

From Acorn to Oak

Who is God, and what is he like? Part 23: What is his will and how can I discern it?

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Not long ago I was in a supermarket and stopped by the greeting card section. Browsing the birthday cards, I came across one with this message: “How do you discover if a wish is right for you? Search your heart and you will know.” My first thoughts were, “How consistent with our culture but what stark contrast with the Bible!”

The prophet, Jeremiah, recorded God’s revelation to him in these words: “The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?” (17:9) Why then seek understanding in that source?! The Book of Proverbs adds other insights, e.g., “Who can say, ‘I have kept my heart pure; I am clean and without sin?’” (20:9) “There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end it leads to death.” (14:12 TNIV)

Contrary to the preponderance of “advice” coming from the media and many other sources urging people to “follow their hearts,” the Bible’s much more realistic description of human nature to its core and the hope God’s Word offers is infinitely more helpful. Does all this mean that we should never consider our hearts, specifically our feelings, about what we would like to do? Of course not, but feelings follow and are subjected to other entities, including God’s Word, the Holy Spirit’s guidance, admonition from carefully selected church members, and cognitively guided self-control. (Micah 6:8, Galatians 5:22-23)

We love God, and we want to please him, to do his will. How, then, in the light of the above, do we discern God’s will?

Intelligent, reasonable, and wise employees try to please the owner of the company where they work. They know it will go better for them, and for their families, if they obey the owner’s rules and try hard to determine and do the owner’s will in all matters whenever possible.

The same is true for us. It goes better for us when we discern God’s will and do it. Always. (Unlike the owner of a company, who like us is also a sinner and who sometimes is wrong, we can always including forever trust God, knowing that all he asks of us, all he wills for us, is good, wise, and perfect.) Therefore, we start with giving careful attention to God’s Word, praying for his help in interpreting it correctly, and following it.

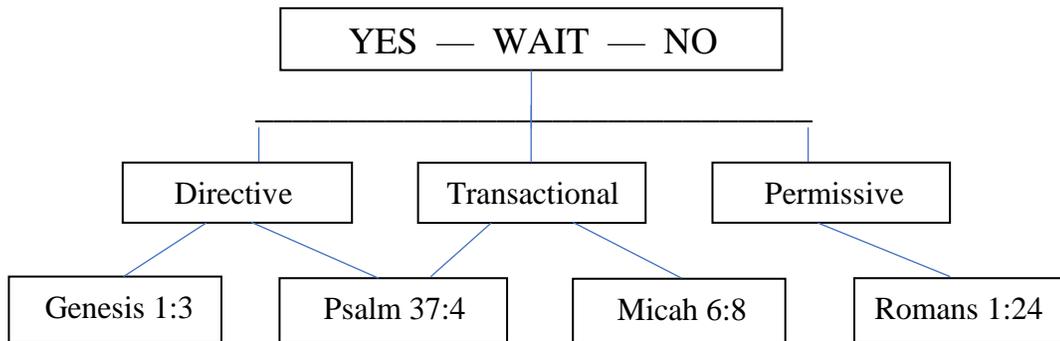
Volumes have been written on the subject of God’s will; we can only here highlight helpful and key aspects. The Bible reveals three main aspects of how God *functions* as his people seek to discern his will, which can be visualized in the graph on the next page. Basically, when we ask God for something, he always answers us. Sometimes the answer is “Yes;” sometimes it is “No;” and sometimes it is “Wait.”

As we read his Word, we see that God reveals his will in three main ways. In his directive will, he takes the initiative and issues a command (e.g., “Let there be light” [Genesis 1:3]). At other times, he transacts with human beings, who bear his image, and, giving us principles in his Word (e.g., Micah 6:8 and Psalm 37:4), he guides us to choose from alternatives within parameters the option we want to do, albeit also acceptable to him (i.e., according to his [transactional] will). On

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other occasions, functioning according to his permissive will, he allows people to do what they wish to do, and when what they want to do is not in accord with his Word, they experience the consequences of such behavior, which should be a learning experience causing them to turn to him in repentance and with the request for his help to do rightly going forward.

God's Will



As far as the *substance* of God's will on specific subjects, much more can be said regarding Biblical guidelines for discerning God's will according to his Word in a particular matter, but in summary, when we want to know if doing something is in harmony with his will, or is pleasing to him (1 Thessalonians 4:1-3), we start with whether the Bible deals with this subject. If so, obey the text. For example, if one is struggling with the temptation to have an affair, he or she doesn't have to read any farther than the seventh commandment (or the sixth in some reckonings), "You shall not commit adultery" (Exodus 20:14), to know God's will; it is clear and unmistakable. That person has his or her answer.

Thoroughgoing postmodernists will argue for the validity of "nuances" and accuse us of being too simplistic and outdated. They are only trying to rationalize their way out of obedience to God's Word and will. Do not follow them; oppose them, speaking the truth in love. (Ephesians 4:15) Communicate God's Word as much as they will listen.

Again, start with the text. Sinful humans rationalize, e.g., "Well, my wife isn't meeting my needs, and Susie is so wonderful and willing." He may even say he loves Susie and that God will understand.

First of all, that's not love; it's lust. True love, as defined by God himself, is "patient and kind...does not envy...is not rude...is not self-seeking...is not easily angered...does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails." (1 Corinthians 14:4-8)

Friends, that definition of true love that God has given us, is the exact opposite of the lust that motivates and maintains adultery. As an ordained pastor, called by God to proclaim his Word, that call being recognized and verified well over half a century ago by the official authorities in the Reformed Church in America, the oldest Protestant denomination in the United States with a continuous ministry since 1628 (thus being no "fly-by-night" counterfeit "church"), I hereby

assure you that anyone who tries to rationalize adultery in any way is rejecting God (1 Thessalonians 4:8), and he or she will not be able to “pull the wool over his eyes,” which see everything, at the time for accountability when he or she appears before him.

Yes, God understands all right. He thoroughly and clearly understands that this fellow is unwilling to consider his wife’s needs and feelings and their relationship, including his and her vows before God. God also loves this person’s wife, and he knows the pain that will come to her, to the fellow himself, to their children, to Susie, to Susie’s husband, and to many others as a result of adultery. God also understands that if Susie and her paramour commit adultery they are rejecting God himself.

What does the text say? It says, do not commit adultery. There are no qualifications in Exodus 20:14 or in any of the related passages on adultery in the Bible. Nowhere does it say, “Do not commit adultery, unless you have an unresponsive wife, or a husband who won’t communicate, or even if he or she has committed adultery.” Neither would that justify either spouse committing adultery him or herself “to get even” or for any other reason. God’s will is that we truly love our spouse and work at making our marriage as strong as possible. Where difficulties emerge, plenty of help exists. God helps us directly, working in our minds and hearts, and indirectly through others.

In Christ hope for healing is always possible. I’ve seen it in many years as a pastor. However, those needing help should not make the mistake many do and only seek counseling after they’ve made the decision to divorce. That is not truly seeking God’s will.

Many people who rationalize do so with pseudointellectualism, questioning definitions, but that’s why we have standards, such as dictionaries, lest communication degenerate into absurdity. See also such passages as 1 Corinthians 6:9-20, Ephesians 5:1-20, 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8. Careful choice of words is vital for effective communication.

When it comes to Biblical words, use a Bible dictionary, not a secular dictionary written by people who may not, and often definitely do not, understand the meaning of words in God’s Word. Even when they do understand, especially if they disagree, they are inclined to alter the meaning of the Bible’s words. Remember, such altering is done not only by rendering definitions that are misleading but also by failing to include key denotations and connotations in the definition, thus rendering definitions that err by commission as well as by omission.

Now, what about those questions that come before us where the Bible does not speak with a specific text on the matter? Prayer and God’s Word are the first steps to discerning God’s will, what will please him in this situation. We begin with prayer, asking God to help us understand the applicable Biblical principles and for him to guide us. Recall King David’s prayer in Psalm 143:10, “Teach me to do your will, for you are my God; may your good Spirit lead me on level ground.” Old Testament scholar and Associate Editor of *The NIV Study Bible*, John H. Stek, writes in his commentary on the Psalms that “lead me on level ground” is a plea for God to guide David where the going is smooth and to keep him from falling.

When we start by asking for God’s help directly in prayer, his Spirit guides us, including by illuminating applicable Scriptural principles. In the light of the above, we begin our search for God’s will with a cognitive process that is not conformed to the worldly mentality but with a

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mind that is holy to God, transformed and renewed by him, so we are “able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.” (Romans 12:2)

Along with prayer consider your options in the light of Micah 6:8, “He has shown all you people what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.” (TNIV) For example, let’s say you’re considering four new job possibilities. Subject each to these three aspects of God’s will. Would it be just? For example, would doing any of them harm someone else, such as negatively affecting your relationship with your spouse, or require you to perform tasks or function in other ways unjustly, contrary to what the Bible teaches, including acting with insufficient mercy or kindness (RSV) toward others? Would the job you’re considering co-opt your ability to function in humility before the Lord in all you do?

To further illustrate, sometime ago I heard a lecture on God’s will at an institute for ministers, and the speaker very insightfully and wisely said, “If you’re considering a move to another church, and your wife [we were all men] opposes the move, understand that at least at that point in time it is not God’s will for you to move; he is not in the business of breaking up marriages.” The same principle applies for those in other occupations, as many have discovered with intense pain.

In this manner one or two of these four job possibilities may not pass muster on the Micah 6:8 test and can be eliminated. You can then consider that any of the ones remaining are within God’s will for you. Does his Word offer guidance as to his will regarding the remaining options? Yes!

It is then, that we can allow our feelings to influence our decision-making. In this example, if we still have more than one option left, none of which runs counter to what the Bible teaches, then is when God says we can look to our feelings. David declared, “Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart” (Psalm 37:4), but in doing so, the Lord will never contradict what he has said in his Word. I’ve known people to pray for something God clearly condemns in the Bible, as if they’re hoping he’ll say, “Well, all right, but just this one time!” It doesn’t work that way! As we’ve seen, God is holy; in fact he is holy, holy, holy (Isaiah 6:3; Revelation 4:8, the way the Hebrew language expresses the superlative, the concept of most or greatest). He is not only displeased by sin, he is offended by it; it is contrary to his whole being, his character and his will.

It is not difficult to comprehend how unbelievers without the new nature from and internal guidance of the Holy Spirit can err in their understanding of God, in particular regarding his holiness and pleasing him. However, many who claim to be Christians are ignorant of, and even rebellious against, God’s holiness and its implications for discerning and obeying his will. Sometime ago, I heard of a man and a woman, both married to someone else, who were engaging in an affair. They would meet in a motel room for their trysts, and before they again would disobey God’s commandment to not commit adultery, they would sit on the bed and have devotions! Such defiant disobedience is disgusting, detestable, and highly offensive to God! It is ***rebellion against*** his will!

There is no place in the Bible that gives this couple any assurance those prayers were well received. See what God says through Isaiah: “your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.” (59:2) Peter, quoting Psalm 34:15 and 16, writes, “the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their

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prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.” (1 Peter 3:12) Jesus said, “I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.” (John 15:16)

It is true that we all sin and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23), and yet God hears our prayers in Christ (James 5:16). *The issue here is conscious, intentional, and habitual disobedience—clearly displeasing to God and not at all in his will. He has neither promised to hear those prayers of disobedience and rebellion nor to honor them.*

This is not to say the couple cannot be forgiven or saved (the former if they are immature Christians mired in a very elementary stage of sanctification; the latter if they’re pagans, wolves in sheep’s clothing [Matthew 7:15-23]); but the Bible is clear that God expects a change of heart, true repentance, and a commitment to obey with concomitant actions before he considers us truly repentant and doing his will. See also Hebrews 13:4, and John 14:21, the latter verse being one which John Stott, the outstanding Anglican pastor, scholar, and prolific author, said every Christian should memorize. I heartily agree! Repentance involves not only sincere regret for the sin but also discontinuing that sinful behavior and committing to obedience to God’s will that shows forth in a track record over time.

Three Important Theological Clarifications to Keep in Mind

Many today wanting to correct theological errors of the past go to extremes to correct them and in so doing commit the opposite error. Three over-emphases are readily observed today, and all three are closely related. When doing so a host of other problems arise.

1. Don’t overemphasize grace to the exclusion of grateful obedience to the moral law.

An overemphasis on the law, eclipsing grace, led many in the past, and some yet today, to become very legalistic. This development further led to judgmentalism that resulted in more problems, including hypocrisy. In recent decades the emphasis to correct the overstress on law has led to an emphasis on grace to the extent that law is so minimized, and salvation by grace alone so emphasized, that many think following the law is unnecessary. Now, the emphasis is that since the Bible clearly teaches salvation is by grace alone, an anti-law mentality has set in.

But a closer look at God’s Word reveals that God wants us to follow his law, the moral aspects of it. Often citing Christ’s fulfillment of the law, many today fail to distinguish between the three main types of the law: moral, ceremonial, and civil. The latter pertained to the period prior to the kings of Israel, when God ruled Israel as a theocracy, the best period they had as a nation before Christ came, and also to the period of the kings. The ceremonial law pertained primarily to Israel’s worship, specifically involving the animal sacrifices that were means used in the Old Testament to teach the concept of vicarious atonement and prepare people for the once-for-all sacrifice Christ was coming to do. (Hebrews 7:27; 9:26)

The moral aspects of the law were always, and still are, done in gratitude to the Lord for our salvation by faith. We are always to keep the moral law, which in Christ helps us honor God and live in holiness to him. (Matthew 5:17-20) Living a holy lifestyle is both physically and spiritually healthy. We simply always keep in mind that by keeping the law we do not at all thereby earn our salvation. Not at all! But we thereby do honor God by living a holy lifestyle in

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gratitude to him for our salvation, which out of his great love for us, he granted to us at a huge cost to himself! The least we can do is show our appreciation and honor him by living holy lives, as is his will, in thanksgiving for his most wonderful gift of eternal life for us.

The issue is the motivation for keeping the moral law. We do it not to earn our salvation (which is God's free gift to us that we are totally incapable of earning) but as an expression of gratitude to God for his great gift to us of salvation in and through Jesus Christ. This clarification should correct a contemporary overemphasis on grace that borders on, and many times crosses over the border into, moral license and different degrees of depravity.

2. Don't overemphasize God's grace to the exclusion of doing good works in gratitude to God.

This overemphasis is essentially the same as the first but with one added dimension: going beyond the law to include any and all works as unnecessary. The motives driving this out of balance orientation range from the fear of works righteousness to a sinful attempt to theologically justify licentiousness. The former is of course an unwarranted and inadequate, though sometimes sincere but ill-informed theological concern, and the latter is a culpable and contorted casuistry that is sinful and requires church discipline.

Previously, and by certain denominations in particular, some Christians overemphasized the importance of doing works to please God. Frequently quoting James, and usually out of context, the overly strong stress on works led to the error of works righteousness. Let's look carefully.

²⁰You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless?
²¹Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? ²²You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. ²³And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called God's friend. ²⁴You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone.

²⁵In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction? ²⁶As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead. (James 2:20-26)

As observed above in the discussion of the overemphasis on God's grace in reaction to an overemphasis on the law, we also see a corresponding overemphasis in reaction to, and usually based on a misunderstanding of, the role of works. Employing the same rationale, that since our salvation is by God's grace alone, many therefore go to the extreme of so overemphasizing grace that the Biblical teaching concerning the importance of works is ignored and often denigrated. The result is that many conclude that works is not important and they are free to do whatever they want to do, and if they slip into sin sometimes in so doing, "Oh well, I'll just ask forgiveness, God will forgive me, and I'll be OK."

But it's not OK! Works are important, as the Holy Spirit speaking through James teaches us. Faith, which has occurred before works (e.g., Romans 4:9-10 ff.) is verified by works that demonstrate its authenticity, genuineness, and veracity. This vetting of faith is as much if not

more important today than ever, since the young adult generation called the Millennials (those born after 1984 in Barna's research, some researchers give other dates), who significantly outnumber even the huge Baby Boomer generation, place a strong emphasis on authenticity and a strong abhorrence on hypocrisy. Yes, we cannot, as many did in the past and some do today, so emphasize works that a full-blown, or at least a quasi, works righteousness emerges either in effect or by implication.

Indeed, works are very important. *The key, as in the first overemphasis, is the motivation.* We must remember James' admonition to do good works that vet our faith, verifying it in others' view and encouraging our faith development and its applications in accord with God's will. Our motivation determines the rightness or wrongness of our emphasis. We do good works not to earn salvation, which we cannot do; we do good works out of genuine love for and gratitude to God for his sacrificial love for us, at great cost to himself in the most wonderful demonstration of love ever, that has provided our salvation for his eternal service and presence.

3. Don't disregard God's judgment in an overemphasis on his love.

Many years ago, we saw an excessive overemphasis on God's justice, focusing on his judgment. Likely due in part to a pendulum swing away from that distortion of grace, we now see an overemphasis on a partial understanding of his love. Many view God only as all loving and their "best friend," but not their Lord who has a will for them and to whom they are accountable for adhering to his will. Such an out of balance perspective issues forth in much behavior that, most euphemistically expressed, is not pleasing to God and could never be called consistent with, much less expressive of, his will.

Truly, God is our friend. (2 Chronicles 20:7; James 2:23). He is even our best friend. But when we so focus on that aspect of our relationship with him to the exclusion of the rest of what his Word teaches about who he is, what he is like, what he is doing, and our relationship with him and his will for us, as we've been examining in this series, our ship goes off keel and runs aground. This loss of perspective is counterproductive to helping us discern his will for our lives, including in specific matters.

Be Very Discerning When Asking Friends for Advice.

We need to also keep in mind another crucial reality concerning friendship and its implications. That reality pertains to the validity of what our friends have to say about what we should do in certain situations, and especially when it involves God's will for us.

*Our friends usually don't oppose us when they sense we really want to do something, and especially when we need correction. However, **true friends**, who love the Lord, care for our well-being, and are not worried about whether we'll continue to like them, **need to speak up when they see their friend about to head into sin or already sinning.** (Cf. Leviticus 19:17)*

Today some church elder boards are reluctant to discipline members, some of whom are their friends. This reluctance is disastrous for those who need such admonition and the lack of which negatively affects them, their families, the Lord himself, his church, and society (all of whom and of which belong to the Lord, as does the whole world that he loves and for which he cares [John
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3:16, cf. Jeremiah 29:1-14]). Truly, we are forgiven by and live in God's grace. But grace is not a license to cavalierly and habitually disobey God's commands; such actions are clearly contrary to God's pleasure, yet because he is sovereign he will still accomplish his purposes. (Cf. Romans 6:1-2)

Many times our forbearers offered insights that we do well to heed. In 1919 John Glover Monsma in his book, *What Calvinism Has Done for America*, wrote, "The more man knows concerning God and His works, the better he will understand the divine will, and the better able he will be to live a life that glorifies his Maker." (6) We need to keep learning from his Word, and from historic Christian theology, which is based on and congruent with his Word, more and more who God is and what he is like, including what he is doing, what his plans are for us, and what his calling of us involves.

The church is the primary means through whom God is working to accomplish his redemptive purposes and is especially helpful in discerning the will of God. He not only helps us directly through the Holy Spirit and his Word but also indirectly through others. Involving others, he primarily uses fellow believers whom the Bible calls the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27) to guide us.

When we have a question as to what is God's will in a particular matter, which the Bible has not addressed specifically, we should seek out at least one mature, wise, believer with whom we can discuss this question—***one who has the strength to tell us the truth, even if we don't want to hear it.*** Remaining doubts can be resolved by checking with two or three such people. These individuals are truly our best friends. (Proverbs 27:6; 28:23; Leviticus 19:17b; Galatians 6:1-2) *We all know those who will tell us what we want to hear on any occasion, but that is not helpful for truly trying to discern and do God's will.* Remember the disaster that befell King Rehoboam when he consulted the wrong people, his immature and unwise peers, and he followed their unwise advice instead of the wisdom of the elders he also consulted. (1 Kings 12)

Listen to Your Spouse!

Here is another way your wife or husband can be especially helpful to you in discerning and doing God's will. Our spouse in the Lord is our most helpful individual human source for receiving corrective feedback, for the marriage love and commitment assure us that we personally are not being rejected, just a sinful idea we are considering, or already are, doing.

To clarify: we're talking here about sin. Corrective feedback about wrongdoing, acts that are contrary to God's Word and will.

It's best to be proactive, and ask your spouse for his or her opinion of what you are thinking of, or are already, doing. Don't wait for him or her to speak up, hoping he or she won't say anything. But if you don't ask, and he or she speaks up about it, listen carefully. He or she is a vessel through whom God is speaking to you.

When your spouse gives you corrective feedback, don't become angry; thank him or her, and with a hug and a kiss! He or she has just kept you from going against God's will. If you do find yourself becoming angry about what he or she said, honestly ask yourself, "Why am I upset?"

It's usually because, deep down we know, our spouse is right. Quickly, ask God to help you desire to do what pleases him in this situation.

Our spouse has our best interests in mind, and due to the marriage commitment, he or she has the security to speak up without fear of losing a friend, in this case, solely humanly speaking, his or her best friend. Of course it's important to give this corrective feedback, using the most effective means, which have been summarized by the basic principle the apostle Paul mentioned: "Speak the truth in love." (Ephesians 4:15)

Timing is also valuable. For example, corrective feedback for a spouse (and anyone else) is much better received when together in private (Matthew 18:15), when relaxed, and without distractions. Avoid such circumstances as just after walking in the door when returning from a day of work, when children are present, and when otherwise occupied (e.g., concentrating on the income tax, in the middle of preparations for company about to arrive, and while watching the Super Bowl!). Neither our spouse nor anyone else will be optimally, if at all, receptive for what we have to say in such settings.

Included in timing is the choice of what to address. It primarily involves sins, not differences of opinion on some debatable matter. The latter, especially if it is bothersome, should be discussed, but watch the timing, including the number of occasions revisiting such subjects. Avoiding overkill, especially nagging in matters of difference of opinion, is a way of optimizing the principle that less is sometimes more. Over time, spouses who know what their wife or husband would like, often come around, especially when they don't feel badgered. After we've made a point once or twice on such disputable matters, (cf. Romans 14:1ff.) and our spouse is unwilling to budge, at least for now, let it go. But not with matters of sin and rebellion against God's will.

Here's another reason for marrying only a fellow Christian. He or she also has the Lord's best interests in his or her mind and heart, which of course are, or should be, ours as well. My precious wife of 48 ½ years, Carol, was such a blessing to me, still is, and thanks be to God will be so forever. Now, many years after her death, I still thank God every day, and multiple times during the day, for her, including for the corrective feedback she so skillfully and lovingly gave me! I confess there were some times when it wasn't easy and that I wasn't thrilled, to say the least, to hear some things she said, but it wasn't too long after such conversations that I was thankful she spoke up! And I always will be grateful to her, and to God, for her doing so and for the way she did so—briefly: in love as Paul explains in Ephesians 4:15 ("Speak the truth in love.") and defines in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 ("patient...kind...not envy...not boast...not arrogant (NASB)...not rude...not self-seeking...not easily angered...keeps no record of wrongs....")

In historic Christian theology, this guidance of God is part of what is called his Providence, i.e., how he guides and cares, provides, for us and our well-being. Let us thank God for his constant love, availability, and all-sufficient help, and let us also make pleasing him our greatest desire, objective, and accomplishment.

For Reflection and Discussion

1. Think of a matter you have emerging in your life, now or coming soon, in which you should ask God to guide you in order to discern and do his will. Use the Biblical guidelines above to help you in your decision-making.

2. Which fellow believer in and follower of the Lord Jesus Christ has the strength and maturity to tell you whether what you plan to do is, or is not, consistent with God's Word and in accord with God's will?
3. What can you do to obtain the most helpful corrective feedback from your spouse?
4. What can you do to give corrective feedback to your spouse and maximize the likelihood he or she will receive it well, including acting on it according to God's will?
5. Would you, or someone in your group, like to enlist the group's help in discerning God's will concerning a question you or he or she is considering?
6. Is there an issue in your church, community, state, or the nation that your group would like to discuss, using the Biblical guidelines above to discern God's will concerning that matter?
7. Discuss one of the problems a reader has sent to an advice columnist in today's newspaper. What would you, or your group, advise the person that God's will is in this particular situation? Would God be pleased with the advice of the columnist?

Author's Note:

Pertaining to discerning God's will on current matters, I have written a book addressing the question of God's will on a major issue not only in our society but also in many church congregations and denominations. See the book, *What Is God's Will Concerning Homosexuality? Help for Church Leaders and Others to Speak the Truth in Love*. It can be located on the Current Issues page of my Website, From Acorn to Oak 12. The direct URL is <https://www.fromacorntooak12.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Homosexuality-What-Is-Gods-Will-Concerning-Homosexuality.pdf>. The book and all other resources on both of my Websites are free.

The URLs for accessing my Websites are as follows:

1. www.edwardseely.com or www.fromacorntooak12.com
2. <https://seelyedward.academia.edu/>