

6. Spiritual Direction

***“My food,” said Jesus,
“is to do the will of Him who sent me
and to finish His work.”
John 4:34***

One of the marks of Jesus’ life was His **obedience** to God His Father. It is also to be a mark of our lives as followers of Christ. As *Christians, one of our most important tasks is to determine the Will of God and fulfill it!* But how do we determine God’s Will for us? We will examine three aspects to God’s Will and how each can be known.

God’s Sovereign Will

God’s Sovereign Will is the exercise of *His supremacy as Creator* over His Creation. **God is in control of everything** whether we believe in Him or not.

“I (God) make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.”
Isaiah 46:10

“The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord and against his Anointed One. ... They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen.”
Acts 4:26 & 28

✓ Underline the phrases in each verse that describe *God’s Sovereignty*.

“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who are called according to His purpose.”
Romans 8:28

✓ Underline God’s Sovereign Will for Believers.

The Sovereign Will of God is the easiest to know and fulfill for it encompasses **all** that comes to past... Where we were born, how we were raised, and who we married. To discover God’s Sovereign Will, you need only look in the *past* at what has taken place, be it a minute or a millennium ago. **All that has taken place has been done according to God’s Sovereign Will!** As they say, hind sight is 20/20, and so it is with God’s Sovereign Will. It can be known 100% *as far as the past is concerned*. However, *comprehending what God’s Sovereign Will is for the future is a mystery only God knows!*

What is God’s Sovereign Will for your life in the following areas?

- 1. My parents are:**
- 2. I was born in (time & place):**
- 3. I am (race):**

These are things that you have no control over and which God has sovereignly ordained for your life.

► Based on the Scriptures shown here, how would you describe God’s Sovereign Will?



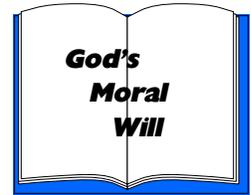
Psalms 135:6
Psalm 115:3
Psalm 33:9
Job 42:2



Romans 11:33-34
Isaiah 40:28

God's Moral Will

God's Moral Will is **His moral instruction revealed in His Law and Scripture**. Unlike God's Sovereign Will, *God's Moral Will is easier to know than it is to fulfill*. Christians who regularly study Scripture are sometimes faced with the predicament of *knowing more Scripture than they apply!* Examine the following Scriptures that describe God's Moral Will.



"Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path." *Psalm 119:105*

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness," *2 Timothy 3:16*

"Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful." *Joshua 1:8*

"Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth." *John 17:17*

✓ Underline all the descriptions and applications of God's Word.

Application

Discovering God's Moral Will is simply a matter of **reading** and **studying** God's Word, for in it is recorded *God's Will concerning right versus wrong, and good versus evil*. Find God's Moral Will in the following areas:

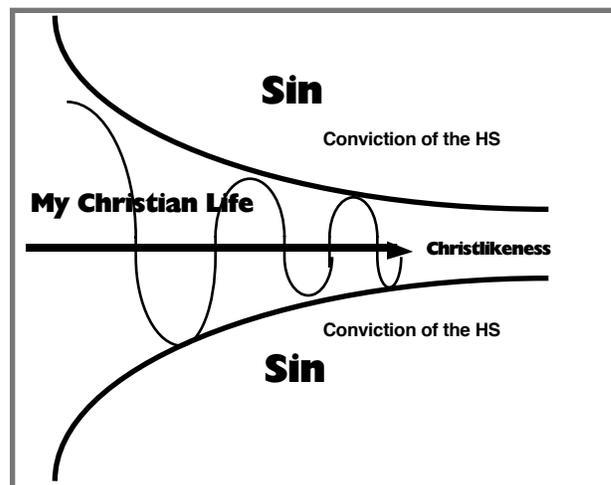
1. Is it right to cheat on my Tax return? (*Leviticus 19:11; Matthew 22:16-21; Romans 13:1-7*)
2. Is it right to have sex before or outside of marriage? (*Exodus 20:14; 1 Corinthians 6:13-20*)
3. Is it right to divorce my husband or wife? (*Malachi 2:16; Matthew 5:31-32; Mark 10:4-9*)
4. Is it right to hate my neighbor? (*Matthew 22:36-40; Luke 6:35*)
5. Is it right to not share Christ with those around me? (*Mark 16:15; Romans 10:9-15*)

Find Scriptures that reveal God's Moral Will on issues that concern you.

The Path to Christlikeness

As you apply God's Word to your life, you will conform more and more to His perfect Will! In other words, *you will become more and more Christlike!*

The diagram shows how the Holy Spirit uses God's Moral Will to *help* us to become more Christlike. *Each time we are Convicted of Sin, Confess and Turn from it, our lives conform closer to the life of Jesus!*



God's Individual Will

A question many Christians wonder about is the *extent* of God's Will for our lives. For example, does God's Will extend to whom we should marry or what occupation we should pursue? How about what kind of car we should drive, or where we should live, or even what brand of soap we should purchase? *Many Christians agonize over these decisions*, afraid that they might be missing God's "best" for their lives.

► Discovering God's Will in the Book of Acts

The early Christians recorded in **Acts** give us an example on how to make personal decisions. **A study of Acts reveals that the entire narrative is the unfolding story of a single verse, Acts 1:8.**

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Acts 1:8

A look at how decisions were made among the early Christians produces a varied list, including:

- **Decisions based on personal choice in light of God's Word or what was expedient in the circumstances** (4:36-37; 6:1-3, 5-6; 8:36-38; 9:26, 38-39; 14:5-6; 15:12-20, 22, 36-41; 16:4; 17:2,16-17; 18:3, 20-21; 19:21; 20:3, 24)
- **Chance** (1:24-26)
- **Visions & Dreams** (2:17; 9:3-7, 10-15; 10:1-3, 9-13; 16:9-10; 18:9-11)
- **Prophetic Announcements** (11:28; 13:1; 21:10-14)
- **Angelic Interventions** (1:10-11; 5:19-20; 8:26; 12:6-9; 27:23-24)
- **God's Sovereign Interventions through His Spirit** (8:29, 39; 13:2; 16:6-7; 20:22-23; 23:11))

The lesson learned from the early Christians is that **they sought to live their lives in obedience to God's Word** (Acts 1:8) and *not agonizing over an ideal, individual will of God for their lives; while at the same time being open to, and usually surprised by, supernatural interventions of God through Visions, Dreams, Prophecies, Angelic messengers, and the Holy Spirit in their lives.*

► The Extent of God's Will

Scripture does not clearly teach that God has an ideal and detailed plan for our lives that dictates only one choice for every decision we make. Instead, God gives us the freedom to choose, as long as our choices fall within His Will revealed in His Word!

- What is the significance of God's Word to Jeremiah in *Jeremiah 1:5*?
- Do you think this verse applies to our lives, too? Why or why not?
- Can you find Scriptures that indicate God has done a similar thing for you?

- Does *Ephesians 2:10* teach that God has a plan for our lives? Why or why not?
- How does this verse relate to *John 17:4*?

How to Know God's Will for Your Life

I. God's Word

The clearest communication of God's Will is **found in His Word**. There, we can be 100% certain that God is speaking to us. **In God's Word we find clear commands to obey, promises to claim, and spiritual truths to believe.** In areas where Scripture does not clearly speak, we are given **Scriptural Principles** that guide us to *wise decisions*. Some of these are found in the following verses:

"Everything is permissible for me" but not everything is beneficial.
"Everything is permissible for me" but I will not be mastered by anything."
"Everything is permissible" but not everything is beneficial."
"Everything is permissible" but not everything is constructive."
"So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do,
do it all for the glory of God."
"Do not cause anyone to stumble" *1 Corinthians 6:12;10:23, 31-32*

✓ Underline the *principles* in the Scriptures above that can guide our decisions.

2. God's Spirit

Always be filled, empowered, and directed by the Holy Spirit. He will give us **His desires, thoughts** and **power** to do His Will! *As we are filled with the Holy Spirit, God is able to direct us as He moves us in the direction He wants us to go through His Spirit's work in our heart, mind and will!*

"For God is at work within you, helping you want to obey Him, and then helping you do what He wants." *Philippians 2:13 (TLB)*

3. God's Sovereign Work

Trust God who is able to Sovereignly keep you in His Will. As you follow God by keeping His Word and being filled with His Spirit, *you will see God's hand at work in your life, directing and leading in various ways (circumstances, abilities, opportunities, advice of others, "coincidences").*

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who are called according to His purpose." *Romans 8:28*

4. God's Supernatural Work

Be open to the possibility that God may direct you in Supernatural ways. However, **be alert** because Satan may come as an *"angel of light"* to lead you astray by appealing to the lusts of your flesh, eyes and ego. *(It is worth noting that all of the supernatural interventions in Acts, such as visions, angelic appearances, dreams, and divine interventions, came unsought by the recipient. Be careful when seeking an experience, or sign, as a basis for decision making because Satan, the master counterfeiter, will be more than happy to oblige.)*

For more information, read **Decision Making and the Will of God** by Dr. Garry Friesen.

 Psalm 19:7
John 17:17

Using Scriptural Principles

How would you use the Scriptural Principles to decide the following:

1. What kind of clothes should I wear?
2. Can I drink alcoholic beverages?
3. Is it okay to smoke?
4. What kind of:
 - TV programs should I watch?
 - Movies should I see?
 - Music should I listen to?
5. Is it okay to take drugs?
6. Is it okay to gamble?

 **God's Spirit**
Ezekiel 36:26-27
Philippians 2:13

 **God's Sovereignty**
Romans 8:28-29
Philippians 1:6
1 Thessalonians 5:24

 **God's Supernatural Work**
Deuteronomy 13:1-4
Proverbs 14:15
Acts 2:17
1 Thessalonians 5:19-21
1 John 4:1

Affirmation

1. God has a Purpose & Plan for My Life
2. God Leads Me by His Word, His Spirit, His Sovereign Work, and even His Supernatural Work.
3. I will follow God no matter what.

A Prayer

"O Lord, I thank You for revealing Your Will to me, and putting Your Spirit in my heart. Grant me wisdom to know Your Will in Your Word of Truth, and lead me by Your Spirit and Sovereign Work in my life. Amen"