

# ***DECISION-MAKING & THE WILL OF GOD***

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**Based on the Bible study by**

**Dr. Garry Friesen, Multnomah Bible College**

# **SEMINAR APPROACH TO DEFINING GOD'S WAY OF DECISION-MAKING**

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**1**

**Present the “Traditional View” of “decision-making”  
& its supporting thinking**

**2**

**Examine the “Traditional View” in the FULL  
light of Scripture**

**3**

**Conclude what God's Word really says about His will  
and guidance for our lives**

# QUESTIONS THE “TRADITIONAL VIEW” TRIES TO ANSWER

- 1 What does the phrase “God’s will” mean ?
- 2 Does God have an “Individual Will” for My life ?
- 3 How can I discover God’s will ?
- 4 How can I know God’s will in specific situations ?

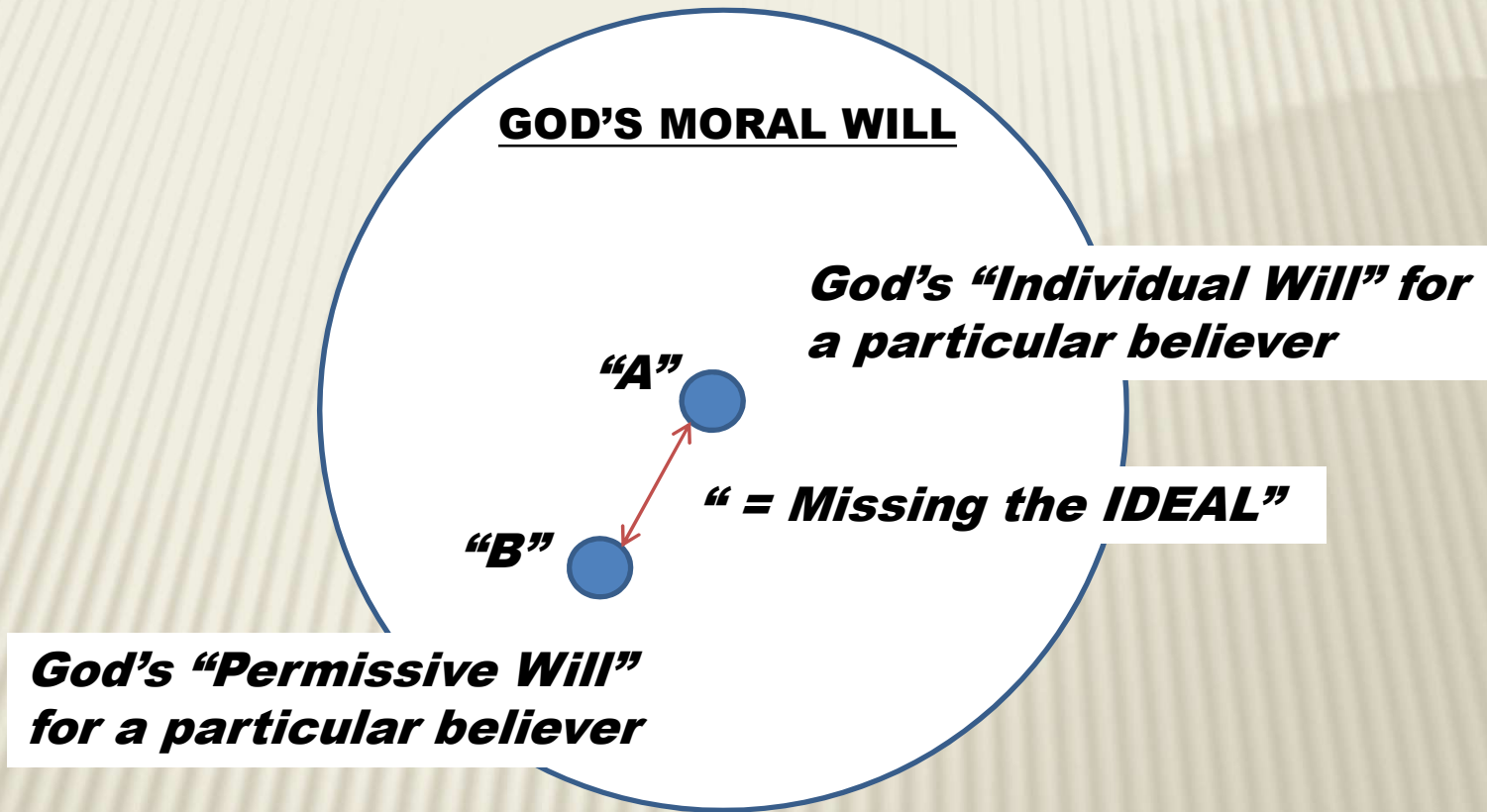
TRADITIONAL VIEW:  
**ASPECTS OF GOD'S WILL**

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**“GOD’S WILL” =** { **HIS SOVEREIGN WILL**  
**HIS MORAL WILL**  
**HIS INDIVIDUAL WILL**  
*(His unique will for each individual)*

## TRADITIONAL VIEW: “THE CENTER OF GOD’S WILL”

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# COMPARING GOD'S SOVEREIGN & MORAL WILLS

## ***God's SOVEREIGN will***

1. **God's secret plan – determines everything that happens in universe**
2. **Mostly hidden**
3. **Cannot be learned before**
4. **Cannot be “missed” should be humbly accepted**
5. **INDIRECTLY ideal plan: Though it includes evil acts & foolish decisions, it will ultimately lead to God's glory**

## ***God's MORAL will***

1. **God's revealed commands in the Bible that teach how men ought to believe & live**
2. **Totally revealed**
3. **Must be learned for guidance**
4. **Can be “missed” through ignorance or disobedience**
5. **DIRECTLY ideal pattern: Includes only those behaviors & attitudes that conform to God's character, thereby glorifying Him**

## TRADITIONAL VIEW: COMPARING/CONTRASTING GOD'S INDIVIDUAL & SOVEREIGN WILLS

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### **INDIVIDUAL WILL**

1. **Detailed plan for all decisions in believer's life**
2. **Believer can find & know it**
3. **Believer is expected to find it**
4. **Believer can miss it by failure to discover or obey it**
5. **Includes only the good & ideal**
6. **Decision-making requires discovering it**
7. **DIRECTLY ideal plan:**
  - **In harmony with Scripture**
  - **Decision is always ideal**
  - **Brings glory to God**

### **SOVEREIGN WILL**

1. **Detailed plan for all events in the universe**
2. **Hidden ... cannot be found or known**
3. **Believer is not expected to find it**
4. **It always comes to pass, so believer cannot miss it**
5. **Includes both good & evil**
6. **Will be discovered only after it happens**
7. **INDIRECTLY ideal plan:**
  - **Includes evil acts & foolish decisions**
  - **Ultimately leads to God's glory**

# **TRADITIONAL VIEW: COMPARING/CONTRASTING GOD'S INDIVIDUAL & MORAL WILLS**

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## ***INDIVIDUAL WILL***

- 1. Detailed plan for all decisions in believer's life**
- 2. Believer is expected to find & do it**
- 3. Believer can miss it by failure to discover or obey it**
- 4. Is revealed to believer's heart – cannot be found in Bible**
- 5. Holy Spirit reveals it through inward impressions by many means**
- 6. Gives specific directives for one specific believer**

## ***MORAL WILL***

- 1. Body of general commands & principles for life**
- 2. Believer is expected to find & do it**
- 3. Believer can miss it by failure to discover or obey it**
- 4. Revealed to apostles & prophets – can be found completely in Bible**
- 5. Holy Spirit revealed it in past by many means**
- 6. Directives are generally for all believers**

# **TRADITIONAL VIEW:**

## **“DOES GOD HAVE AN INDIVIDUAL WILL FOR MY LIFE ??”**

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- **Yes – By REASON**
  - **1 Cor 14.40**
  - **Matt 11.20-22**
  - **Matt 6.25-26**
- **Yes – by EXPERIENCE OF BELIEVERS**
- **Yes – By BIBLICAL EXPERIENCES**
  - **John 4.34**
  - **1 Cor 1.1**
  - **Acts 13.1-2**
  - **Acts 15.28-29**
- **Yes – By DIRECT BIBLE TEACHING**
  - **Col 1.9-10**
  - **Rom 12.1-2**
  - **Prov 3.5-6**
  - **Eph 2.10**

## **TRADITIONAL VIEW: 7 “ROAD SIGNS” FOR DETERMINING GOD’S INDIVIDUAL WILL FOR ME**

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- 1. God’s Word**
- 2. Circumstances (1 Cor 16.8-9)**
- 3. Inner witness of the Holy Spirit (John 16.13)**
- 4. Mature counsel from other believers (Prov 24.6)**
- 5. Personal desires**
- 6. Common sense (Acts 6.3)**
- 7. Special supernatural guidance**

## **TRADITIONAL VIEW: “ HOW CAN I KNOW GOD’S WILL FOR SURE IN SPECIFIC SITUATIONS ?? “**

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- **By agreement of the “7 Road Signs”**
- **By monitoring the results**
- **By prayer (Jam 4.2)**
- **By continued personal communion with God (Ps 32.8)**

## **CRITIQUING THE “TRADITIONAL “ VIEW: PROBLEMS WITH SOME OF THE “ROAD SIGNS” ... THE 3 “IMPLICATIONS” SIGNS**

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- ❑ **Problems in conclusions based on REASON ...**
  - **Evidence of “order”**
  - **Evidence of God as Father, Shepherd, King (Gal 4.1-7)**
- ❑ **Problems in conclusions based on EXPERIENCE OF OTHERS ...**
  - **Wrong concept of “success” (Josh 1.7, 2 Tim 3.16-17)**
- ❑ **Problems in conclusions based on BIBLICAL CHARACTER EXPERIENCES**
  - **Low number of recorded cases of direct guidance**
  - **Recipients of direct guidance not the norm**
  - **Directly guided decisions narrow in type**
  - **Not all recorded decisions had direct guidance**

# CRITIQUING THE “TRADITIONAL” VIEW: PROBLEMS WITH “SUPPORTING” SCRIPTURES

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- ❖ **Proverbs 3.5-6**
  - “... He will make your paths straight ...”
  - Speaks of making believer's life successful
  - Says one shows trust & obedience to God by following His Moral will

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- ❖ **Psalms 32.8**
  - “...I will counsel you ...”
  - Key word is “counsel”, not “guide”
  - David (not God) offers his counsel, which is to follow God's Moral will

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- ❖ **Isaiah 30.20-21**
  - “...hear a word behind you, ‘This is the way, walk in it...’ ”
  - Plural “teachers” shows many guides, not one Holy Spirit, doing advising
  - Guidance not coming from within believer
  - Addressed specifically to rebellious Israel

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- ❖ **Colossians 1.9**
  - “... filled with the knowledge of His will ...
  - Key point = knowledge of God's Moral will is vital
  - Contains exhortation to seek spiritual insight

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- ❖ **Romans 12.1-2**
  - “... that you may prove what the will of God is”
  - Plea is to surrender your bodies for obedient living
  - Context is to obey God's Moral commands after surrender

# **CRITIQUING THE “TRADITIONAL” VIEW: DIFFICULTIES IN APPLYING IDEA OF AN INDIVIDUAL WILL**

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## **ORDINARY DECISIONS**

- **Can't be uniformly applied to the “minor decisions of life”**

## **EQUAL OPTIONS**

- **Since there is only one “correct” choice, there is ...**
  - **Anxiety over missing it**
  - **Lack of gratitude to God for multiple opportunities**

## **IMMATURITY**

- **Its logic sometimes promotes immature approaches to making a decision**

## **SUBJECTIVITY**

- **Since this view has no objective source supporting it, believer can't have certainty that he/she has found God's individual will for them**

***INSTEAD OF THE TRADITIONAL VIEW ....***


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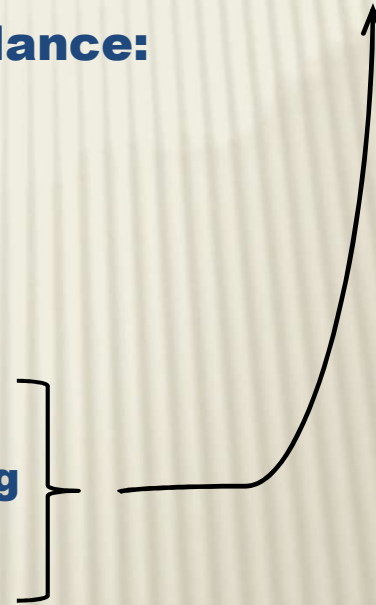
***Presenting .....***

**THE “WAY OF WISDOM”**

# WAY OF WISDOM – POINT 1

## GOD'S MORAL WILL IS THE GUIDANCE SOUGHT FOR

- ❑ Intended to guide perfection of  **CHARACTER**
- ❑ God's intended **RESULTS** by this guidance:
  - **PRODUCTS (GOALS of guidance)**
    - God glorified ( 1 Pet 4.10-11)
    - “Expedient” results (1 Cor 10.23)
    - Believers are to be edified
    - Others are served (Rom 4.19)
    - “Fruit” is produced (Col 1.10)
      - Love Joy Peace Longsuffering
      - Gentleness Goodness Faith
      - Meekness Temperance



# WAY OF WISDOM – POINT 1

## GOD'S MORAL WILL IS THE GUIDANCE SOUGHT FOR

- ❑ Intended to guide perfection of
- ❑ God's intended **RESULTS** by this guidance:
  - **PRODUCTS** (*GOALS of guidance*)
  - **PURPOSE** (*ATTITUDES intended by guidance*)
    - “Put off” / “Put on” (Eph 4.22-24)
    - Love God & neighbor
    - Rely on God, not self
    - Humility, not pride
    - Submission, not self advancement
    - Courage, not fear
  - **PROCESS** (*MEANS urged by guidance*)
    - Must be scripturally lawful (Eph 5.1, 6-14)
    - Must be wise (Eph 5.15-17)

**CHARACTER**



# WAY OF WISDOM – POINT 1

## WISDOM-WAY PRINCIPLE # 1

***Responses God expects to guidance from His MORAL Will:***

**1**

**It must be KNOWN (John 13.16-17)**

- **“Consider” it, “study” it ( 2 Tim 2.7,15)**
- **“Meditate” on it (Ps 1.2)**
- **Memorize it (Ps 119.11)**

**2**

**It must be OBEYED (Deut 10.12-13)**

- **Get your priorities straight (1 Cor 7.19)**
- **Obey it from the heart (1 Sam 16.7)**

**3**

**EXPECT it to produce RESULTS (Ps 1.1-3)**

**WISDOM-WAY  
PRINCIPLE # 1**

***“In those areas specifically addressed by the Bible, the revealed commands and principles of God (His Moral will) are to be obeyed”***

## WAY OF WISDOM – POINT 2

# UNDERSTANDING THE SPIRIT OF GOD'S MORAL WILL

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- ❖ **God's principle of guidance as shown in Scripture ...  
FREEDOM OF CHOICE WITHIN LIMITS**
- ❖ **Examples**
  - **Started with Adam (Gen 2.16-17)**
  - **Formalized in Mosaic Law = "Normative Law"**
  - **Jesus corrected abuse of Scribes & Pharisees**
    - **God-given freedom had been removed ! (Matt 23.1-4, 13, 15)**
    - **It must be returned**
- ❖ **To understand the spirit of the Moral Will, understand sin**
  - **Sin is breaking God's law ( 1 John 3.4)**
  - **If law doesn't cover it, it isn't sin (Rom 4.15)**
- ❖ **Scriptural support for freedom within revealed limits:**
  - **Believers made in God's Image (Gen 1.26-27)**
  - **Mosaic Law**
    - **Certain animals not to be eaten (Lev 11, Deut 14)**
    - **Nazarite Vow, personal consecration (Num 6)**
    - **Freewill offering (Lev 22.18)**
  - **NT: Eating regulations (Rom 14.2, 1 Cor 8, 10)**
  - **NT: Giving regulations (2 Cor 9.7)**

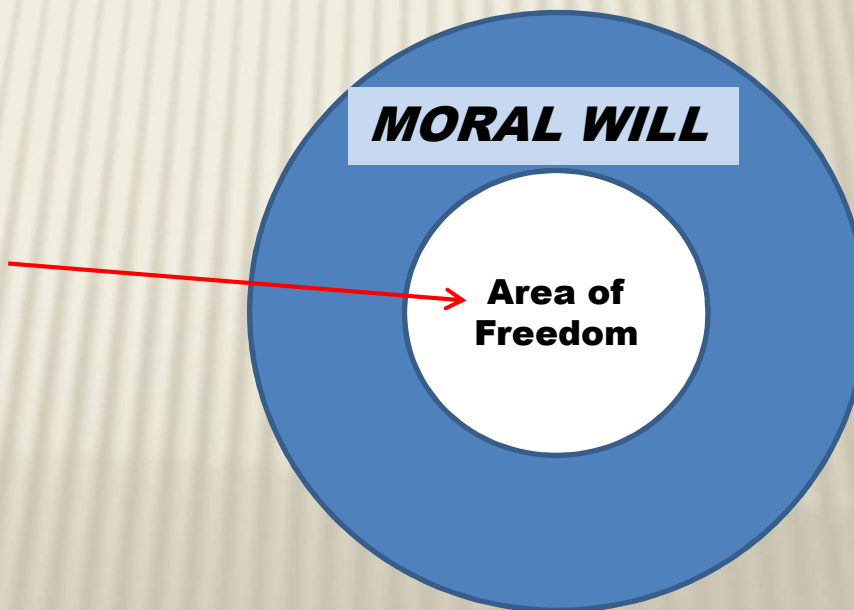
## WAY OF WISDOM – POINT 2 ... IN NON-MORAL DECISIONS ...

### WISDOM-WAY PRINCIPLE # 2

***“In those areas where the Bible gives no command or principle (non-moral decisions), the believer is free and responsible to choose his own course of action. Any decision made within the moral will of God is acceptable to God.”***

**PRINCIPLE LEADS TO**  **GOD’S MORAL WILL AND FREEDOM**

**- Replaces “dot” of  
Traditional View’s  
“Individual Will”**



## WAY OF WISDOM – POINT 3

# MAKE “NON-MORAL” DECISIONS: BUT ON WHAT BASIS ?

- **Freedom brings responsibility** (Rom 14.5, 10, 12)
  - Believer is free and required to make decisions
- **God has supplied :**
  - Privilege of choice
  - Accountability
  - Needed instructions
  - Holy Spirit within
- **NT provides examples of apostles making decisions :**
  - Should we help Thessalonica ? ( 1 Thess 3.1-5)
  - Should we aid a fellow worker ? (Phil 2.25-26)
  - Should we support the offering being taken ? (1 Cor 16.3-4)
  - Improve care for others ? (Acts 6.1-4)

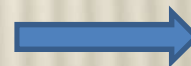
... **Note the common theme**

**NOT**

“What is God’s will for me ??”

**INSTEAD**

“Thought it best...”  
“Thought it necessary ...”  
“...seemed good ...”



**FREEDOM,  
TAKING  
RESPONSIBILITY**

## WAY OF WISDOM – POINT 3

# MAKE “NON-MORAL” DECISIONS: KEY GUIDANCE POINTS

### WISDOM-WAY PRINCIPLE # 3

***“In Non-Moral decisions, the goal of the believer is to make wise decisions on the basis of spiritual expediency”***

#### ***“SPIRITUAL”***

- Means & ends governed by God’s Moral will
- Aim – Glorify & please God

#### ***“EXPEDIENCY”***

- Conditions quality of the means
- What works best within God’s Moral will to get the job done

#### ***“WISE”***

- Perceiving an effective way to accomplish spiritual goals

***DECISION-MAKING BASIS = APPROPRIATE USE OF WISDOM***

WAY OF WISDOM – POINT 3  
**MAKE “NON-MORAL” DECISIONS: GAINING THE BASIS**

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 **SPIRITUAL EXPEDIENCY IS THE KEY (Eph 5.15-17 + Col 4.5)**

**“Walk” = Conduct**

**“Wise”, “wisdom” = How you live your life**

**Principle # 3 summarized is ...**

***Make decisions ... with wisdom, that are spiritually expedient***

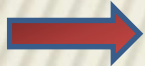
## WAY OF WISDOM – POINT 3

# MAKE “NON-MORAL” DECISIONS: GAINING THE BASIS

**SPIRITUAL EXPEDIENCY IS THE KEY (Eph 5.15-17 + Col 4.5)**

**Principle # 3 summarized is ...**

**Make decisions ... with *wisdom*, that are spiritually expedient**



**Steps to gaining wisdom ...**

- **Must have a desire for it (Prov 8.17)**
- **Must have the right attitude**
  - **Not self-dependent (Prov 3.7)**
  - **Given to those of certain spiritual characteristics**
- **Must have the right approach**
  - **Ask God for it (Jam 1.5-6, Col 1.9-10)**
  - **Look for it in Scriptures (Ps 119.97-100)**
  - **Do outside research (Neh 2.11-16)**
  - **Seek wise counselors (Prov 13.20, 15.22)**
  - **Learn from life (Prov 6.6-11, Heb 5.12-14)**

## WAY OF WISDOM – POINT 3

# MAKE “NON-MORAL” DECISIONS: GAINING THE BASIS

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**Reprise** last slide –

***“Given to those of certain spiritual characteristics”***

- **Reverence** (Prov 9.10)
- **Humility** (Prov 15.33)
- **Teachableness** (Prov 19.20)
- **Diligence** (Prov 2.4-5, 8.17)
- **Uprightness** (Prov 2.7)
- **Faith** (Jam 1.5-8)

## WAY OF WISDOM – POINT 4

# THE ROLE OF GOD'S SOVEREIGN WILL

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### Reviewing the nature of God's sovereign will

- **It will be fulfilled ( Dan 4.35, Job 1.12, 2.6)**
- **It is exhaustive (Jam 4.13-15, Eph 1.11)**
- **It is mostly secret**
- **It is perfect**

### Concerns these raise

- **“Is God responsible for sin ?” .... (Isa 6.3)**
- **“How can there be any free choice in decisions ?”**
  - **God operates at the “macro” level, man at the “micro”**
  - **God never forces us to act against our will**

WAY OF WISDOM – POINT 4

# ***THE ROLE OF GOD'S SOVEREIGN WILL***

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## **Effects of God's sovereignty on decision-making**

- **Planning: Decision-making = God's growth plan**
  - Scriptural model (Jam 4.13-16)
- **Circumstances**
  - Not God's "hints" ... shouldn't replace decision-making
  - Dangerous to morale to "read" them (Eccl 1.1-11, Ps 37.1, Jn 9.2-3)
- **Role of "doors" ( ≠ circumstances)**
  - = an opportunity, usually to minister God's Word
  - Come about through God's sovereignty
  - Should be wisely evaluated
  - Scripture doesn't mention "closed" doors (Rom 1.10-13)
  - "Putting out a fleece" = seeking a circumstantial sign

# GOD'S SOVEREIGN WILL: THE "GENERATOR"

## WISDOM-WAY PRINCIPLE # 4

***"In all decisions, the believer should humbly submit, in advance, to the outworking of God's Sovereign will as it touches each decision"***



***SUMMARIZING TO ...***

**A BIBLICAL MODEL FOR  
PRACTICAL DECISION-MAKING**

## GAINING A BIBLICAL MODEL FOR DECISION-MAKING

# FOUR DISTINCTIVE WAYS IN WHICH GOD GUIDES

	MORAL GUIDANCE	WISDOM GUIDANCE	SOVEREIGN GUIDANCE	SPECIAL GUIDANCE
<b>SPHERE</b> of Guidance	In <b>MORAL</b> Conduct	In <b>"NON-MORAL"</b> Decisions	In <b>ALL</b> things	In <b>UNIQUE</b> cases
<b>NATURE</b> of Guidance	God <b>DIRECTLY</b> Guides believers	God <b>MEDIATELY</b> Guides believers	God <b>SECRETLY</b> Guides believers	God <b>SUPERNATURALLY</b> Guides believers
<b>MEANS</b> of Guidance	By <b>REVEALED:</b> -Commands -Principles	By <b>ACQUIRED</b> Wisdom	By <b>SOVEREIGN CONTROL</b> Over all events	By -Divine Voice -Dreams -Miracles
<b>GOVERNING PRINCIPLE</b> God Uses	According to His <b>MORAL WILL</b> (Bible)	According to <b>SPIRITUAL EXPEDIENCY</b> (Gain His objectives, best way, best time)	According to His <b>SOVEREIGN WILL</b>	According to <b>SPECIAL REVELATION</b>

# GAINING A BIBLICAL MODEL FOR DECISION-MAKING RELATIONSHIPS AMONG ASPECTS OF GOD'S WILL

