



Mission

Taking Jesus
to the World

Mission Decision Making

Acts 15:1-16:10

Pastor Nathan Mains – Jan 24, 2010

3 Aspects of God's will

1. Providential Will of God – Things God is going to do no matter what.
2. Moral Will of God – Things God has instructed His people to do or not do.
3. Personal Will of God – What God wants us to do in the details of our lives.

Proverbs 3:5-6

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart
and lean not on your own understanding;
in all your ways acknowledge him,
and he will make your paths straight. (NIV)*

The Path of God's Will

God's Moral Will

What God is up to

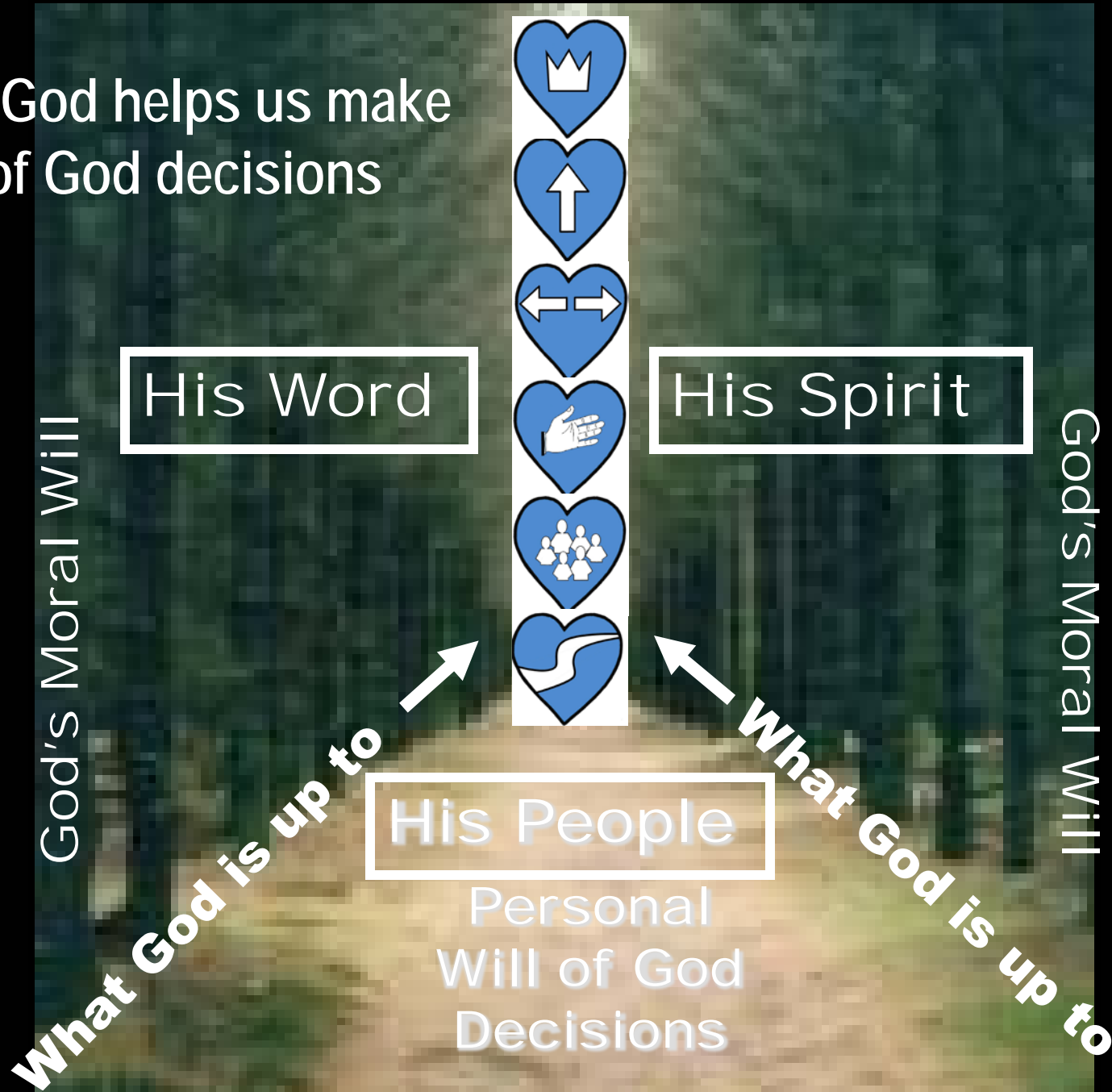


God's Moral Will

What God is up to

Personal Will of God Decisions

How God helps us make Will of God decisions



His Word

His Spirit

His People

Personal Will of God Decisions

God's Moral Will

God's Moral Will

What God is up to

What God is up to

Example of Mission Decision Making when God's Moral Will is the issue

Acts 15 [Seatback Bibles p 783]

1 *Some men came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the brothers: "Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved."*

2 *This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them.*

So Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question. (NIV)

Moral Will of God arguments

Acts 15:5 *...some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said, "The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to obey the law of Moses."*

[Peter] 15:8 *"God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. 9 He made no distinction between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith."*

12 *The whole assembly became silent as they listened to Barnabas and Paul telling about the miraculous signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them. (NIV)*

Conclusion & Next Step

Acts 15:13 *When they finished, James spoke up: "Brothers, listen to me. 14 Simon has described to us how God at first showed his concern by taking from the Gentiles a people for himself. 15 The words of the prophets are in agreement with this...*

19 "It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God.

20 Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood. 21 For Moses has been preached in every city from the earliest times and is read in the synagogues on every Sabbath." (NIV)

The Letter

Acts 15:23 ...*They... sent the following letter:*
*The apostles and elders, your brothers, To the
Gentile believers in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia:
Greetings. 24 We have heard that some went out
from us without our authorization and
disturbed you, troubling your minds by
what they said...*

*28 It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to
us not to burden you with anything beyond the
following requirements:*

*29 You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols,
from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and
from sexual immorality. You will do well to
avoid these things. Farewell. (NIV)*

The Response

Acts 15:30 *The men... went down to Antioch, where they gathered the church together and delivered the letter. 31 The people read it and were glad for its encouraging message.*

32 Judas and Silas, who themselves were prophets, said much to encourage and strengthen the brothers.

33 After spending some time there, they were sent off by the brothers with the blessing of peace to return to those who had sent them. [Jerusalem church & leaders]

[some NT Greek manuscripts add: 34 but Silas decided to stay there] (NIV)

Mission Decision Making Moral Will of God Principles:

1. When the Moral Will of God is the issue
Do Not Compromise!
2. Be intentional about making sure Moral
Will of God decisions are known &
remembered

Example of Personal Will of God

Mission Decision Making

Acts 15:36 Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us go back and visit the brothers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing."

37 *Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them,*

38 *but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work.*

- With disagreements there's always 2 sides
- Who do you think is right, in God's will?

Acts 15:**39** *They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company.*

➤ Was splitting up God's will?

Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus,
40 *but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord. 41 He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches. (NIV)*

Personal Will of God Principle:

1. With strongly held personal will of God opinions sometimes the best next thing is to separate respectfully so each may follow his own personal convictions



THRACE

Black Sea

MACEDONIA

Amphipolis
Philippi
Neapolis

Egnatian Way

SAMOTHRACE

BITHYNIA

PONTUS

Beraea
Apollonia
Thessalonica

Troas

MYSIA

ASIA

Antioch
in Pisidia

GALATIA

CAPPADOCIA

EPIRUS

Cenchreae

Corinth

Athens

ACHAIA

Thyatira

Ephesus

PHRYGIA

Lystra

Iconium

Derbe

(starting point)

Tarsus

Antioch

RHODES

CRETE

Gortyna

CYPRUS

SYRIA

Damascus

2nd Mission Trip

Mediterranean Sea

Cyrene

CYRENE

Caesarea

PALESTINE

Jerusalem

0 100 200 mi

Alexandria

EGYPT

Another example of Personal Will of God Mission Decision Making

Acts 16:1 He came to Derbe and then to Lystra, where a disciple named Timothy lived, whose mother was a Jewess and a believer, but whose father was a Greek. 2 The brothers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him.

3 Paul wanted to take him along on the journey, so he circumcised him because of the Jews who lived in that area, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. (NIV)

➤ Wait a second, what about the recent moral will of God arguments and decision about circumcision?

➤ Did Paul's decision cause problems or subject him to charges of hypocrisy?

Acts 16:4 As they traveled from town to town, they delivered the decisions reached by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem for the people to obey.

5 So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers. (NIV)

Personal Will of God Principle:

2. Good Personal Will of God Mission decisions will be sensitive to others and will consider potential mission impact

Does God ever interject Himself into our Personal Will of God Mission Decision Making?

Acts 16:6 Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. 7 When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to.

8 So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. (NIV)

So what's up with that? Is God playing with them, waiting till they decide something and then closing the door?



2nd Mission Trip

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Acts 16:9 During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us."

10 After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them. (NIV)

Providential Will of God Principles:

1. Even when God doesn't give clear direction, continue moving towards mission progress.
2. While moving towards mission progress, God may use a variety of ways to point us towards His Providential Will.

God's Will
[and your best next step]
is:

- ❑ Always in Step with and Sometimes Specifically Directed by God's **Spirit**
- ❑ Always In Tune with God's **Word**
- ❑ Often Confirmed by God's **People**
- ❑ Always Protected by God's **Peace**

How to get good personal Will of God decision making advice

□ Seek trusted & respected people you sense are tuned in to God, interested in your best, with nothing to gain or lose by telling you the truth.

□ Share your situation with them, then ask:

1. Do any of my options seem to you to be outside the boundaries of Scripture?

2. Is there anything you sense I'm not seeing or paying attention to that I should be?

3. Based on what you know of me what do you think is the wise best next thing is for me? - or - What do you think you would do if you were me in my situation?

We'd like your input regarding an FBC
Personal Will of God decision

Please read the FBC Mission Decision
Making Story you'll receive on your way out
today and then give us your thoughts & reactions in
2 areas on the inserted sheet:

1. Potential you sense for increasing our
Disciple-Making impact?

2. Concerns or questions you have after
reading our FBC Decision-Making History and the
elders proposed next step for increasing our
Disciple-Making impact.

We'll have a box available the next 2 weeks for you
to deposit your responses

Next Week:
God's Amazing Ways

- What happened when Paul's Mission Team went to Philippi – Acts 16:11-40

