

Discerning the Will of God

Discerning the Will of God

- We want to live in harmony with God's will
 - Rom. 1:9-10 - “For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers, 10 making request if, by some means, now at last I may find a way in the will of God to come to you.”

Discerning the Will of God

- How can we discern God's will for us in critical decisions or even day to day matters?
 - We must be diligent to practice God's will as revealed in His Word
 - We must be careful to permit ourselves only those things in which God has granted liberty
 - We must avoid being dogmatic in matters of God's Providence.

Discerning the Will of God

- Stop saying of evil “It was God’s will.”
- “It was God’s will that my wife got cancer.”
 - Really? How do you know for a fact that it was not as Solomon said in his inspired wisdom: “I returned and saw under the sun that-The race is not to the swift, Nor the battle to the strong, Nor bread to the wise, Nor riches to men of understanding, Nor favor to men of skill; But time and chance happen to them all” (Ecc. 9:11)?
- “It was God’s will that drunk driver killed an innocent child.”
 - Really?! God does not will man’s evil.

Scriptural Manifestations Of God's Will

- God's proclaimed will
 - 1Thes. 5:18 - "in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."
 - 1Peter 2:15 - "For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men"

Scriptural Manifestations Of God's Will

- God's proclaimed will: Clearly given through revelation of inspired scripture
 - Heb. 1:1-2 - "God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, 2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds"

Scriptural Manifestations Of God's Will

- God's proclaimed will: Clearly given through revelation of inspired scripture
 - John 16:12-14 - "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 13 However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. 14 He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you."

Scriptural Manifestations Of God's Will

- God's proclaimed will: Clearly given through revelation of inspired scripture
 - 1Cor. 14:36-37 - "Or did the word of God come originally from you? Or was it you only that it reached? 37 If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord."

Scriptural Manifestations Of God's Will

- God's proclaimed will: Clearly expected by the Divine
 - Matt. 7:21 - "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven."
 - 2Tim. 3:16-17 - "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."

Scriptural Manifestations Of God's Will

- God's proclaimed will: Clear enough to make all men accountable to it in the Judgment
 - Acts 17:30-31 - "Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, 31 because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead."

Scriptural Manifestations Of God's Will

- God's proclaimed will: Clearly God can fulfill His will regardless of the intent or efforts of men
 - Isa. 10:5-7 - "Woe to Assyria, the rod of My anger And the staff in whose hand is My indignation. 6 I will send him against an ungodly nation, And against the people of My wrath I will give him charge, To seize the spoil, to take the prey, And to tread them down like the mire of the streets. 7 Yet he does not mean so, Nor does his heart think so; But it is in his heart to destroy, And cut off not a few nations."

Scriptural Manifestations Of God's Will

- God's permissive will
 - There are some matters about which God is indifferent with regard to our choice; He has granted liberty in such things
 - Rom. 14:4-6 - "Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand. 5 One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. 6 He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks."

Scriptural Manifestations Of God's Will

- God's providential will
 - God acts providentially in our lives
 - Rom. 15:30-32 - “Now I beg you, brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in prayers to God for me, 31 that I may be delivered from those in Judea who do not believe, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints, 32 that I may come to you with joy by the will of God, and may be refreshed together with you.”

Scriptural Manifestations Of God's Will

- God's providential will
 - If our plans cooperate with His will, He will bless us
 - Prov. 3:5-6 - "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths."

Scriptural Manifestations Of God's Will

- God's providential will
 - We should pray to God about our plans
 - James 4:13-15 - “Come now, you who say, Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit; 14 whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. 15 Instead you ought to say, If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.”

Scriptural Manifestations Of God's Will

- God's providential will
 - Our requests are answered according to their harmony with God's will
 - 1John 5:14-15 - "Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 15 And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him."

Discerning God's Providential Will

- Begin with determining the proclaimed will of God, if He has spoken on the matter
- If one does not accept and practice the revealed will of God, what purpose does it serve to determine areas of God's unrevealed will?

Discerning God's Providential Will

- Consider the wisdom and experience of others; discuss alternatives with older, mature Christians
 - Prov. 11:14 - “Where there is no counsel, the people fall; But in the multitude of counselors there is safety.”
 - Prov. 12:15 - “The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, But he who heeds counsel is wise.”

Discerning God's Providential Will

- Pray for wisdom
 - James 1:5-8 - “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. 6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. 7 For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.”
 - Wisdom is insight developed by long term exposure to spiritual matters that enables us to evaluate situations clearly, and use the options and abilities we have. Use wisdom to eliminate less acceptable desires

Discerning God's Providential Will

- Be committed to the Lord
 - Psalm 37:5-6, 23-25 - “Commit your way to the LORD, Trust also in Him, And He shall bring it to pass. 6 He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, And your justice as the noonday... 23 The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD, And He delights in his way. 24 Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; For the LORD upholds him with His hand. 25 I have been young, and now am old; Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, Nor his descendants begging bread.”

Discerning God's Providential Will

- Ask God to close the door on your choice if that is His will
 - Matt. 26:39 - “He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.”
 - If He closes the door on your choice, accept it and look for alternatives

Discerning God's Providential Will

- Remember that God is Deity, not human
 - God sees the end of a thing from the beginning
 - God operates on an eternal timescale
 - God will always choose our spiritual benefit over our physical comfort
 - God can use us and our choices in multiple ways and accomplish His purposes fully in spite of our strength or weakness

Discerning God's Providential Will

- Remember that you are human, not Deity
 - Not all of your choices will be between good and bad, but occasionally between good and better
 - If you have trouble deciding, pray, talk to the wise, and wait for wisdom to come to you
 - If you discover you have made wrong choice, stop and change direction; do not turn a mistake into persistent folly
 - When you have made a good choice, perform it with all of your will, strength, and resources

Discerning God's Providential Will

- Col. 4:12 - "Epaphras, who is one of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God."
- Matt. 6:10 - "Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven."
- You will never begin to successfully discern the will of God in all other matters, until you both discern and obey the will of God in salvation