Water Brooks

Truth Young Adults' Fellowship | 2023

Seeking God's Will



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Editorial

by Dn Franco Wong

Dear reader,

The desire for every Christian is to know God's will. Though he is saved, he is still in the mortal body, and so he is still attracted to the things of this world, which appeals to the flesh. It is a daily struggle to die to self and to live for Christ. God's Word declares clearly what He wants of us, but we plead ignorance and continue to seek for other ways to find out if God would approve our fleshly desires. It is a profitable exercise for all of us to find out what the Bible says are ways that God expresses His will for us. Not only will it help us to discern difficult decisions in our lives (or so it seems difficult when we are unwilling to submit), it will also help us to rest contented in what God has already appointed for us. And prayerfully, our desire will advance to desiring to do God's

will. May you find the few articles in this issue of the Water Brooks refreshing to your soul, and may it help you navigate through this pilgrim journey on earth with less heart aches and pain.

3 John 1:4 "*I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.*"

In Christ
Dn Franco

Principles of Seeking God's Will

by Pr Joshua Yong

Introduction

"How can I know what is God's will for me?" "When we say that we must obey God's will, does it mean that God has only one will for us?" "Can there be several possible options in following God's will?" These are some questions that Christians often ask when we come to a point in life where important decisions are to be made. In this article, I hope to share the principles of how we are to discern God's will.

The word "will" means "desires." When we speak of seeking or discovering God's will, we are speaking of seeking or discovering God's desires.

Obey God's Will

We sometimes tend to over-spiritualise decision making by saying that we want to discover God's will when in reality, we want to know exactly what the future will be. This could be the

problem – in trying to discover God's will, what we may actually be trying to do is to search out the mysterious aspects of God's decretive will. We want God to reveal His specific plans for us. When we speak of what is the "right" choice or the "right" decision, or when we talk of discovering the will of God, part of what we are actually saying is that we want to know what will exactly happen in the future – "if I make this choice or that choice, what will happen?" Perhaps part of the reason why we place so much emphasis on wanting to know the future is that we do not want to face the troubles, problems or rejection that may come with our choices.

Even if we could be genuinely thinking: "What if this choice I make is not God's will," this still betrays a fundamentally wrong understanding of living a life in God's will. We are in fact suggesting that God's will is something that is unclear or unknown. While there is the mysterious aspect of God's decretive will, there is also the plain and clear aspect of God's directive, and preceptive will which is what we need to fix our eyes upon.

If we do a search on the Biblical teaching on the "will of God," the first thing that you will notice is that the idea of "finding" or "discovering" the will of God is not emphasised in the Bible. Rather, the Bible emphasises the obeying and doing of God's will (Matt 7:21; Matt 12:50). The Bible does teach us to "seek" God (Deut 4:29), but little emphasis is placed on "seeking" God's will.

When we see the people of the Bible making decisions and

living their lives unto God, they did not really speak of seeking God's will. They lived out their lives in faith and obedience. When Abraham left the Ur of the Chaldees (Heb 11:8), he acted upon what God had revealed to him (such as the plain command to go) and did not search for those aspects which God did not reveal (such as what will happen in the future; whether there will be sufficient food, water, or provision). The Bible emphasised that this is obedience in faith on Abraham's part.

The Bible does not present the will of God as something that is vague or unknown, but the Bible teaches us that God's will is known. What Christians should focus on, is the doing or obeying of God's will. Of course, we can say that in order to do the will of God, we must know the will of God, and perhaps part of knowing the will of God is to discern or discover the will of God. Nevertheless, the Bible emphasises the obeying and doing of God's will.

To be in the centre of God's will is the happiest place we can be. But what do we mean when we talk about the centre of God's will? By that, we mean that we are living in these aspects of God's will that have been clearly revealed to us. It means to follow God's plan for us.

So then, what does it mean to follow God's plans for us? To answer this question simply: Following God's plan for our life is to live a life of faith, where we strive to please God and to obey God, walking as He has called us to walk. We know that when we live this life of obedience in faith, it brings

glory to God and we know that we are doing the will of God. An important aspect in making decisions is to remember that God is our Shepherd (Psalm 23) and He continues to lead, guide and direct us even when we may not be fully aware of His leading and guidance.

This should be our starting point even when we start thinking of the major decisions and choices we have to make.

But what should we do then when we come to major crossroads in life, where we have to make important, life-changing decisions? How are we to make these important decisions in the light of God's will? What are the principles that guide us? What then is God's will which He has revealed to us, which we already know, and which we should obey?

These questions may be answered by first understanding God's preceptive will.

Knowing God's Will – God's Preceptive Will

God's preceptive will, which is His Word, has already revealed God's will relating to many aspects of our lives. When we seek God's direction for us regarding our lives, do so in light of what God's Word has already revealed to us. There are clear and direct commands given to us in Scripture and there are principles which Scripture teaches us that are very much applicable to us today. Consider the following principles:

Our Calling to Sanctification

Romans 12:2 – "*And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing*

of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

Galatians 1:4 – "*Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father*:"

1 Thessalonians 4:3 – "*For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication*:"

The Bible here tells us that it is God's will for us to live in holiness.

Our Calling to Suffer for Christ's Sake

1 Peter 3:17 – "*For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing."*

1 Peter 4:19 – "*Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator."*

When we live as a Christian in a non-Christian world, we are bound to bear persecutions. This is also God's revealed will for us.

Our Calling to Submit

Ephesians 6:6 – "*Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;"*

1 Peter 2:13-15 – "[13] *Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme;* [14] *Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of*

evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. [15] *For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men:"*

In an age where many are insisting on their own rights, the Bible teaches us to submit.

The Ten Commandments

The Ten Commandments are God's preceptive will revealed to us. Positively stated, the Ten Commandments teaches us that it is God's preceptive will for us to love God and to love our neighbour (Matthew 22:36-40). We must: 1) Love God's being; 2) Love the worship of God; 3) Love God's Name; 4) Love God's Day, 5) Love God's representatives, our parents; 6) Love our neighbour with respect to his life; 7) Love our neighbour with respect to purity; 8) Love our neighbour with respect to his property; 9) Love our neighbour's reputation; 10) Love our neighbour's prosperity (Rev Tow).

These principles of Scripture are expressions of God's preceptive will and we must be guided by them.

We must never underestimate these principles in God's Word regarding our lives. These principles may appear quite "general." But the general must guide the specifics – it serves as the framework through which the specifics are considered.

Applying God's Will – God's Directive Will

We can now enter into a more specific aspect of God's will. This is where we will consider how God directs us regarding the specifics of our lives. This is

called the directive will of God. This aspect of God's will concerns how God reveals His will to direct and lead us. There will be unique circumstances which we will face in our lives. Still, God's Word continues to guide us, and we can always examine the specifics through the principles of God's Word.

Some examples of how God directs us may be seen in the following principles:

1. Consider if it is lawful. If there is a direction we want to take that goes against the certain commands or precepts revealed clearly in Scriptures, we know immediately that this cannot be God's will for us. God will not contradict His own Word.

2. Consider if the decision you make is edifying and beneficial. 1 Cor 10:23 says, "*All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not.*" The word "*expedient*" describes that which is profitable. We have to consider if a decision we are making is profitable to us and to others spiritually. If we know that a decision will harm our own spiritual walk with God, then it cannot be profitable. The word "edify" describes that which builds you up. This again applies to us and to others. We ought to consider if the choices we make will build ourselves and others up spiritually.

3. Consider if the decision you make will lead you to the addiction of it. 1 Cor 6:12 reminds us that even if a thing is lawful, we must not allow ourselves to be brought under its power, where we fall into the bondage of it. In this verse,

Paul says, "*...all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.*"

4. Consider your spiritual gifts (Eph 4:1).

5. Consider the needs. While needs in themselves do not constitute God's calling, it may be an indication of how God is directing us (Isa 6:8 – "... *who will go for us...*").

These are not the only principles in the Word of God which God uses to direct and lead us. These are some examples to consider. But there are other principles which will be relevant and specific to the various phases of life you are in and to the specific situation you are encountering.

As God's children, we must pray for wisdom and discernment. We know that God also grants unto us His Holy Spirit which will give us the understanding of God's Word, bring to mind the truth of God's Word, and teach us how to apply them when faced with various decisions to make.

Conclusion – The Cooperative Will

At the end of the day, we come back to the obedience of God's will. It is one thing to discern God's will, it is another thing to obey it. Having discerned, we must now obey. As we obey God's will, God will help and bless us. This is called the cooperative will of God.

The cooperative will of God is taught in the account of Abraham's servant who went to find a wife for Isaac. Genesis 24:27 records for us his

testimony: "*And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth:* ***I being in the way, the LORD led me to the house of my master's brethren***." Notice how the Bible says here that God led the servant as he was already "in the way." When Abraham's servant said that he was "in the way," what it means is that he was already walking in the way which God wanted him to take. And as he obeyed God and walked along that way, he experienced how the Lord continued to lead him with divine guidance. This was where the Lord led him to find the right person for Isaac.

Abraham's servant was "*in the way*" when he went back to Abraham's home country, Haran. The reason why Abraham sent his servant back to his own country to find a wife for Isaac was because he did not want Isaac to marry a wife from the land of Canaan, which was at that time filled with idolatrous nations. Thus, in obedience to God's will, Abraham's servant went back to Abraham's own country and the Lord blessed and led him to the right wife for Isaac.

This is a wonderful picture of what it means to be in the cooperative will of God. To be in the cooperative will of God requires faith and obedience. Could it be that the reason why we are sometimes afraid of making decisions is really because there is a lack of faith, and not so much because there is a lack of revelation from God? Following God's plan for our life is to live a life of faith, where we strive to please God and to obey God. This means that we must be "in God's way"

by faith – to go where He wants us to go. And as we walk "in God's way," we will then enjoy the blessing of His divine guidance and leading.

A Summary of

Transitions: Preparation and Patience

Church Camp Q&A with Rev Prabhudas Koshy

by Pr David Chew

Introduction

Rev Koshy shared from 1 Corinthians 7:20-24. Apostle Paul speaks of many subjects in this chapter (e.g. singlehood, marriage, slaves, masters, etc.). In the discussion of these subjects, Paul repeats the same thought three times in this chapter: "*Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called.*" (1 Corinthians 7:20). What Paul is saying here is that if the Lord has convicted you of your calling, whether single or married, you ought to remain in your calling joyfully, though there may be trials and difficulties. We ought not to be desperate with our lot but honour the Lord whatever our lot may be. We must not complain and try to change our situation unnecessarily, without the Lord's permission. Whatever may be our status, we must not be overwhelmed by it, but remember that we are children of God, bought with a

price, and are precious in God's sight. Every situation that God gives to us must be viewed with Christ as over all. Only then will we know how we ought to handle our situations. If we take Christ out of the equation and try to manage things on our own without yielding to Him, we will mess things up. Christians must have orderly lives (1 Corinthians 7:17). God does not want us to seek after disorderly lives with ever-changing situations. God wants us to be people who put ourselves under the sovereignty of God and under His providential leading. We ought not to assert our will, our preferences, or desires, but humbly submit to the will of God. God promises that He will be with us (1 Corinthians 7:24). We are never alone. Though our situation may be difficult, and painful at times, God is always with us. We must trust God amid our afflictions, just as Job did.

Question 1: Can Christians use dating apps?

It is difficult because we do not know people very well. Two individuals may seem to be a match on the outside but there may be many hidden things we do not know. Now with the advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology, it may be able to tell us so much more about the character of a person, and whether it would be a good match. However, both parties can be of opposite characters, but if Christ is working in you, He will transform you, and you will learn through your marriage and grow. You can never get a perfect match. Dating apps are not the way to go. There are many other ways to go about this: personal observation,

Christian parents (e.g. Abraham for Isaac), and godly individuals.

If it is the Lord's will for you to be married, God has already chosen and prepared the one for you. If your calling is to be married, you must pray. It is not that you cannot feel for a person, but your feelings cannot be based on your preferences. In knowing God's will, it is not about preferences or likes. It is based on what God wills, based on biblical convictions. What the Bible drives us to with the Spirit is what we should choose. Preferences are unstable, changeable, and often come from carnal mindedness. But convictions based on the Bible will not change. Marriage must not be entered into based on changeable preferences, but unchangeable foundations of God's Word. Do not follow your heart, but follow Christ, your heart, but follow Christ, His Word, and the Spirit's leading.

Question 2: How are arranged marriages different from dating apps?

Marriages should not be arranged by simply anyone. Mature believers, like godly parents, Pastors, and Elders, should be sought. And ultimately, you must be biblically convicted. Boaz would be one example. Ruth was instructed by Naomi to do something carnal by sneaking into Boaz's covers by night. But Boaz was godly, and he gently rebuked her and sent her back safely, promising to fulfil his duty and clear all that was required of him first before marrying her. If not for Boaz's biblical conviction, Ruth could have caused him to fall into sin. You must be biblically convicted of your principles.

It is not that you should go after every person that a mature believer recommends. But God can use many ways to bring about a relationship. The danger of using apps, however, is that you do not really know the background of the person (e.g. divorced, or otherwise), and it lacks the evaluation of mature believers. Seek godly advice.

Question 3: Is it all right for the church to put their extra funds in safe investment instruments (e.g. Singapore Saving Bonds, Treasury bills backed by Singapore government)? What are the biblical principles that the church must follow regarding the use of extra funds.

Tithes and offerings are not given for investments. They are given to pay the full-time staff, to manage overseas missions, to open new ministries, or a building or vehicle fund. They are given not for investment but for spending. Christian works around the world need support. We should not keep it to ourselves. We need to have wisdom to know how to use the funds, according to the need.

Question 4: If an individual has extra monies after tithing and personal expenses, can he put them into safe investments?

He may do so, but he must pray before doing so. He must not guess but be sure what the Lord wants him to do with the money. God may want him to give everything to the Lord's work. We must not assume that after giving tithes and offerings, we have nothing more to give and therefore we can go and invest. There may be something God wants us to do. Also, we

must remember ultimately that we ought to lay up our treasures in heaven.

Question 5: Ushers are males, and most Sunday School teachers are females. Is a certain gender more suited for a particular area of service? If yes, why? If no, how can we encourage the other gender to serve in those areas?

There is nothing wrong with having a female usher or greeter to minister and help the women and children. The purpose of the greeter or usher is to assist the worshipper. Ushers who collect offering bags are stewards and represent the leadership of the church. Therefore, as a general principle, males should collect the offering as they ought to take leadership. However, it is not a hard and fast rule (e.g. in instances where it is a small church predominantly made up of females).

Regarding teachers, it is a weakness of the church if there are only lady teachers. Both fathers and mothers should teach. Our church ministries cannot be patterned after the world. In selecting Sunday School teachers, they must be spiritually mature. It is wise to have a lady helper or teacher to be able to bring the children to the toilet and for their general safety. However, the teachers ought to be both men and women.

Question 6: As part of assisted reproduction, can Christian women freeze their eggs?

Normally in such an instance, when they seek to fertilise the eggs, they would not only

fertilise one egg as the chances of failure is very high and it is not economically viable. They would normally fertilise multiple eggs, allow them to grow to a certain stage, and if the couple only wants one child, they will destroy the rest of the fertilised eggs, killing them. They may even do this without your knowledge. Even if one may be tempted to do so because of illness, we must learn to trust the Lord. If the Lord can open Sarah's womb, and Elizabeth's womb at an old age, let us leave it to the Lord to decide and be content in our status. Do not try to override things, and make mistakes, and regret. When we refuse to be contented, it means that we are not submitting to God. And when we are not submitting to God, we will make mistakes.

Question 7: Can a Christian be a politician? What if this requires them to engage with other religious groups?

When we speak of politicians in our time, we are speaking of it in the context of democracy. Democracy always seeks the people's mind. If you want to be a biblical man in modern politics, it is not going to work. This is not to say that it is wrong if one has the desire to contribute to the government. No matter what profession, you cannot put yourself in a compromising situation. You may be placed in a position where you are forced to write policies that would include homosexuals and be seen to be supportive of their activities. Joseph and Daniel were not politicians but were appointed by kings to their position. They did not campaign for leadership nor grabbed for power. They were government officials. No matter where we

may be, this world will seek to cause us to compromise. We must remember that this world is not our home, and we must not seek power and prominence in this world. If God places us there, there will be many tests, but we must uphold Christ's name and not compromise.

Question 8: Is civil marriage all right for Christians?

True believers will desire to begin their marriage with God as Witness. A marriage is a three-party covenant — the man, the woman, and God. In a civil marriage, there is no prayer or asking of God's blessing. This does not mean that they must be married in a church building, but in a Christian environment with the Pastor.

A Summary of the

'Sevenfold Will of God'

by Rev Dr Timothy Tow

by Edrea Tai

Introduction

This article attempts to summarise the Sevenfold Will of God taken from pages 15 to 53 of the book, The Clock of the Sevenfold Will of God, written by Rev Dr Timothy Tow. Taking from the answer to question seven of the Westminster Shorter Catechism, the decrees of God are His eternal purpose according to the counsel of His own will, whereby for His own glory, He hath ordained whatsoever comes to pass. The book has categorised the will of God into seven aspects: (1) Cooperative, (2) Directive, (3) Desiderative, (4) Decretive, (5) Preceptive, (6) Permissive, and (7) Punitive.

Directive

The revelation of God's will is progressive.

At the early stages along the road of God's progressive

revelation, theophanies or direct revelations – manifestations of God – were the means that God used to reveal what He was going to do. We can see this in the Patriarchs: (1) When Abraham encountered the three heavenly visitors, who later revealed the fate of Sodom. (2) When God gave direction to Abraham to leave his home country. However, we have advanced along the road of God's progressive revelation, and we now have the Word of God, the Bible, in our very hands today. As such, we must be wary of modern-day claims of witnessing the directive will of God in voices and visions. Consider the warning of Jeremiah 23:16, "*Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the LORD.*"

With that being said, we also should not absolutely shut out the testimonies of faithful men of God like Wang Ming Tao, John Sung, and Sadhu Sundar Singh. Nevertheless, today we are not to expect direct revelations from God in our day-to-day lives. We must advance on the road of God's progressive revelation to His Church and arrive at the complete revelation of the Bible.

Cooperative

Having been assured of the Lord's direction for our life, if we seek to do His Will to the best of our ability, He will surely bless us and lead us to good success. This Divine help is the cooperative will of God.

The classical example found in

the Bible pertaining to the cooperative aspect of the will of God would be that of the servant of Abraham (Genesis 24). Obeying Abraham's instructions to find a wife for Isaac from Abraham's own country, his servant prayed to God for two things to happen as a confirmation from the Lord, and God answered him, leading him to Rebekah. Another more present-day example would be that of Rev Dr Timothy Tow, who was turned from studying law in London, to studying theology in China, and then subsequently in the USA in 1947, which was two years before Mao took over all of China. A familiar verse found in Matthew 6:33, "*But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*" echoes the summary statement written above for this cooperative aspect of the will of God. May we also say with the servant of Abraham, "*I being in the way, the LORD led me*".

Punitive

Luke 12:47 "*And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.*"

The punitive aspect of the will of God would be the inverse to the cooperative will of God. This can clearly be seen in the examples of Balaam and Judas. God had clearly instructed Balaam, a Gentile prophet, not to curse the nation of Israel as requested by the Moabite king, Balak. Motivated by greed, after being offered material rewards by Balak, Balaam went to God again. God even used the animal (an ass), and an

angel to speak to Balaam, "*thy way is perverse before me*". The New Testament counterpart to Balaam is Judas, one of the twelve Apostles, who also had his mind set to betray his Master, the Lord Jesus Christ for material gain of 30 pieces of silver. Despite following Jesus, hearing His teachings, and witnessing first-hand the miracles He performed, Judas betrayed his Master. The ends of these two characters were that they were met with the punitive aspect of the will of God, in the form of death, as recorded in Numbers 31:8, "... *Balaam also the son of Beor they slew with the sword.*", and Acts 1:18, "... *with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.*" The final operation of God's punitive will will take place in the end times as recorded in 2 Thessalonians 2:8-12, "*And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming... And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*"

Preceptive

God's ultimate progressive revelation to His church is that revelation committed eventually to writing.

As aforementioned in the directive will of God, we now have the Bible, revelation from God put down in parchment and ink, and now printed. Therein the synopsis of the Law in the form of the Ten

Commandments is found, teaching us our duty towards God and our duty towards other men. Jesus Himself further groups them under two great commandments of Love – love towards God and love towards man. Truly the Word of God "*is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path*". As faithfully declared by the psalmist in Psalm 119:89-102, "*For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven. Thy faithfulness is unto all generations: thou hast established the earth, and it abideth. They continue this day according to thine ordinances: for all are thy servants. Unless thy law had been my delights, I should then have perished in mine affliction. I will never forget thy precepts: for with them thou hast quickened me. I am thine, save me; for I have sought thy precepts. The wicked have waited for me to destroy me: but I will consider thy testimonies. I have seen an end of all perfection: but thy commandment is exceeding broad. O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day. Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts. I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word. I have not departed from thy judgments: for thou hast taught me.*" As such, in order to become increasingly attuned to God's preceptive will, we ought to read our Bibles daily, systematically, and meditate upon the precepts, We must not practise bibliomancy, perusing the Scriptures at

random. This is a poor attempt to discern God's will, no different from fortune telling by picking random divination cards as practised by the heathen. Consider the words of James in James 1:22-25, "*But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves... But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.*"

Permissive

Romans 8:28 "*And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*"

Perhaps the most familiar and no better example of this aspect of the will of God is that of Job. It is evident that God permitted Satan to touch all that Job had. Job, in a short span of time, lost his possessions, his health, and his loved ones. His wife taunted him to "*curse God, and die*" (Job 2:9). Yet despite these trying times, Job did not once lose his steadfastness. Upon learning the terrible events that had transpired, "... *Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.*" (Job 1:20-22).

There will be hard times in our lives when we are perplexed, just as the psalmist said in

Psalm 42:11, "*Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.*" In the beginning, and through the midst of hard times, often we are unable to understand, and we struggle with much difficulty to see the purpose of our adversity, but "*God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive*" (Gen 50:20b). Hard as it may be in the moment, all things, whether good, bad, sweet, or bitter, will turn out good and sweet in the end for the God-loving Christian. Job 42:12-17, "*So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning... After this lived Job an hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, even four generations. So Job died, being old and full of days.*"

Desiderative

Ezekiel 18:23 "*Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord GOD: and not that he should return from his ways, and live?*"

The word 'desiderative' comes from the Latin implying desire or a longing for. The desiderative will of God denotes His desire for all of mankind to be saved from sin. John Calvin expounds the desiderative will of God in John 3:16, that God indiscriminately invites all to share in life, cutting off every excuse from unbelievers. When the Bible says, "*For God so loved the world*", it points to the entire world and not only to the elect. Though there is nothing in the world

deserving His favour, God shows His favour to the whole world when He calls all without exception to believe in Christ. Calvin further expounds this aspect of the will of God in 2 Peter 3:9, explaining that God desires all men to be saved, and is prepared to bring even the perishing to safety, to receive all men into repentance, so that none may perish. Christ's work of salvation (His death and resurrection) is sufficient for all, efficient for the elect. This is illustrated in the parable of the sower (Matthew 13:3-8), where the offer of salvation, the seeds, are scattered to the uttermost parts of the field – the way side, the stony places, the thorny places, and the good ground. Only the good ground brought forth even a hundredfold fruit although all the places had been scattered with the seeds. Ezekiel 18:32 "*For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.*"

Decretive

Romans 9:17-23 "*For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? Nay but, O man, who are thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and*

another unto dishonour? What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory,"

Ephesians 1:4-5 "*According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,*" The decretive will of God humbles us in that God predestinated us to be saved not according to His foreknowledge of our merit or demerit, but simply out of His good pleasure according to the counsel of His own will, simply out of His good pleasure according to the counsel of His own will, "... *not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast*" (Ephesians 2:8-9). For those who are reprobate, in the words of Buswell, the chargeable cause of the loss is in the lost. As it is written in John 3:19, "*And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.*" and in 2 Thessalonians 2:12, "*That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*" Because they have rejected the grace of God, they are responsible for their lost condition. This is also clear in chapter three of the Westminster Confession of Faith, "neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the

creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established." Therefore, let us handle this doctrine of predestination with "special prudence and care", that it may "afford matter of praise, reverence, and admiration of God; and of humility, diligence, and abundant consolation, to all that sincerely obey the gospel" (WCF III. VIII).

Conclusion

Some aspects of the will of God may be simpler to understand as compared to others, but together, all aspects give us enlightenment in our understanding and discernment of what the Lord's will is for our life. From hence, let us "*See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is*" (Ephesians 5:15-17).