

# GOD'S WILL – OUR DECISIONS

**Should our decision-making focus on trying to discover or obtain "God's Perfect Plan" for our life?**

## I. INTRO

Before we can discuss decision-making, we must clarify the sovereign will of God and the moral will of God.

An understanding of these two aspects of God's Will is foundational to understanding decision-making in regard to His Will.

Conceptually, we want to deal with the idea that we as humans are expected to discover "God's perfect will" for our lives; i.e. find the person God has chosen for us to marry; live where He wants us to live; be involved in a ministry or work a particular job; etc.

## II. PRELIMINARY CONCEPTS

A. DECREE -----“God’s eternal purpose according to the council of His own will, whereby, for His own glory, He has ordained whatever comes to pass” (Westminster Catechism)

1.) There is one comprehensive plan in which all things have their place and by which they proceed. God did not decree anything concerning Himself, as to His own existence, attributes, subsistence in Three Persons or any inherent relationship or assumption of responsibilities within the Godhead.

2.) The decree of God relates to His acts which are outside His own Being. Consequently, everything that was, or is, or ever will be outside God’s own Person is included in the decree. (creation)

OMNISCIENCE ----- Knowledge of all things – both actual and possible

B. SOVEREIGN -----“Supreme power or Authority”

1.) When used in reference to God, it speaks of His ruling over all things. To say that God is sovereign states that God is the supreme ruler, but it does not include within its definition how He rules.

C. FREEDOM----- The absence of any restrictions.

1.) All freedom is LIMITED (by birth, circumstances, the age in which one is born or lives, money, ability, intelligence, exposure, etc...). Freedom is always restricted by bounds which by definition, results in limited freedom. Even God is not totally free. God cannot lie, etc... The only thing that restricts God is His own nature. Freedom, though limited, is real.

## THE SOVEREIGN WILL OF GOD

### A. THE DECREE

- 1.) The Decree of God is singular.
- 2.) The Decree of God is Free, and not necessary.  
God has decreed all that has come to pass because He wanted to. He needs nothing. All things exist for God, not He for them.  
Ps.135:6  
Rev.4:11  
Rom.11:33-36  
  
Being alone when His Decree was, His determinations were influenced by no other being. He was FREE to do or not to do. (No obligation, no need, no outside motivation).
- 3.) The Decree of God is Eternal in Nature  
Eph.3:11 & 1:11 (called “the eternal purpose” or “His purpose”)  
The Decree, being eternal, all its parts are in the mind of God, but one, though in its realization there is succession.
- 4.) The Decree of God is Wise  
The wisdom of God behind the Decree of God assures us of the ultimate (even infinite) goodness that will come out of God’s plan. There is a worthy reason for all that God has done or will do.  
Rom.11:33
- 5.) The Decree of God is Unconditional  
Eph.1:11  
  
The execution of it is in no way dependent upon conditions which may or may not emerge. There is no uncertainty or change.  
Is.46:9,10
- 6.) The Decree of God is All-Inclusive: Ps.103:19  
God has not decreed certain things and left others to man’s free will or chance. Everything is included in God’s plan.

## B. PROPOSTIONS ABOUT THE DECREE

- 1.) The origin of the decree is in God Himself. No one forced Him to do it. No one advised Him concerning it.

Rom.9:11,16-18,21

All through the Bible it is said that God is working things “according to His purpose” or plan. It is also said that this plan is from before the foundation of the world, thus excluding anything from having influenced Him from this realm.

It also states that “no one has been His counselor concerning these things”, thereby excluding His angels. It is also spoken of as “His eternal purpose”. God only, being eternal, would exclude any other creature from influencing it. Consequently, all things are the outworking of an eternal purpose which God alone has planned which incorporates all things.Eph.1:11

- 2.) It is not incompatible with human responsibility, it includes it.

At no place in the scriptures are creatures permitted to trace responsibility for themselves back to God.

- a.) When God pronounced judgment upon Adam, He did not say “I am partly to blame since I created you” or “I am partly to blame since I created the circumstances you found yourself in”. the blame rested on Adam alone. The race fell in Adam and became that which they are, “the children of wrath”. Eph.2:1-3

- b.) Likewise, when every child of God stands at the reward seat for his service that was wrought only by the enabling power of the Spirit of God, God will not say, “I claim the larger share in all you did for Me”. The honor and credit will rest upon the faithful servant alone, as undividedly as though they had wrought it in their own strength; though the Bible refers to our good works as “good works which we were predestined to walk in”.

## SOMETHING “GREAT” TO THINK ABOUT

\* The above “truth”, negatively stated: God is not following a plan which is not worthy of Him, or that He is only partially in authority over, or that He has failed and is seeking to salvage something out of the wreckage, or that He is conforming to things which He has no control over. All that has taken place or ever will take place is a part of His decree.

\* Positively stated: The plan of God as ordained and as it is being achieved is, and in the end will prove to be, the best plan and purpose that could have been devised by infinite wisdom, consummated by infinite power, and that which will be the supreme satisfaction to infinite love.

**IN SHORT: THE PRESENT PLAN IS AS PERFECT AS ITS AUTHOR!**

- 3.) In relation to the wicked, the Decree includes Retribution (deserved punishment) and Pretorition (passed by).

Note: Pretorition does not imply:

1. that God delights in it - I Tim.2:4
2. that they are driven against their will to reject Christ - Matt.23:37
3. that the gospel isn't whosoever will
4. that man is not responsible

Note: According to the Bible, God does not damn anyone to hell, they “chose” that end themselves.

- 4.) The Decree of God must be distinguished from the Desires of God. God has not purposed to do all that He desires to do. God is not willing that any should perish but His Decree includes it. God has not decreed all that He has desired.

Note: The Biblical teaching concerning the “fact” that God has decreed all things is very clear in scripture. The “fact” that He is sovereign is very clear. The “fact” that man is free to choose or reject his life and consequent destiny is just as clear. Logically, a finite mind cannot put these two “truths” together. Yet the Bible teaches both. God's ways are past finding out! We need to try and understand what God has chosen to reveal to us. We must accept what God describes! BUT; we MUST NOT try to limit God's activities to our desires, understanding, etc...

C. THE WORKING OF THE DECREE  
(FOUR WAYS THAT GOD IS SEEN IN WORKING OUT HIS DECREE)

A. PREVENTATIVE ACTS OF GOD (Gen.20:6)

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B. PERMISSIVE ACTS OF GOD

1.) Textual evidence:

a.) Rom.1:24

b.) Acts 14:16

There is evil in the world. God is a Holy God. Since both these are true, God did not directly put evil in the world, He permitted it but He still controls it.

GREATEST EVIL IN THE WORLD  
GREATEST WORK GOD HAS EVER DONE

CRUCIFIXION OF  
CHRIST

Evil men had a major part in the outworking of God's plan, yet we don't thank evil men for our salvation.

C. DIRECTIVE ACTS OF GOD  
(Gen.50:20)

D. LIMITATIVE ACTS OF GOD  
(Job 1:12, II Thes.2:7)

## **THE MORAL LAW OF GOD**

The Moral Law of God is as eternal as God is eternal.  
The Mosaic Law of God had a beginning - Sinai - and  
an ending - the Cross of Christ.  
It never had authority over anyone outside the Nation of Israel.

### **THOUGHTS ON THE "DOING AWAY" OF THE MOSAIC LAW**

#### **1. WHAT IS THE LAW? - THE ENTIRE PENTATEUCH**

The entire "book of the Law" Gal 3:10

#### **2. THE 10 COMMANDMENTS HAVE A PROMINENT PLACE IN THE LAW BUT CHRIST TAUGHT THAT THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT WAS NOT ONE OF THE 10.**

Matt 22:36-37; Lev 19:18; Deut 6:5

#### **3. JESUS SPOKE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT AS "THE LAW OR THE PROPHETS"**

Matt 5:17

"the Law of Moses and the prophets and the Psalms" Lk 2:44

#### **4. PAUL REFERRED TO THE OLD TESTAMENT AS "FROM THE LAW OF MOSES AND FROM THE PROPHETS" Acts 28:23**

#### **5. EACH ONE OF THE FIVE BOOKS OF THE PENTATEUCH IS IDENTIFIED AS A PORTION OF "THE LAW"**

a. 1Cor 14:34-35; Gen 3:16

b. Rom 7:7; Ex 20:17

c. Lk 10:26-27; Lev 19:18 and Deut 6:5

d. Mt 12:5; Num 28:9

e. 1Cor 9:9; Deut 25:4

#### **6. IN THE GOSPELS, THE WORD "LAW" ALWAYS REFERS TO THE MOSAIC LAW; OFTEN REFERRING TO THE ENTIRE PENTATEUCH**

## **THE MORAL LAW OF GOD**

7. THE LAW IS ONE LAW - AN INDIVISIBLE UNITY  
Jas 2:10; Gal5:3
  
8. WITH TWO EXCEPTIONS, HEB 8:10 AND 10:16 WHERE JER 31:33 IS BEING QUOTED FROM THE SEPTUAGINT, THE WORD "LAW" IN THE NEW TESTAMENT IS ALWAYS FOUND IN THE SINGULAR; THE LAW OF GOD VERSUS THE LAWS OF....
  
9. THE MOSAIC LAW CONTAINS "CONCESSIONS" TO SINFUL MAN WHICH DO NOT REFLECT THE ABSOLUTE MORAL LAW OF GOD.  
MT 19:8-9; 5:31-45  
As the Giver of that Law, Christ is in the position to modify its revelation.
  
10. COMPARING GAL 4:4 WITH 5:18 "under the law" BOTH PHRASES ARE IDENTICAL; ie WHATEVER CHRIST WAS BORN UNDER, WE ARE NOT UNDER AS BELIEVERS.
  
11. EPH 6:1-2 THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT...THE FIRST COMMANDMENT WITH A PROMISE IS THE ONLY ONE OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS WITH A PROMISE, MEANING THAT THE USE OF THE WORD "COMMANDMENT" ENCOMPASSES OTHER COMMANDMENTS OUTSIDE THE TEN.
  
12. THE MOSAIC LAW LEAVES ONLY TWO ALTERNATIVES -  
COMPLETE SUBJECTION - OR - COMPLETE VIOLATION GAL 5:3
  
13. THE MOSAIC LAW WAS A COVENANT MADE WITH ISRAEL ALONE.  
EX 19:3-6
  
14. THE END OF THE MOSAIC LAW (INCLUDING THE TEN COMMANDMENTS) DOES NOT CANCEL OR DETRACT FROM THE ETERNAL, MORAL LAW OF GOD.



## THE MORAL LAW OF GOD

15. IN THE DEATH OF CHRIST, THE BELIEVER IS DELIVERED FROM:
- a. the curse of the law      Gal 3:10
  - b. the law itself              Rom 7:4; Eph 2:14-15; Col 2:14,20-23
16. IT WAS AT CALVARY THAT CHRIST BECAME THE END OF THE "LAW FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS".      Rom 10:4
17. THE NEW REPLACES THE OLD, NOT BY DESTRUCTION, BUT BY FULFILLMENT.
18. CHRIST DID NOT FULFILL MERELY A PART OF THE LAW, BUT THE WHOLE OF IT.
- He did not complete the ritual portion of the Old Testament alone, but all its moral parts as well.
- If He has fulfilled the system in all its parts, then the system has passed away.
19. THE ETERNAL, MORAL LAW IS BINDING, ON THE BELIEVER, BUT NOT IN ITS MOSAIC FORM, BECAUSE IT IS A PART OF THE RIGHTEOUS WILL OF THE IMMUTABLE GOD.

## THE MORAL LAW OF GOD

### THE 10 COMMANDMENTS COMPARED TO THEIR RESTATEMENT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Remember: the Law of Moses does contain parts of the  
Eternal, Moral Law of God.

1. "You shall have not other gods before Me" Ex 20:3

The penalty for violation - death Ex 22:20; Deut 6:13-15

The principle involved is affirmed in the New Testament

1Tim 2:5; Acts 14:11-18

but nowhere is the penalty either affirmed or implied

CONCLUSION: The First Commandment has been annulled but  
the moral principle that only the true God should be  
worshipped and served abides forever!

The above principle will hold true for all of the remaining 9  
commandments.

2. "You shall not make for yourself an idol" Ex 20:4

The penalty - death Ex 32:19-28

NT - 1Cor 8:1-10; 12:2; 2Cor 6:16-18; 1Jn 5:21

3. " You shall not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain" Ex 20:7

The penalty - death Lev 24:15-16

NT - Mt5:33-37; Jas 5:12

## THE MORAL LAW OF GOD

4. "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy" Ex 20:8

Penalty - death Num 15:32-36

NT - Death is replaced with "optional" Rom 14:5-9  
To maintain the Law, abides - but - its penalties have been  
done away with

NOTE: COL 2:10-17  
GAL 3:17-19

5. "Honor your father and your mother" Ex 20:12

Penalty - death Ex 21:15,17  
(Deut 27:1-18 - 28:2ff, esp Vs 16  
Now that the Cross has been accomplished Rom 8:28-39)  
Mt 15:3-7a

NT - Eph 6:1-3 (NOTE: that "in the Land" of Ex 20:12 has been  
replaced with "on the earth" in Eph 6:3)

Remember: The principle continues but the law does not.

6. "You shall not kill" Ex 20:13

Penalty - death Ex 21:12 with qualification Num 35  
(The death penalty was instituted long before the Mosaic Law.)  
Gen 9:5-6

NT - 1Jn 3:15 The moral law of God is much more extensive than

the Mosaic Law. Mt 5:21-22

**THE MORAL LAW OF GOD**

7. " You shall not commit adultery" Ex 20:14

Penalty - death Lev 20:10

NT - Again, the moral law goes farther.  
Mt 5:27-28; 1Cor 6:9-11

8. " You shall not steal." Ex 20:15

Penalty - Ex 22:1-4 etc

NT - Eph 4:28

9. " You shall not bear false witness" Ex 20:16

Penalty Deut 19:16-21

NOTE: Verse 21 is found in the context of bearing false witness.

NT - Col 3:9-10

The appeal for honesty is not based upon the fear of penalty; but upon the reality of who God has made us to be.

10. " You shall not covet" Ex 20:17

Penalty - The Mosaic Law states no penalty for covetousness in thought only.

How that covetousness is expressed is where the penalties lie.

NT - covet = greed

Eph 5:3; Col 3:5



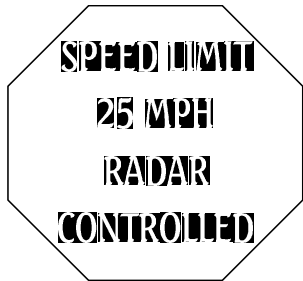
## PERSPECTIVES

QUOTES FROM ROY L. ALDRICH *"HAS THE MOSAIC LAW BEEN ABOLISHED?"*

**#1** As we drive down the road, we see a sign:



DIFFERENT FROM



**BOTH ARE TRUE!**

THE FIRST IS GRACE

Phil 3:17-20; Heb 12:28

THE SECOND IS "the MINISTRY OF DEATH"; "the MINISTRY OF CONDEMNATION"

2 Cor 3:7-18

Heb 12:18-27

## THE MORAL LAW OF GOD

**#2** This should be no more difficult to understand than the fact that a citizen of the United States is not under the laws of Canada, even though the moral principles underlying the laws of the two countries are the same.

When a citizen of the United States becomes a citizen of Canada he does not remain under ten of the best laws of the United States. Nor does the fact that some of the laws of the United States are quite similar to some of the laws of Canada confuse or compromise his new exclusive responsibility to Canada. So the believing Jew of the first century moved entirely from the Mosaic economy of law into the new economy of grace instituted by Jesus Christ. Jn 1:17

# DOES GOD HAVE A PERSONAL PLAN FOR YOU

Does God have a plan for our lives - a blueprint - that must be discovered by the individual?

If we hold that He does; how many (what percentage) of the decisions that we make are included in that blueprint?

**Shall I marry?**

**Whom shall I marry?**

**Where should I live?**

**What should my vocation be?**

**What shall I wear today?**

**What should I eat for lunch?**

**Where shall I sit?**

**Where should I buy gas?**

Certainty of God's will in every daily decision is a practical impossibility.  
Who decides which decisions fall under the will?

What about equal alternatives? Which of the dozen pairs of white socks



am I supposed to wear?

How can I know God's individual will for sure in a specific situation?

**YOU CANNOT!**

How do individuals attempt to explain their "certainty" on such matters?

**"Inner Impression" (the Voice of the Spirit).**

Impressions are impressions! Call them "spiritual" or attribute them to the Holy Spirit, and they are still the same - JUST IMPRESSIONS!

**Circumstances**

In order for circumstances to give direction, they must be interpreted. Scripture gives no guidelines for reading providence.

NOTE: To specific questions of vocation, marriage, education, etc. the Bible does not say. It only indicates what is and is not permissible.

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For God's children, all things within the moral will of God are:

lawful	1 Cor 6:12; 10:23
clean	Mk 7:19; Lk 11:37-41; Rom 14:14,20
pure	Titus 1:15



**IF THE BELIEVER IS FREE TO CHOOSE - HE IS ALSO REQUIRED TO CHOOSE.**

1 Thes 3:1-2	"we thought it best"
Phil 2:25-26	"I thought it necessary"
Acts 6:2-4	"It is not desirable"
Acts 15:22,25,28	"It seemed good"
Acts 15:19	"It is my judgment" (James)
Titus 3:12	"I have decided"

In the above: Apostolic decision-making was not based on "discerning God's will for such decisions, but was simply them exercising their freedom of choice within God's moral will.

In each case, in the judgment of the responsible decision-maker, their decision appeared to be the best way to accomplish some worthy objective.

1 Cor 6:1-6 Ordinary Christians, who will one day judge the world and fallen angels are "competent" to judge the matters of this life. Furthermore, those who possess a greater measure of wisdom are recognized as being able to make the better decisions.

1 Cor 7 Some questions' answers have been answered by the moral will of God.

1. married believers are not to abstain vs 3-5
2. not to get divorced vs 10-11

Others fall within the area of "free choice" where it is "good" or better vs 1,8,26,28,32-35,36,38

There are many things that the moral will of God does not address- Specific Situations in which we must make choices.

Blessing and making good decisions comes as a result of knowing and obeying the revealed moral will of God.

Jn 13:17; 2Tim 3:16-17

Spiritual success comes because the Sovereign God is working through believers who are obedient to His moral will.

Eph 5:16-17 (moral will of God)

**The Leading of the Holy Spirit**  
**(not whether God leads, but how)**

Rom 8:14     Context: The passage is not dealing with 2 possible places to live or homes to buy.  
It is dealing with the law of sin and death versus the law of the Spirit of life - conformity to the moral will of God.

Gal 5:18     Context: The conflicting pulls of the flesh on ONE HAND - AND - the indwelling Spirit ON THE OTHER - FRUIT OF THE FLESH - AND - FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Jn16:12-14     Context: Spiritual truth that they have been taught (you - apostles)

Col 3:15     a. I have peace about - must be the right decision  
b. Paul is not writing about God's provision for decision-making, but rather a moral life style that is consistent with the believer's position in Christ. He is not referencing inward peace of the soul, but is referencing peace with one another.

**GOD'S REVEALED WILL FOR US**  
**(THAT WHICH WE CAN BE CERTAIN OF)**

1 THESS 4:3; 5:18 (VS 10-17)  
1 THESS 4:1-16  
1 THESS 5:1  
1 TIM 5:8  
2 THESS 1:3-4  
1 THESS 4:10-11  
1 COR 10:31  
2 COR 5:9

COL 1:10  
1 COR 10:23-24  
ROM 14:19  
1 THESS 5:22 - 6:9  
GAL 6:9-10  
1 TIM 5:8  
1 COR 6:12  
1 THESS 2:10

If I make the following decision will it help or hinder me in accomplishing the above goals

If His Moral Will has not been violated, there has been no sin.  
If there is no sin, there is no guilt.  
In decisions where God's law does not restrict, the believer has moral freedom to decide.

## WISDOM'S PLACE IN DECISION-MAKING

1. Wisdom is gained by those who seek it.

Prov 8:17

2. Wisdom is found in God Himself

Job 9:1-4; 12:13; Dan 2:20; Rom 16:27

and is given to men Prov 2:6

to those who value it enough to pursue it Prov 2:4-5; Jas 1:5-8

3. The wisdom granted by God produces

a. Reverence

Prov 9:10

b. Humility

Prov 11:2; 15:33

c. Teachableness

Prov 9:9; 15:31; 19:20

d. Diligence

Prov 8:17; 2:4-5

e. Uprightness

Prov 2:7

f. Faith

Jas 1:5-8