

Summer Seminars 2018

“Discovering God’s Will for Your Life”

Part 1: Sovereignty and the Will of God

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“We learn about guidance primarily by learning about the Guide. It is the knowledge of God and his ways with [people] which ultimately gives us stability in doing his will.”

– Sinclair Ferguson, *Discovering God’s Will*, p. xii

## 1. GOD IS SOVEREIGN

- God is that He is the Creator of all things: “For you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created” (Rev 4:11).
- He has ultimate authority over his creation: “Whatever the LORD pleases, he does, in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all deeps.” (Psalm 135:6).
- God’s **sovereignty** is God’s exercise of power and rule over his creation.
- The Apostle Paul refers to God as the one “who accomplishes all things according to the counsel of his will” (Eph 1:11). Nothing is outside of his purview or righteous rule.

## 2. GOD’S SOVEREIGNTY DEMANDS OUR SUBMISSION

- In light of who God is and his rule over all things, He necessarily demands that we submit to his righteous rule.
- Our refusal to submit to God’s sovereign rule over our lives is sin. Our sin nature makes it impossible to submit to God without the Holy Spirit radically changing our hearts.

*We are not what we should be  
We haven’t sought  
what we should seek  
We’ve seen your glory, Lord,  
but looked away*

*Our hearts are bent,  
our eyes are dim  
Our finest works are stained with sin  
And emptiness has shadowed all our  
ways*

*-Shine Into Our Night*

- It's only when the Holy Spirit changes our hearts that we can actually do God's will and delight in Him.

### 3. AS WE SUBMIT TO HIS SOVEREIGN RULE WE FIND PURPOSE AND A PATH

- "For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen." (Rom. 11:36)
- Westminster Catechism: Question 1: "What is the chief end (ultimate purpose) of man?" Answer: "The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever."
- "I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart" (Psalm 40:8).
- In light of who God is the Apostle Paul presents a path forward for God's people saying,
 

*"I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. <sup>2</sup> Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."*  
(Romans 12:1-2)

### 4. OBEY GOD'S REVEALED WILL AND TRUST GOD WITH HIS SECRET WILL

- "The *secret* things belong to the Lord our God; but the things that are *revealed* belong to us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law" (Deuteronomy 29:29)
- OBEY God's *Revealed* Will: the commands from God in Scripture that he expects for us to obey, as well as declarations of what is pleasing to him.
- TRUST God's *Secret* Will: the things God has not made known to us, which often include how God governs the universe and determines what will happen in the world
  - Story of Job. "I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you" (Job 42:5).
  - Story of Joseph. "As for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today" (Gen. 50:20)

- “To trust in the secret will of God overcomes pride and expresses humble dependence on God’s sovereign control over the events of our lives.”

-- Wayne Grudem, *Bible Doctrine*

## 5. IN HIS SOVEREIGNTY, GOD CARES FOR HIS PEOPLE

- God’s sovereign will is often mysterious to us, but God is always ruling in such a way that he receives glory *and* that he is *graciously caring* for his people.
- He cares for us like a good shepherd cares for his sheep.

*Psalm 23*

<sup>1</sup> *The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.*

<sup>2</sup> *He makes me lie down in green pastures.*

*He leads me beside still waters.*

<sup>3</sup> *He restores my soul.*

*He leads me in paths of righteousness  
for his name's sake.*

<sup>4</sup> *Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,*

*I will fear no evil,  
for you are with me;*

*your rod and your staff,  
they comfort me.*

<sup>5</sup> *You prepare a table before me  
in the presence of my enemies;*

*you anoint my head with oil;  
my cup overflows.*

<sup>6</sup> *Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me  
all the days of my life,*

*and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.*

*“I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. <sup>11</sup> I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.” (John 10b-11)*