

Gospel & Guidance

Decision making in the light of God's big plan

Life is full of decisions, from the trivial to the major.

Some questions we might ask:

- Does God guide his people – if so how?
- How do I know God's will?
- Does God have a specific will for my life?
- Do I need to know his specific will?
- How can I be sure?

What have we heard in our culture, churches, songs, testimonies?

“God told me”, dreams

Fatalism, ‘graph of my life’, nothing you can do, no responsibility

God has a plan for my life (Jer. 29:11) and I must find it out and follow it

Claiming a particular verse

Laying a fleece

Horoscopes, divination

This sort of desire for guidance can come out of selfish desires and out of a proud concept of me being at the centre of the world. When people say, “God told me his will for you” it is subjective, unverifiable and often a desire for control over others. Often the desire for specific guidance is inspired by **fear not faith** – wanting to allay worries about future, wanting to be into control, rather than a desire to obey. God has often chosen to hidden the future because he wants us to trust in the one who holds the future. We don't need to understand all the complex layers of the will of God and all the reasons why every terrible thing happens. Rather we are to trust and obey.

These verses put things bring us down to earth:

Prov. 14:12 (the things that look right to us often end in death); Jer. 10:23 (we don't have the power in ourselves to direct our lives)

If we have confidence in the Word, in Christ, in what he wants for me, in the goodness of God in all the circumstances he brings to me – that is enough.

1. The fact that the Scriptures exist is proof of God's *desire* to guide us and the answer to the question of *how* he guides us. But do we really believe the Scriptures are sufficient? What level of specificity is necessary? Would we really want more specificity?
 - a. When we close the Bible and ask for a ‘sign’ are we not despising the Word of God?
 - b. God has designed life as a journey of trust in him where we often will not know why we are where we are (e.g. Joseph in Egypt).
 - c. The heroes of faith (e.g. Athanasius) did not know the exact plan for their life (e.g. 5 exiles) but were confident in Christ and driven by the truths of Scripture.
2. So commit yourself to the loving sovereign - Proverbs 16:1-4; 1 Peter 5:6-7

3. What is God really concerned about?
 - a. Get things in perspective – e.g. marriage or career in relation to eternity (Mark 12:25)
 - b. Whenever the Bible speaks of the “will of God” it refers to eternal things, salvation, sanctification, righteousness (e.g. 1 Thess. 4:3; Eph. 6:6; Col. 4:12).

Main text: Ephesians 1

Looking at v1-14

- How do you see the supremacy and sovereignty of God here?
- How is the Trinity at work? How much does it depend on us?
- Is there any risk that those in Christ will miss out on God’s will, his blessings, or our inheritance?
- How is this encouraging amid uncertainties and decisions?
- What are we told is God’s will for us in these verses?
- What are God’s big concerns and what should be our big concerns in life?

Looking at v15-23

- What might we often pray that God would reveal to us? What does Paul pray would be revealed to the Ephesians?
- What is God’s big plan?

The chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever.

We have it all in Christ. Christ is our all in all. We’re children of the king. In the light of that, the things that worry us about the future pale into insignificance.

Extra reading:

- [Decisions, decisions \(Good Book Blog\)](#)
- [Guidance and the will of God \(Conversation Magazine blog\)](#)

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