

# Sources of God's Will (Part 2)



Week Three

## inTro



Read This Week's Passage:  
Psalm 23

### DRIVING TO A DECISION

A university student was driving home back from graduation in his used car. With dormitory furniture and belongings in his back seat, he drove along contemplating the next stage of his life. Now empowered with an undergraduate degree, he wondered what he was going to do, how he was going to it, and where. Surrounded by anxiety and overwhelmed with the number of choices, he looked out into the countryside on his road trip. Weeks before graduation, he had applied to random jobs and internships out of desperation. Random opportunities came here and there. His rationale caused him to overthink each choice and reason out its pros and cons. But at the end of day, he still had to decide.

The monotony of the drive caused him to debate and even cry out loud for some help. Not knowing what to do, he started to pray to God aloud in his car, asking for a clear sign from heaven. He asked God to put the right decision in front of his eyes. This anxious young adult wanted to stop analyzing and wanted the assistance of heavenly omniscience to help make the decision for him.

Just then, a car cut in front of him. The recent graduate was so angry that he stared at the license plate. He wanted to mark this car, its make, and its license number. But then he realized that the plate was from a certain province of the country. Immediately his thoughts went back to the seemingly random jobs and internships he had applied to. One of them had offered him an entry-level position. And it was in the same region as the license plate of the car that had cut him off.

It was then that he knew where he was going next—the province of the car that had cut in front of him.



**inScribe**

Write out Psalm 23 from the translation of your choice. You may also rewrite the passage in your own words, outline, or mind map the chapter.



Go back to your scribed text and study the passage.

**Circle** repeated words/phrases/ideas

**Underline** words/phrases that are important and have meaning to you



Draw **Arrows** to connect words/phrases to other associated or related words/phrases

What special insights do your marks seem overall to point to?



Memorize your favorite verse in Psalm 23. Write it out multiple times to help memorization.

How have you used these three methods to discover God's will in the past?



Read more at [www.inversebible.org/will3-3](http://www.inversebible.org/will3-3)

## SUBJECT TO SCRIPTURE

Last week we emphasized the importance of keeping the Word of God, the Bible, as the primary source of discovering the will of God. By “primary” we mean that it is not the first in a list of sources but rather the most important and foremost source, and the one by which the other sources are judged. We will look at other sources of ascertaining heaven's will, but we must remember that all should agree with His principles found in Scripture.

A great gift to Christianity is the gift of prophecy in the writings of Ellen G. White where she reveals many practical applications of biblical principles. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, she wrote on topics including health, education, marriage, family, stewardship and finances, prophecy, ministry, evangelism, and nutrition. In the arena of ascertaining God's will, she wrote the following:

“There are three ways in which the Lord reveals His will to us, to guide us, and to fit us to guide others. . . . God reveals His will to us in His word, the Holy Scriptures. His voice is also revealed in His providential workings; and it will be recognized if we do not separate our souls from Him by walking in our own ways, doing according to our own wills, and following the promptings of an unsanctified heart, until the senses have become so confused that eternal things are not discerned, and the voice of Satan is so disguised that it is accepted as the voice of God.

“Another way in which God's voice is heard is through the appeals of His Holy Spirit, making impressions upon the heart, which will be wrought out in the character. If you are in doubt upon any subject you must first consult the Scriptures. If you have truly begun the life of faith you have given yourself to the Lord to be wholly His, and He has taken you to mold and fashion according to His purpose, that you may be a vessel unto honor. You should have an earnest desire to be pliable in His hands and to follow whithersoever He may lead you. You are then trusting Him to work out His designs, while at the same time you are co-operating with Him by working out your own salvation with fear and trembling.” (*Testimonies to the Church*, 5:512)

The three ways in which God reveals His will are through the Bible, His providential workings, and impressions by the Holy Spirit. The first was elaborated upon last week. The second refers to different circumstances happening in our lives where opportunities are opened and closed. These providential workings can be coincidental, experiential, historical, and/or supernatural. It should be noted that every open opportunity is not necessarily God's will, nor is every closed opportunity not God's will. As Ellen White qualifies, these occurrences are only to be taken into account when our spiritual lives are connected with God. We should examine our heart through the Holy Spirit and with prayer to determine whether these occurrences are indeed providential.

The third mentioned source of God's will is impressions of the Holy Spirit. Again, Ellen White qualifies this by limiting it to areas of character development—not for major life decisions, but impressions that affect who you are as a person, as you are moved by the Holy Spirit. Character impressions might include some like “your tone was too unkind”; “that dessert was a little too glutinous”; or that your finances were spent rashly for whatever reason. As it is with the second way, these impressions must be subject to Scripture.

## WISDOM AND REASON

In addition to the three ways mentioned by Ellen White, the Bible mentions two more sources of God's will. Proverbs 15:22 places wisdom in the multitude of counselors. Guidance can be acquired by those who have previously been guided. Wisdom can be acquired by those who have wisdom. The Bible has many narratives in which mentors, prophets, leaders, and other people have been consulted for the will of God.

Before making a large life decision, it is wise to find mentors who have been and are led by God. Preferably these individuals should have three types of knowledge. First, they should know as well as follow the principles of Scripture and the writings of the Spirit of Prophecy. Though we all should be studying the Bible, interacting with people who know the Bible more will help expand our exposure and make its application more practical. As obedient observers of Scripture, they give counsel that is authentic, tried, and true.

Second, they should know who you are and have your best interests in mind. They should be familiar with your values, vision, life goals, history, individual character, and experience. In short, they should love you.

Third, they should have some life experience. Perhaps this is why many wise individuals are older, in that they have experienced mistakes, failure, success, and so on. Since they have already done much before, guided by the Holy Spirit and Scripture, they can share how to avoid trouble or face life's difficult decisions.

Besides the counsel of the wise, the Bible also places value on reason. Isaiah 1:18 states, " 'Come now, and let us reason together,' says the LORD, 'though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.' " Reason is a God-given component of the human mind. Decisions should be reasonable to some degree. Yes, God does at times do supernatural and extraordinary things, but there is still some form of reason to it. He's trying to get a point across. He never does something that is totally nonsensical or absurd and pointless. Rather, we can use our reason and common sense to apply biblical principles in the context of our individual case. For example, we are to keep the Sabbath, but God does not dictate how we should keep the Sabbath with a minute-by-minute itinerary.



inTerpret

After looking at your scribed and annotated text, what special insights do your marks overall seem to point to?



What questions emerge after studying this passage? What parts are difficult?

What other principles and conclusions do you find?



Read more at  
[www.inverseible.org/will3-4](http://www.inverseible.org/will3-4)

Sources of God's Will (Part 2)



What relationship do the following verses have with the primary passage?

Luke 14:28-32

Acts 8:29-39

2 Timothy 3:1-5

Hebrews 1:1-2



What other verses point to these and other sources for God's will?

Review your memorized verse from Psalm 23.

## WHEN HE DOESN'T ANSWER

There are times when, after prayer, God simply doesn't answer. This is not a revelation of His indifference or His non-existence. For whatever reason, there may not be a response to our request. At these times, we are to apply the principles aforementioned, where through reason, counselors, impressions, circumstances, and the writings of the Spirit of Prophecy, the biblical precedent is sought after.

But even with this diligence, study, and prayer-filled time, there are moments when you can choose between several good options. This reveals not the indifference of God but His gift of free will and choice. At the end of the day, after ruling out all the unbiblical alternatives, there are opportunities when we get to choose.

This also reveals that God is not a system or some impersonal force. When we follow some formula, enact some ritual, or push some buttons on a machine, we shouldn't expect a celestial candy bar to fall out of the sky. The Holy Spirit is a person, just as much as God the Father and God the Son. With the characteristics of life (2 Cor. 3:3), intelligence (Is. 40:13), freedom (1 Cor. 12:11), knowledge, and emotion, He interacts with us as a real-time person with a real-time person. There are moments when there is clearly only one choice; and there may be moments when we get to choose from more than one.

This reveals that the Holy Spirit is the Author of Scripture (2 Peter 1:20, 21; 2 Samuel 23:1, 2; John 14:16, 17, 26; 16:13, 26, 27). We can have confidence that after the biblical filter and no further information on God's end, that we can make a biblically informed choice. Though we may be insecure about possibly choosing the second-best choice, knowing that God has authored the Bible gives us confidence that God will allow the best results from whatever choice we made, knowing we made it prayerfully and obediently.

This reveals that the Holy Spirit is a convicter of truth. Knowing that we diligently searched the Scriptures and applied the principles of God's will to making our decisions, we are acknowledging Him as God and the Spirit as the convicter—or main decider—within our convictions for our decisions.

This reveals that Christ is our Lord and King. Jesus was led by the Spirit (Matt. 4:1; Mark 1:12; Luke 4:1). This means that He was living an obedient life and following the will of His Father. As we follow the Spirit, we are acknowledging the One who sent the Spirit, and His Father, the One who placed Him on the throne.



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Where do you see Jesus in  
Psalm 23?



Is Jesus Lord in your life  
decisions?

What is He saying to you through  
this lesson?

How do you see Jesus differently  
or see Him again?

Prayer: How do you respond to  
seeing Jesus in this way?



Read more at  
[www.inverseible.org/will3-6](http://www.inverseible.org/will3-6)

Sources of God's Will (Part 2)



Review the memory verse.  
How does it apply to your  
life this week?



After this week's study  
of the chapter, what are  
personal applications you  
are convicted of in your life?

What are practical  
applications you must  
make?



Read more inSight from the  
Spirit of Prophecy at  
[www.inverseible.org/will3-7](http://www.inverseible.org/will3-7)

**DEPEND UPON GOD**

“You endeavor to reach correct decisions regarding religious duties, and to make decisions regarding business enterprises, by the tossing up of a coin, and letting the position in which it falls decide what course you shall pursue. I am instructed to say that we are not to give encouragement to any such methods. They are too common, too much like sleight-of-hand movements. They are not of the Lord, and those who depend upon them for direction will meet with failure and disappointment. Being nothing more than a matter of chance, the influence of adopting such tests regarding duty is calculated to lead the mind to depend on chance and guesswork, when all our work and plans for work should be established on the sure foundation of the Word of God.

“The people of God can come to a correct understanding of their duty only through sincere prayer and earnest seeking for the sanctification of the Holy Spirit. When they seek aright for instruction concerning their course of action, these strange and unreliable methods will not be accepted by them. They will then be saved from haphazard work, and from the confusion that is ever the result of depending on human devisings. . . .

“To our people I will say, Let none be led from the sound, sensible principles that God has laid down for the guidance of His people, to depend for direction on any such device as the tossing up of a coin. Such a course is well pleasing to the enemy of souls; for he works to control the coin, and through its agency works out his plans. Let none be so easily deceived as to place confidence in any such tests. Let none belittle their experience by resorting to cheap devices for direction in important matters connected with the work of God.

“The Lord works in no haphazard way. Seek Him most earnestly in prayer. He will impress the mind, and will give tongue and utterance. The people of God are to be educated not to trust in human inventions and uncertain tests as a means of learning God's will concerning them. Satan and his agencies are always ready to step into any opening to be found that will lead souls away from the pure principles of the Word of God. The people who are led and taught of God will give no place to devisings for which there is not a ‘Thus saith the Lord.’

“Let all who claim to be preparing for the coming of the Lord humbly seek Him for a knowledge of His will, and for a spirit that is willing to walk in all the light He sends. As a people we have had much instruction regarding our duty to depend upon God for wisdom and counsel. Let us go to the Word of God for instruction. ‘Search the scriptures,’ the Saviour said. . . . We need to humble our hearts and purify our souls daily, learning at all times to walk by the faith of the Son of God.

“My brethren and sisters, leave all minor tests that you may be tempted to make, and test your spirit by the witness of the Word of God. Study that Word, that you may know the character and will of God. It is positively essential that every believer make the truths of the Bible his guide and safeguard. To every young man and woman, and to those of advanced years, I testify that the study of the Word is the only safeguard for the soul who would remain steadfast unto the end.”  
*(Selected Messages, Vol. 2, pp. 325–326)*



Share insights from this week's memory verse and Bible study as well as any discoveries, observations, and questions with your Sabbath School class (or Bible study group). Consider these discussion questions with the rest of the group.



What are some ways that people misinterpret the will of God?

How can selfish interest cloud the decision-making process?

What are the three ways that God reveals His will to us, according to Ellen G. White?

What are the different parameters that each of the three ways are revealed?

What are some narratives where to prove the sources are biblical?

Who are some good mentors in your life, and what godly counsel have they given?

Are there other sources for God's will that have not been discussed?

Is common sense common?

Why is it so important to establish the sources of God's will before deciding to follow it?