



INSIDE

VERSE OF THE WEEK

Ephesians 5:17 3

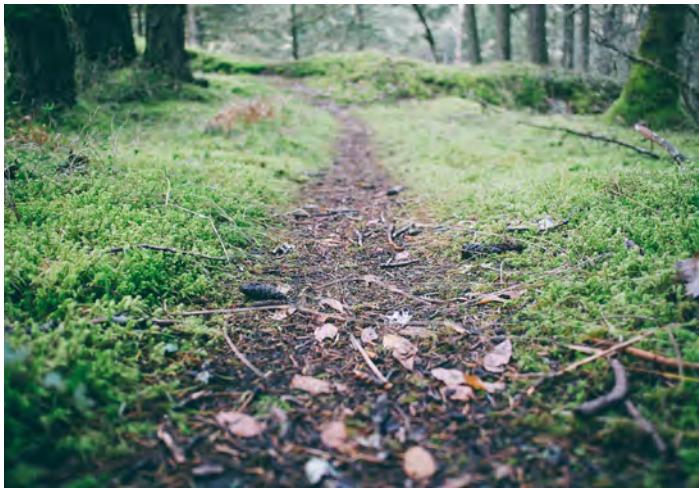
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Knowing Jesus: Better Understanding His Guidance



WHAT A MIND-BOGGLING WONDER that God would “empty Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of man, and being found in appearance as a man . . .” And that “He made Him who knew no sin, to be sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” (Philippians 2:6-7 and 1Corinthians 5:21.) These are unfathomable truths — that God would incarnate Himself to save us from our sin — bespeaks of “what kind of love is this?”

This same infinite and personal God cares not only for our eternal destiny, but the here and now. He is not removed from our day-to-day existence, but is here to care and to guide. With that in mind, I prayerfully believe this week’s study will be great aid to you as you reflect on upcoming goals and how you will best invest all that God has given you for maximum impact on the maximum number of people for His glory! May God bless you as you study this lesson.

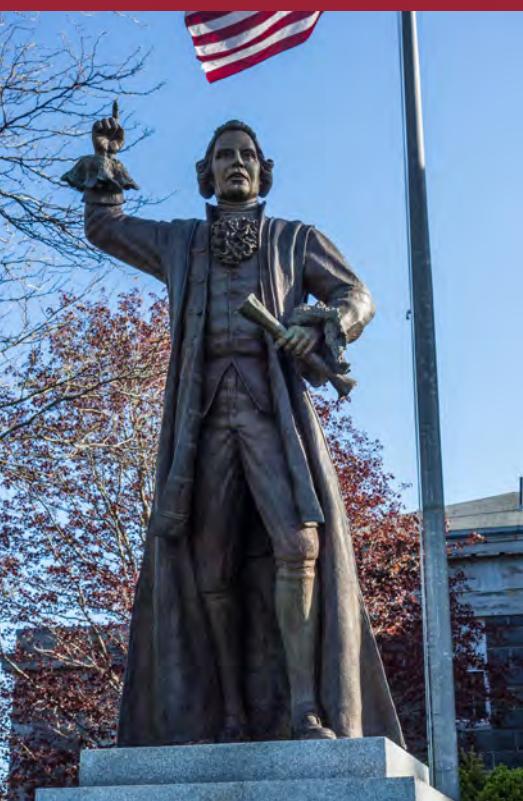
Ralph Drollinger

Weekly Bible Study During Session

SENATE: Dirkson Basement: 8:00 AM Tuesdays. *Hot Breakfast Served.*CONGRESS: Capitol H324: 5:30 PM Monday or Tuesday Evenings. *After First Votes Back.*



James Otis, Jr.



"Has [government] any solid foundation? Any chief cornerstone? . . . I think it has an everlasting foundation in the unchangeable will of God . . . The sum of my argument is that civil government is of God."

— James Otis, Leader of the Sons of Liberty; Attorney and Jurist; Mentor of John Hancock and Samuel Adams.

James Otis, *The Rights of the British Colonies Asserted and Proved* (London: J. Williams and J. Almon, 1766), pp. 11, 98.

Knowing Jesus: Better Understanding His Guidance

I. INTRODUCTION

You have probably heard the “now-clinché-like” saying, “God has a wonderful plan for your life!” If you have not rejected Him as your Savior and Lord, I believe that to be a true statement. God is sovereign and has a purpose for all of His creation. He has a plan or “will” for each of us, gifting us and providing us with time, talent and treasure of varying degrees in order to achieve His specific purposes for our lives.

Having said that, we often make His will more difficult to respond to than it really is. For the obedient believer, I think it requires a great deal of prolonged gymnastics to get out of the center of His will. In this lesson we will explore God’s will and how we are guided into His will.

II. GOD’S WILL

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 was not in God’s plan. History is really the unfolding of God’s purposes, which happen exactly as He planned.

Read the following verses and write out the key thought about God’s sovereign will:

a. Isaiah 14:24

The Lord of hosts has sworn saying, “Surely, just as I have intended so it has

happened, and just as I have planned so it will stand,

b. Ephesians 1:11b

Also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will.

Isaiah 46:9-10 states:

“Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things which have not been done, saying, ‘My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all My good pleasure.’”

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?

“. . . teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”



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

(1) Matthew 22:37

And He said to him, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.’

(2) Matthew 22:39

The second is like it, ‘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.

Study the table and be ready to test your understanding of God's sovereign will and His commanded will. A teaser going in: Do you ever attribute something to "the sovereignty of God" that in essence is the responsibility of man?

Sovereign Will	Commanded Will
1. Secret, known only as revealed through history or revelation.	Revealed in the Bible.

2. Cannot be resisted or thwarted.	Can be resisted or disobeyed.
3. Encompasses both good and evil.	Involves only that which is good; holy.
4. Comprehensive; controls all aspects of life, time, and history.	Specific; provides principles for living.
5. The believer is not commanded to know or discover what God has not revealed.	Believers are exhorted to know, understand and obey all that God has revealed.

Write out the part of the verse that conveys God's will. *Circle the appropriate letter.* (KEY: S = Sovereign, C = Commanded)

1. Philippians 2:13 S C

...for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

2. I Thessalonians 4:3 S C

For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality.

VERSE OF THE WEEK

EPHESIANS 5:17

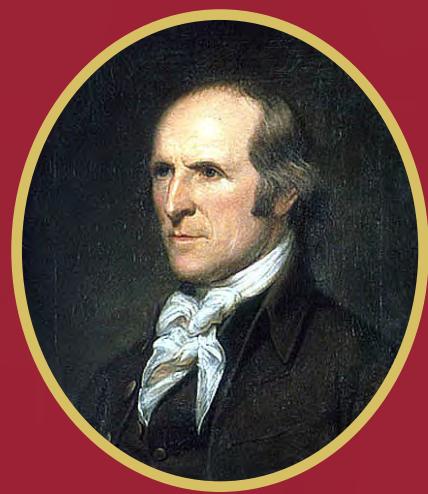
So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.



God is not removed from our day-to-day existence, but is here to care and to guide.



Timothy Pickering



"Pardon, we beseech Thee, all our offences of omission and commission; and grant that in all our thoughts, words, and actions, we may conform to Thy known will manifested in our consciences and in the revelations of Jesus Christ, our Savior."

— Timothy Pickering, Revolutionary General; Judge; Ratifier of the U.S. Constitution; Postmaster General under President George Washington; Secretary of War under Presidents George Washington and John Adams; Secretary of State under President John Adams.

Charles W. Upham, *The Life of Timothy Pickering* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1873), Vol. IV, p. 390, from his prayer of November 30, 1828.

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3. 2 Corinthians 6:14 S C

Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?

4. Matthew 7:21 S C

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter."

5. Philippians 1:6 S C

For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

6. Jeremiah 29:11 S C

'For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.'

Christianity best defined is not a religion, rather it is a personal relationship with Christ. Incumbent in a personal relationship is just that — a personal relationship. If that understanding is correct, then it follows that one should presuppose that God has a special plan for his life and that He will guide him all

the way. How does one best understand and discern that personalized guidance from above?

C. THE 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

Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit." Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. Instead, you ought to say, "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

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

- b. Deuteronomy 29:29

"The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law."

How does the above passage in particular summarize the differentiation of God's sovereign will and God's commanded will?

- c. Deuteronomy 11:1

"You shall therefore love the LORD your God, and always 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

III. GOD'S GUIDANCE

Because of His great love, God has pre-destined, called, justified, and will glorify all believers. He also guides day-by-day; He is intimate with the upright!

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

And see if there be any hurtful way in me, And lead me in the everlasting way.

2. Guide (to show, to help understand)

- a. Psalm 23:3



The Good Shepherd, c. 300-350, at the Catacombs of Domitilla, Rome

But He led forth His own people like sheep And guided them in the wilderness like a flock.

— Psalm 78:52





Knowing Jesus: Better Understanding His Guidance

He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake.

b. Psalm 73:24

With Your counsel You will guide me, And afterward receive me to glory.

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 in which God guides people directly or indirectly:

Direct Guidance	Indirect Guidance
1. Spoken revelation of God	1. God's Word

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| 2. Visions | 2. Conscience or conviction |
| 3. Dreams | 3. Providence (circumstances controlled by God) |
| 4. Prophet/ Apostle | 4. Wisdom and counsel |

Direct guidance was experienced during the Old Testament and early New Testament time periods. Today, we see God primarily 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)?

Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was being provoked within him as he was observing the city full of idols.

3. Guidance through God's providence



A Roman oil lamp.

*Your word is a lamp to my feet
And a light to my path.*

— Psalm 119:105





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

And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

- 4. Guidance through God-given wisdom
 - a. Read Proverbs 2:1-11. What four things will wisdom allow you to discern (verse 9)?

My son, if you will receive my words And treasure my commandments within you, Make your ear attentive to wisdom, Incline your heart to understanding; For if you cry for discernment, Lift your voice for understanding; If you seek her as silver And search for her as for hidden treasures; Then you will discern the fear of the LORD And discover the knowledge of God. For the LORD gives wisdom; From His mouth come knowledge and understanding. He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; He is a shield to those who walk in integrity, Guarding the paths of justice, And He preserves the way of His godly ones. Then you will discern righteousness and justice. And equity and every good course. For wisdom will enter your heart And knowledge will be pleasant to your soul; Discretion will guard you, Understanding will watch over you,

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

(4) _____

IV. APPLICATION

- A. LIST ONE AREA IN WHICH YOU ARE WRESTLING WITH A DECISION AND NEED GUIDANCE IN THE COMING YEAR. RELATIVE TO THE FOUR AREAS/KINDS OF DIRECTION GOD HAS MADE AVAILABLE TO YOU PER THE ABOVE STUDY, EVALUATE YOUR THINKING AND DECISION BASED ON EACH FORM OF HIS INDIRECT GUIDANCE:

1. What are some applicable principles from God's commanded will that come into play in terms of direction and guidance from scriptural passages?

2. Are the convictions of your conscience based on biblical principles? If so, what does your conscience inform you is the right thing to do?

John Randolph of Roanoke



"I have thrown myself, reeking with sin, on the mercy of God, through Jesus Christ His blessed Son and our (yes, my friend, our) precious Redeemer; and I have assurances as strong as that I now owe nothing to your rank that the debt is paid and now I love God — and with reason. I once hated him — and with reason, too, for I knew not Christ. The only cause why I should love God is His goodness and mercy to me through Christ."

— John Randolph of Roanoke, Congressman under Presidents John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, James Monroe, John Quincy Adams, Andrew Jackson; U.S. Senator; Diplomat.

Collected Letters of John Randolph of Roanoke to Dr. John Brockenbrough, Kenneth Shorey, editor (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1988), p. 17, to John Brockenbrough, August 25, 1818.



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Knowing Jesus: Better Understanding His Guidance

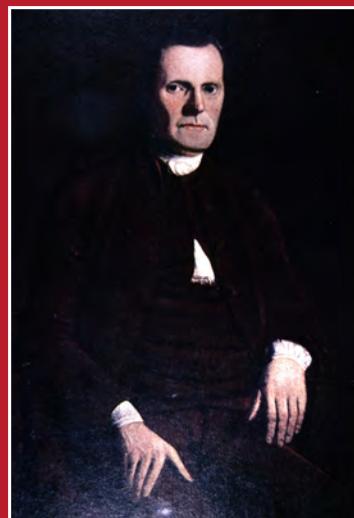
3. What are the extenuating circumstances/the situation as it exists? Importantly, do the extenuating circumstance stem from another's obedience or disobedience to the Word of God? Accordingly, does the decision you need to make stem from the sovereign will of God or the irresponsibility of man? (Don't facetiously categorize something as "the sovereign will of God in my life" and take no action because of your misdiagnosis — spiritualizing the matter.)

4. How does God's wisdom specifically increase and inform your discernment in relationship to your decision? What do your godly counselors think?

5. How long have you prayed about this and sought God's guidance?

6. What is your decision based on the above?

For past studies or additional copies go to [www.capmin.org](#)



Roger Sherman

"God commands all men everywhere to repent. He also commands them to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and has assured us that all who do repent and believe shall be saved... [G]od... has absolutely promised to bestow them on all these who are willing to accept them on the terms of the Gospel – that is, in a way of free grace through the atonement. "Ask and ye shall receive [John 16:24]. Whosoever will, let him come and take of the waters of life freely [Revelation 22:17]. Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out" [John 6:37]."

— Roger Sherman, Signer of the Declaration of Independence; Signer of the Constitution; "Master Builder of the Constitution"; Judge; Framer of the Bill of Rights; U.S. Senator.

Correspondence Between Roger Sherman and Samuel Hopkins (Worcester, MA: Charles Hamilton, 1889), p. 9, from Roger Sherman to Samuel Hopkins, June 28, 1790.