

Lesson 13

GOD'S WILL AND GUIDANCE

Prepare for Your Assignment

1. Download message #13, "Knowing and Doing God's Will," from www.gty.org/fof.
2. Use your notebook to take notes on the message.
3. Work through the questions and tasks on the following pages.

Memorize Ephesians 5:17

So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

God is sovereign and has a purpose for all of His creation. He has a plan or "will" for each of us, though we often make His will more difficult to respond to than it really is. In this lesson we will explore God's will and how we are guided into it.

I. God's Will

The Bible portrays two aspects of God's will: sovereign will and commanded will. In God's sovereignty, He has a plan that covers all aspects of creation and time. He also has a commanded will that He legislates to His people.

A. The meaning of God's will

1. God's sovereign will

God's sovereign will involves His ultimate, complete control over everything. Nothing happens that is not in God's plan. History is really the unfolding of God's purposes, which happen exactly as He planned.

Look up each of the following verses, and write out the key thought about God's sovereign will.

a. Isaiah 14:24 'Surely, just as I have intended so it has happened, and just as I have planned so it will stand.'

b. Ephesians 1:11b "who works all things after the counsel of His will."

"I am God, and there is no one like Me. . . . My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all My good pleasure."

—Isaiah 46:9–10

2. God's commanded will

God's commanded will is revealed throughout the Bible as laws or principles. It is that aspect of His will to which men are held accountable.

a. According to the Great Commission (Matthew 28:20), what are new believers to be taught?

all that He commanded them

b. God gave two great commandments. List them below.

Matthew 22:37 "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind."

Matthew 22:39 "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

B. The nature of God's will

God's sovereign will and commanded will are better understood in light of their respective characteristics.

SOVEREIGN WILL	COMMANDED WILL
1. Secret; known only to God except as revealed through history or revelation	1. Revealed in the Bible
2. Cannot be resisted or thwarted	2. Can be resisted or disobeyed
3. Encompasses both good and evil (sin)	3. Involves only that which is good and holy
4. Comprehensive; controls all aspects of life, time, and history	4. Specific; provides principles for living
5. The believer is not commanded to know or discover what God has not revealed	5. Believers are exhorted to know, understand, and obey all that God has revealed

Study the table above. Test your understanding of God's *sovereign will* and His *commanded will*.

Write out the part of the verse that conveys God's will.

Check the appropriate box.

	Sovereign Will	Commanded Will
1. Philippians 2:13 _____ "It is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure." _____	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. 1 Thessalonians 4:3 _____ "For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that you abstain from sexual immorality." _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3. 2 Corinthians 6:14 _____ "Do not be bound together with unbelievers." _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4. Matthew 7:21 _____ "he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven." _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5. Philippians 1:6 _____ "He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus." _____	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Jeremiah 29:11 _____ "I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord." _____	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

C. Response to God's will

1. How should we respond to God's sovereign will?

- a. Proverbs 3:5-6 "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own
_____ understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths **straight**."

- b. 1 Peter 4:19 "Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall **entrust their**
_____ souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right."

c. James 4:13–15, “If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that.”

2. How should we respond to God’s commanded will?

a. Ephesians 5:17 “Do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.”

b. Deuteronomy 29:29 “observe all the words of this law.”

c. Deuteronomy 11:1 “keep His charge, His statutes, His ordinances, and His commandments.”

God Instructs; We Obey

“Good and upright is the Lord; therefore He instructs sinners in the way. He leads the humble in justice, and He teaches the humble His way. All the paths of the Lord are lovingkindness and truth to those who keep His covenant and His testimonies.” —Psalm 25:8–10

II. Guidance

Because of His great love, God has predestined, called, justified, and will glorify all believers. He also guides us.

A. Meaning of guidance

Guidance is God’s active role in our lives, accomplishing His purposes.

Note the following words used in the Bible to describe guidance. Write down how the verse conveys the meaning of each word.

1. **Lead** (to shepherd; to bear or carry)

a. Psalm 78:52 “But He led forth His own people like sheep and guided them in the wilderness like a flock.”

b. Psalm 139:24 “lead me in the everlasting way.”

2. **Guide** (to show; to help understand)

a. Psalm 23:3 “He guides me in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake.”

b. Psalm 73:24 “With Your counsel You will guide me.”

3. **Direct** (to establish or prepare; to make straight)

a. Proverbs 16:9 “The mind of man plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps.”

b. 2 Thessalonians 3:5 “May the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the steadfastness of Christ.”

B. The nature of guidance

The chart below outlines ways that God guides people directly and indirectly.

Direct Guidance	Indirect Guidance
1. Spoken revelation from God	1. God's Word
2. Visions	2. Conscience or conviction
3. Dreams	3. Providence (circumstances controlled by God)
4. Prophet/apostle speaking for God	4. Wisdom and counsel

Direct guidance was experienced during the Old Testament and early New Testament time periods. Today, we see God guiding indirectly. The Holy Spirit is active in all areas of indirect guidance as part of His ministry in the believer.

1. Guidance through God's Word

How does the psalmist describe God's Word (Psalm 119:105)?

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”

2. Guidance through conviction

How was Paul stimulated to action in Athens (Acts 17:16)?

“His spirit was being provoked within him as he was observing the city full of idols.”

3. Guidance through God's providence

What can the believer be confident about regardless of the circumstances (Romans 8:28)?

“God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God.”

4. Guidance through God-given wisdom

Read Proverbs 2:1–11. What four things will wisdom allow you to discern (verse 9)?

(1) _____ righteousnes_____

(2) _____ justice_____

(3) _____ equity_____

(4) _____ every good course_____

What is the result of seeking counsel (Proverbs 13:10)? _____ wisdom_____

III. Application

A. List one area in which you are wrestling with a decision.

(Answers will vary)

B. Does this issue involve:

- God's sovereign will?
- God's commanded will?
- I don't know which one.

C. What should your response be if it involves:

1. God's sovereign will (Proverbs 3:5–6)?
2. God's commanded will (John 15:10)?
3. You are unsure (James 1:5)?

What action are you going to take?

(Answers will vary)
