**ORIENTATION & INTRODUCTION** to Knowing God’s Will

* **Welcome**
* **Who I am**… Dr. Gary T. Meadors, Emeritus Professor of Greek and NT, Grand Rapids Theological Seminary / [gngmeadors@mac.com](mailto:gngmeadors@mac.com) / [www.gmeadors.com](http://www.gmeadors.com) [my resume is on my website]

I have taught Bible, especially the NT and Greek as my primary focus for over 50 years. I am retired and do special projects as opportunity arises.

* **What we will study…**
  + **A biblical theology** about knowing God’s will. Most of the literature about knowing God’s will is “popular” literature. My intention is to teach you how to think about God’s will. This approach is not some simplistic formula to figure God out, but a comprehensive model for thinking biblically about God’s revelation to us and how that guides us in life’s decisions.
  + **CULTURAL EXPRESSIONS... How** do you think about and discuss “knowing God’s will.” The way Christians think and talk varies in Church traditions, Church stereo types vary by locations... I know my traditions but I may not know your tradition. MUCH of what we will discuss is the Bible and we certainly have that in common. The interpretation and application of Scripture to a subject can, however, differ because of various theological commitments. Please be open to investigate new ways of thinking.
  + My book, *Decision Making God’s Way: A New Model for Knowing God’s Will* (Baker, 2003 but OP; is available in LOGOS in English and Spanish; check used book online sites like “Thrift Books”; I will compose a revised volume which will follow these lectures).
    - The “table of contents”will note which chapter in my 2003 book relates to the current lectures. You will notice that my sequence in the lectures differs from my original publication…I am in process of rewriting my material in line with these lectures. Stay tuned for information about its publication. **You DO NOT need the book for the current study. It is merely collateral reading.**
    - My views are the same, I am just upgrading, clarifying and re-sequencing the material. I am also adding material on biblical wisdom, the issue of providence and a critique of other models.
  + **SEQUENCE**… is difficult for a “model” because you need to see the whole paradigm in order to fit the parts together. Studying the Book of Revelation illustrates this challenge, as one author stated it, “You know nothing about the book of Revelation until you know everything!” The point is that some material only unpacks when you understand the totality. I have thought about God’s will for decades and how to sequence the biblical and theological material in a way that flows well. As the claimed Chinese proverb puts it: “Give a person a fish and you feed them for a day. Teach them to fish and you feed them for a lifetime.”

Consequently, we will do our first lecture as an overview of the whole model then break it out in subsequent lectures. This will give you the “big picture” before we treat the various items necessary for a view of how God’s will is understood and pursued.

* + After I have presented my model, I will do a brief review of several prominent constructs that differ from mine (Blackaby, Smith and Friesen individual publications). These three were conveniently presented in *How Then Should We Choose* (Kregel, 2009). Some have claimed that my view is a variation of Friesen. This is an incorrect judgment, probably based on a poor reading of my model. Some take verbal parallels and *assume* they mean the same thing. I will point out just how different my model is from all three at the end of our study.
* **Suggestions for study patterns**…
  + Retrieve lecture notes.
  + Overview the contents, reviewing the notes for the subject being presented.
  + THEN view a video with notes available to log ideas and questions.
  + DO NOT get bogged down…it would be better to quickly listen to the lectures first, then return for close study.

Thank you for choosing to study with me about knowing God’s will. I believe at the end of our journey you will find yourself better informed about **“how”** to discern God’s desires for creation and your life. My goal is to help you build a “mindset” that can discern issues not directly addressed in the Bible, by reflecting from a biblical worldview and value system that gives you confidence in your quest to know and please God.

***Very selective bibliography*** for God’s will and biblical worldview and ethics. Some items seem older, but they are still the better reading on this subject.

Cosgrove, Charles H. *Appealing to Scripture in Moral Debate: Five Hermeneutical Rules.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002.

Frame, John M. *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God.* Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1987.

Furnish, Victor Paul. *Theology & Ethics in Paul*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, Fifth Printing, 1982.

Hays, Richard B. *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethics.* New York: Harper Collins, 1996.

Healy, Mary and Parry, Robin, editors. *The Bible and Epistemology: Biblical Soundings on the Knowledge of God.* Paternoster, 2007.

Helm, Paul. *The Providence of God.* Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1994.

Hollinger, Dennis P. *Choosing the Good: Christian Ethics in a Complex World.* Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002.

Huffman, Douglas S., editor. *How Then Should We Choose: Three Views on God’s Will and Decision Making.* Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2009. [represents Blackaby, Friesen, Smith]

Meadors, Gary T. *Decision Making God’s Way: A New Model for Knowing God’s Will.* Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2003.

Malphurs, Aubrey. *Values-Driven Leadership: Discovering and Developing Your Core Values for Ministry.* Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996.

Milco, Michael R. *Ethical Dilemmas in Church Leadship: Case Studies in Biblical Decision Making.* Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1997.

Murray, John. *Principles of Conduct.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957.

Rae, Scott B. *Moral Choices: An Introduction to Ethics.* Second Edition. Zondervan, 2000.

Ramm, Bernard. *The Witness of the Spirit*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959.

Smith,

Spieger, James S. *The Benefits of Providence: A New Look at Divine Sovereignty*. Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2007.

Titus, Harold

Waltke, Bruce