

HOW MANY WILLS DOES GOD HAVE ANYWAY: IS THERE A PERFECT WILL FOR YOUR LIFE?¹

I. BUILDERS, BOOMERS, AND TINKERERS—A NEW MALAISE IN DECISION MAKING

Tinkerers lack consistency, stability, and the ability to make decisions. We simply tinker with whatever is before us, colleges, majors, girlfriends/boyfriends, churches, doctrines, etc. Youth is now extending into 30's and 40's. In 1960, 77% of women and 65% of men completed all the major transitions into adulthood by age 30. By 2000, only 46% of women and 31% of men made the same transitions at 30 years old. Unmitigated freedom and uncertainty over God's will can lead to postponement of adulthood and loss of productivity in the Kingdom of God.

II. GOD'S WONDERFUL PLAN—FINDING GOD'S PERFECT WILL FOR YOUR LIFE

- A. God is Good and Loves His People, therefore He has a perfect, individual will for each life. Thus, the only criterion for any decision is God's Will—We must not ask what will make me happy or what will be most fun. Rather, we must “find” God's will for each and every decision.
- B. God's Will is described in 3 distinct ways in Scripture: Will of Decree (Eph. 1.11), Will of Desire (Romans 2.18, I John 2.15-17), and Will of Direction (Col. 1.9, Prov. 3.5-6)
- C. Failure to discern, discover, and follow God's personal will for each decision in your life will lead to anxiety, lack of peace, frustration, and loss of blessing.
- D. We can have confidence that God will lead us in each decision by the Holy Spirit through a variety of means such as a “still small voice,” inward peace, impressions, etc. When we are at the very center of God's Will, we will experience God's peace, success, blessing, and joy because we are following Him faithfully.
- E. Therefore, God's will for our lives is like a target, where we must hit the bull's eye each time. So, if we run into a “closed door” or if we lack clarity, we are defective in discernment.

III. HOW MANY WILLS DID YOU SAY?

- A. God's will in 3 ways
 - 1. According to God's Will (Decree)
 - 2. Obeying God's Will (Desire)
 - 3. Finding God's Will (Direction)
- B. God's Will of Decree—Sovereign, always comes to pass (Eph. 1.11, Matt. 10.29-30, Prov. 21.1)
- C. God's Will of Desire—God's commands, the way things ought to be. Unlike His decrees, God's will of desire can be disregarded (I Thess. 4.3, 5.18, Eph. 4.30, Deut. 29.29)
- D. God's Will of Direction—What about all the decisions I have to make that God doesn't talk about in Scripture? Here's where the evidence dissipates a bit. There seems to be no Biblical warrant for a third use of “God's will” in Scripture.

¹ Much of this series' material comes from two very good books: *Just Do Something* by Kevin DeYoung and *Decision Making and the Will of God* by Gary Friesen.

“Does God have a secret will of direction that He expects us to figure out before we do anything? And the answer is no. Yes, God has a specific plan for our lives. And yes, we can be assured that He works things for our good in Christ Jesus. And yes, looking back we will often be able to trace God’s hand in bringing us to where we are. But while we are free to ask God for wisdom, He does not burden us with the task of divining His will of direction for our lives ahead of time. The second half of that last sentence is crucial. God does have a specific plan for our lives, but it is not one that He expects us to figure out before we make a decision. I’m not saying God won’t help you make decisions (it’s called wisdom). I’m not saying God doesn’t care about your future. I’m not saying God isn’t directing your path and in control amidst the chaos of your life. I believe in providence with all my heart. What I am saying is that we should stop thinking of God’s will like a corn maze, or a tight rope, or a bull’s-eye.” (DeYoung)

IV. FREEDOM AND LIBERATION—The fear of missing the “center of God’s will,” the bull’s-eye, paralyzes many and leaves many more in fear that they are only experiencing God’s second best right now. Many worry and are anxious that God they are doomed to experience the alternate ending of their lives rather than the really good one God intended. The conventional view says that God has a specific pathway and that we have the duty to discover it and walk on it. The implication is that the right choice will lead to God’s favor, blessing, and success, but if we make the wrong decision, we will miss God’s will for our lives and remain lost forever.²

- A. This view creates disappointment with God and ourselves
- B. This view invites indecision—“Trusting God’s will of decree is good. Following His will of desire is obedient. Waiting for God’s will of direction is a mess. It is bad for your life, harmful to your sanctification, and allows too many Christians to be passive tinkerers who feel more spiritual the less they do.” (De Young)
- C. This view makes us into Tarot Card readers, always trying to peer into the secret counsel of God. The words ‘discover’ and ‘find’ refer to things that are lost or hidden, but God is neither. Yes, we trust that God has a plan for our lives but this does not mean that He will tell us the details of that plan before it unfolds. So much of this is preoccupation with our own comfort and happiness—the desire to have no risk in life. What seems on the surface like a desire to follow Jesus is actually a well-masked lack of trust in the providence and provision of God.
- D. Wisdom from Others:
 - 1. St. Augustine: “Love God and do what you will”
 - 2. Oswald Chambers: “Trust God and do the next thing.”
 - 3. Tullian Tchividjian: “Discovering God’s will does not happen as we let go and let God but as we trust God and get going.”
 - 4. Jesus: Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you (Matt. 6.33).”

² “Conventional understanding of God’s will defines it as a specific pathway we should follow into the future. God knows what this pathway is, and he has laid it out for us to follow. Our responsibility is to discover this pathway—God’s plan for our lives. We must discover which of the many pathways we could follow is the one we should follow, the one God has planned for us. If and when we make the right choice, we will receive his favor, fulfill our divine destiny and succeed in life...If we choose rightly, we will experience His blessing and achieve success and happiness. If we choose wrongly, we may lose our way, miss God’s will for our lives, and remain lost forever in an incomprehensible maze (Gerald Sittser).”