are equal. What do I do then? Guess what – just pick which one you like best! Welcome to Christian liberty! Enjoy the freedom of being able to pick! Pick the red one, or the big one, or that job in Dallas, or whatever – if you have been diligent in the steps of searching God's declared will, you are free to choose.

So far, I have laid out the difference between God's declared will and His sovereign will. If I want to live an orderly life, it makes sense that I would want to live my life in accord with God's will. But I can't expect that order in my life will come from God telling me what is going to happen in my future. I have also laid out that we are to use His declared will in decision making, and not ask Him to make the decision for us – namely, to tell us His sovereign will before the fact. So why are we not using God's declared will, His word, more in our decision making? Why are we not finding the order we need for our lives directly from His Word? I would submit that we are simply not looking at scripture with that kind of practical direction in mind. One of the critical biblical concepts that applies here is the area of theology called the sufficiency of scripture. We are not believing that God's Word is truly sufficient for our problems and decisions! This scriptural concept is so important in the Christian walk, and is displayed vividly in II Timothy 3:16-17. Turn with me past the gospels and Romans and Ephesians and first and second Thessalonians to II Timothy 3:16-17. **II Timothy 3:16-17**, which reads: **16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.** Notice how this verse starts out – *All* scripture, the Old and New Testament, the entire canon, was inspired or literally "breathed out" by God. And the result is that it is profitable, useful, valuable for us in a number of ways. It is profitable for doctrine, for teaching and informing us about our relationship with God and what He is like, as well as how we are to live. Scripture tells us what is right. Secondly, it is profitable for us for reproof or conviction, mostly in the sense of a rebuke. This is the Bible telling us what is not right. So the Bible not only gives us clear direction about what is right, it convicts and rebukes us when we go astray.

Thirdly, the Bible is profitable for us for correction. The sense here is not so much punishment as it is restoration – the Bible is able to restore us to an upright state, a right relationship with God after we have failed. This is the Bible telling us how to “do” right. Lastly, the Bible is profitable for us for instruction. The sense here is more of that discipline or chastisement. The Bible tells us not only how to do right, but how to stay right. The Bible informs us and rebukes us and restores us and admonishes us.

That's a lot of profit! But to what end? Why does God's Word do all these things? That is answered in verse 17. That the person of God, one who is united with God and approved of God, submitted to God, might be complete, blameless, thoroughly furnished, fully equipped, fitted out, for every good work. Every good work. Sounds pretty inclusive for all aspects of life, doesn't it? Now, doesn't that sound orderly? My translation uses the word “adequate” – that the man of God might be adequate, equipped for every good work. As an engineer, I love that translation. When a civil engineer says that a beam for example is structurally adequate, he is not saying that it is only barely strong enough to just squeak by. They are saying that the beam is sufficiently strong and structurally capable of withstanding every load that it could reasonably be expected to bear. In the same sense, God's Word is sufficient to direct and support us in every conceivable circumstance, in every way, for every work God has for us. God's Word is sufficient!

Perhaps, like me, you have looked for order with respect to the future in the wrong places. Perhaps you need to be reminded to broaden the scope of how you use the Bible in your daily life, and that it is truly the source for order. Perhaps you have let the busyness of life distract you from understanding God's word at a level where you really do use it in daily living, in giving direction in big and small ways. I know I need to be more diligent in making sure that I am leaning on God's Word, and not my own understanding, in interpreting life and in my interactions with others. Will you join me in renewing your commitment to looking to God's Word as the sole source for truth, and as the sole source for what is necessary for instruction in this life?

Let's pray: God, help me to revere you and to cling to your Word. Help me to look to your Word as my source for order, and not to look elsewhere. Help me to change my thinking about it, and to rely on your Word as my only true and trustworthy compass as I make life's decisions. Thank you for your Word and the direction that it provides, and thank you that you love me enough to do whatever it takes to help me as I strive to love you and obey you more. In Jesus name,

Amen.