

# **Dr. Gary Meadors, Knowing God's Will, Session 1, An Overview of Meadors' Model**

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Welcome back to our course on Biblical Theology for Knowing God's Will. Last time we talked about the introduction, the table of contents, and helped you to get a feel for the entire series. And today we start what we call Lecture 1, Lesson 1 in this GM 1. GM 1, you should be sure that you retrieve your notes.

This time it will be primarily PowerPoint slides. You may have them in a PDF or you may have them in PowerPoint depending on where you are and what you have in terms of technology. But they'll be there for you and it's important for you to have those in front of you as you listen to me.

Like I said, learning needs not only the hearing but the looking, the seeing. And you can connect my comments to the notes and I think it will be a lot more profitable for you if you do that. All right, now this lesson, as I mentioned to you in the previous situation, is about an overview of my model.

I'm going to look at the big picture through this slide presentation. There are a number of slides. I could take a long time on this, but I'm not going to do that.

I'm going to go through it quickly because I will go back to the subsequent lessons and cover every one of the things I talk about in this overview, unpack it in greater detail, and hopefully increase your understanding of it. So right now, the only thing I want to do in this lesson is help you to get a handle on my model. All right, so first of all, what does discerning God's will require in terms of our thinking? Well, it requires a biblical view of knowing.

We're talking about knowing God's will. Knowing is a category of life. It's actually a very basic philosophical category.

We use the word epistemology. It may be a new term to you, but it comes from the Greek word, which means to know. In an introduction to philosophy, you will talk about ontology.

That's being. Who am I? You will talk about epistemology and knowing. What do I know? How do I know? What's the validity of my knowledge? And you'll talk about doing.

Axiology is that term, and that is what you are supposed to do as a result of knowing. Okay, so knowing God's will requires that. Furthermore, it requires a view of how to read the Bible and to read the Bible in context, not proof text.

It's a disease. Many times in churches, people will use the Bible like a Ouija board. They'll just open it up and find a verse and they'll keep opening it until they find a verse that has words that says what they want to hear or applies to the situation they're dealing with. But that's an abuse of the Bible.

We need to read the Bible in its context. We've got the whole Bible as a context. We've got sections of the scriptures as a context.

We have books as a context. We have individual paragraphs and chapters in these books have a context as well. So, we must pay attention to the Bible because we're interested in what the Bible means so that we might have a legitimate way of answering the question, what does it mean in my particular situation? You've got to move from meant to means.

Third, Romans 12:1 and 2 is a key passage in the question of knowing God's will. And we're going to use it as a model, be transformed by the renewing of your mind. And we'll talk about that.

We're also going to talk about an understanding of how a worldview and values model works because that's the core of my paradigm for knowing God's will, is to function from a worldview and values model. Furthermore, I'm going to talk about confronting subjective challenges, conscience, spirit, prayer, provenance, and some of those issues. We will cover those at the end, even though your curiosity is probably more for about those at the beginning.

But you can cherry pick and go listen to some of that. But the fact is, is that you need to get the paradigm as a whole. And furthermore, a system to discern questions.

I will walk you through at least one idea about how to process decisions. Most of the decisions that you're going to confront are not decisions that the Bible directly addresses. That's lecture number three or four, in which we will talk about how the Bible teaches.

It teaches in direct ways, it teaches by implication, and it teaches by creative constructs that we bring to the totality of scripture. So, I'll talk about a system to discern questions in relation to the Bible and the question at hand. Furthermore, what's the goal of this study? What do I hope to achieve with you? What do you hope to achieve as a person sitting and listening to these lectures? Well, here it is.

I hope that you will, and that I hope to produce a person who is self-conscious in deliberation. All these words are packed. Self-conscious deliberation.

You can think critically about life's decisions in a manner consistent with biblical worldviews and values. Now that's a mouthful. It's a very important idea.

That's what we want to achieve at the end of the day. I want you to be self-conscious about your decisions. I want you not just to make a decision pragmatically.

I want you to make a decision because you have reasons to do so and you've thought through it. That's deliberative. God created you to be able to do that.

So, a self-conscious deliberation. I want you to think critically, which has to do with biblical interpretation to a great extent, and the ability to not just take a surface reading of the Bible but to probe it to understand it. And I want you to be able to probe the decision you're going to be making as well.

In other words, what are you working on? Are you working on abortion, transgender, education for yourself, for your children? Those things. You need to be able to prove that as well as your own process. We do all of this in a consistent way with the biblical worldview and values.

So first you've got to have your biblical worldview and values consciously in your mind, consciously under control in how you're going to go about it. Now you'll say, I don't want that. That's too complicated.

Just give me, tell me five things. Give me five things to do so that I'll be a happy person. Well, I've got news for you.

You may be happy, but you may not be sound in the way that you go about life and the way you go about dealing with the questions of life. Friends, Christianity is, in some senses, above all religions, a mental process. God says to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The word knowledge and the concept of knowing permeates all over the Bible. And if we are not students of the word, as Paul even told Timothy to be, then we are missing what God has for us. We can't slough our way through life.

We can't just go through life accidentally, bumping against one pillar or another. We must engage the scriptures and engage life with the scriptures. So that's the goal of our study.

I kind of suggest that you put that on a card and that you memorize that statement so that you can think about it as you go through the study and through life. Now, discerning God's will requires, first of all, a biblical epistemology. Now, remember, epistemology is a term that covers the issue of knowing.

What do I know? Well, how do we know what we know? That sounds like kind of a crazy question, doesn't it? How do we know what we know? First of all, epistemology relates to the sources, nature, and validity of knowledge. The sources of knowledge, traditionally and classically, are our senses, our feelings, our hearing, our seeing, and reason, our ability to relate to something rationally and to reason it out. It also relates to authority.

We all sort of start our lives as Christians in that category of authority. We're doing what people tell us we ought to do. Sooner or later, we may say, I'm not so sure that's right, and we come to the scriptures, and we look at it.

But authority is an aspect of knowledge. It's a secondary aspect because senses and reason are primary. And then intuition.

Intuition is not what ladies have. You know, ladies' intuition. Intuition is not essentially the Deja vu that we sometimes experience in life.

Oh, I think I've been here before. I think I've done this before. How did I think about that before? However, in philosophy, intuition is like Eastern mysticism.

In the biblical idea, intuition would be equivalent to revelation. God has revealed himself. And that's not intuition in the way a lot of people use that word, but that is the source of knowledge that we have.

And it comes from scripture, not just our thinking in terms of how we would view that subject. We have to go to something that's more objective. And that brings us to the next thing.

Epistemology is objective and subjective. You heard someone say, if a tree falls in the forest and no one is there to hear it, will it make a noise? That's a classic ancient Greek question to probe the question of knowledge as objective or subjective. We as Christians, by and large, take knowledge in an objective way.

So the answer to that is creation is objective. Even if we're not there, it still makes a noise. If you had a recorder and no human being there, you'd hear it.

Whereas the subjective side says that reality isn't reality unless I experience it. Now, that's simplistic, but that's a little bit about what we talk about when discussing knowledge. Then there's the validity of knowledge, correspondence, and coherence.

Correspondence has, if I'm sitting in a room with a tin roof, I know when it's raining because I hear it. And I don't have to go out and get wet to realize it's raining because I cohere with my experience the sound of rain on a roof so that I know that it's raining without seeing it. You don't have to see things to know things.

And then there's also coherence that deals more with the rational side of life and the way that things are reasoned. Now that's a very quick overview of the question of how do we know what we know. There are books written on this very slide here and I just want you to get a taste of the fact that knowing is a very challenging issue.

Next, how do you see the Bible filling those epistemological blanks? For example, about sources. Well, our source is scripture. Our source is scripture.

But we approach scripture both from the standpoint of reason and whether the Bible coheres. We talk about the unity of scripture and that we interpret scripture with scripture. The Bible doesn't contradict itself.

It has different perspectives on things. So, we use a lot of reasoning as we go about understanding scripture. Intuition is the sense that God has given us a revelation.

And we'll talk more about how our internal processing works in terms of what we call conviction to deal with relating to that source. Also, epistemological blanks about nature. The sources, the nature, and the validity.

The nature of knowledge is objective, and its validity is worked out both in coherence and in relation to the issue of correspondence and theory of knowing. Now, you don't have to know all that stuff, but I just wanted to give it to you because epistemology is not some simplistic subject. It's something that we should think about.

How do we know what we know, what is the nature of what we know, and how do we prove what we know? That's the domain of epistemology. In a Christian worldview, however, we've got a problem because the world actually works off of the model of sources, nature, and validity of knowledge.

Every philosopher deals with that no matter what their religious orientation is, no matter what their philosophic orientation is. Atheists deal with it. Christians deal with it.

Muslims deal with it. Hindus deal with it. Everybody deals with that.

But in the Christian worldview, we've got something particularly important in our worldview that affects our knowing and here's what it comes to. There's a dilemma. There's a dilemma in knowing God.

For example, God existed in eternity. He came and he created Adam and Eve are in the garden, probably not for very long actually, and they disobeyed God and we theologically call that the fall. Adam and Eve fell.

They sinned. They were kicked out of the garden. That's the metanarrative of scripture.

That's the big story. But what happens to that is this. When we look to see God, we're looking through, I'll go this way, we're looking through distortion.

The fall has distorted what we see in nature, for example. When David said the heavens declared the glory of God, the firmament showeth his handiwork. He said that because he believed what the Bible said and what Moses had said and what the tradition within his own believing category of being a Jew told him that.

That's how he knew that the heavens declared the glory of God. An atheist goes out and looks at heaven and shakes their fist in the air and says, kill me if you're really God, and nothing happens. And so he concludes there is no God.

Well, that's silly. But the fact is that we have to look through distortion. And that distortion is complicated because it's not only the data that we look at; it's the way we look at it.

We ourselves are distorted. There is what theologians call the effect of the fall. That is, the fall not only affected the land but as God told Adam and Eve, it's going to, you're going to get thistles instead of green beans.

You're going to have problems with your gardens. Life is not going to go as well as it could have gone. And so therefore, we have to deal with our own selves.

We're blinded by sin, as it says many times in the scriptures. So, God's solution to the dilemma is this. And you should open up 1 Corinthians 2:6-10.

I'm going to talk about this later, so I can only overview it now. Remember, we're just getting an overview. The Bible tells us that 1 Corinthians 2:6-10 is packaged in chapters 1-4.

2:6-10 is Paul's apology for why his message of the cross is the right message, is the superior message. And the answer of Paul to those who were pressing him is that God revealed it. Verse 10 of chapter 2, God revealed.

So Paul is speaking from a revelatory context of God communicating to Paul and Paul communicating to us through that revelation, which is encoded in scripture. For us, the revelation we have is the Bible, and that's it.

That's why the Bible was so important, because it is our base for knowledge. And so, God overcame the distortion of sin to know him by giving us that communication, the scriptures. And yet, there's still a dilemma even after that.

We have a perfect Bible, but we don't have perfect readers. We have inspired scripture, but we don't have inspired interpreters. Therefore, we face confusion even in reading and studying the Bible, and people come to different opinions.

Now that is a big, big piece of a biblical worldview. For whatever reason, in God's decrees, he gave us a scripture that's adequate, but we ourselves are not adequate many times to be able to pull it out. But we're responsible for doing so.

And I think at the end of the day, God created us in his image, and part of that image is the quest to know God, the quest to operate from the scriptures in relation to our decisions to be able to do it the way God would want us to do it, as best we can do. And for whatever reason, in God's decrees, he created the system to work that way and does give us diversity. There is unity, and there is diversity.

So, we even end up dropping the ball, as it were, when we get the Bible. But the fact is, we're way ahead because we at least have the Bible. So, God's solution to the dilemma.

And we'll look at 1 Corinthians 2:6-10, a great deal more later. We must move on here. Just getting an overview.

So, the biblical story, with the results of the fall, is an Adam and Eve situation. Excuse me, I'm getting my notes here. The biblical story results of the fall in that story presents a worldview.

See, the fall is a core of our worldview. And Romans unpacks what it means to be a fallen creature. It's not pretty.

No one thinks God's thoughts. We're all in rebellion against God. And conversion, through becoming a Christian, becoming a believer in God, whether Old Testament or New Testament, helps us to move toward being an obedient believer, and being one who understands what God wants.

But the fact is, is we still struggle with the fallenness of our world and of ourselves. So discernment requires a grasp of this. How that impacts us, we'll talk about later.

But that's why a biblical worldview and values is my system for discerning God's will, because that's the only sure route that we have. We've got to connect ourselves to God's teaching. So, discerning God's will requires a new way of thinking.

What is that way of thinking? Two-fold solution. On one hand, God has disclosed himself. The Bible is God's word.

It's a revelation of God. It's what we call self-disclosure of God to us. And we have that sure word of testimony, a lamp unto our feet.

All kinds of metaphors the Bible uses to tell us how important it is. Isaiah said, to the word and to the testimony. If they don't speak according to that, then they're not of God.

First, John says very much the same thing. So, all the way through the Bible narrative, we are keeping our feet planted in the scriptures. God has disclosed himself.

He's left us a record of that revelation, and he is not negotiating more records through time. That record is closed, and we are responsible to deal with it. Furthermore, on the other hand, we're responsible for moving out from that record and discerning God's will in our situations.

That's our responsibility. We are not perfect. The revelation is, but we are not.

As a result of that tension, we have our Christian journey. If we're honest, it's a very challenging journey, and it's one that has diversity that sometimes confuses us, but we do have the unity that we have as believers in Christ and believers in the authority of scripture. And we work that out in our human context.

Romans 12:1 and 2 are very core to all of this. What does it say? Romans 12, 1 and 2. I appeal to you, therefore, brothers and sisters. By the way, in the Bible, the word brothers is adelphoi.

It's a Greek term that includes husbands, wives, and children and includes the whole group. Therefore, it's legitimate to say brothers and sisters so the ladies don't feel left out here. By the mercies of God, you are to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship or rational service.

There are some issues in translation here. So, it uses a biblical metaphor: We're a living sacrifice.

That's not what a sacrifice is. Sacrifices die. We're a living sacrifice.

We're crucified with Christ, as Paul says later. Do not be conformed to this world. Let me ask you this.



What is worldliness? Worldliness is not thinking God's thoughts. Worldliness is thinking against God's thoughts because that's the category outside of the approved process, if you please, in terms of following God. That's worldliness.

So don't conform to this world and its worldview and values, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Transformation is a mental process. It's a part that we're going to talk about in detail.

By testing, you may discern what is the will of God. You see, this passage is not telling you. Just pray, and God will tell you what to do. It says you have a responsibility.

You have a responsibility to be transformed. And what does that mean? Well, you've got to unpack that. That's an aspect of learning and education.

I'm sorry, but my glasses are a little crooked, so I keep adjusting them. That's a process to be transformed. In that transformation, you develop a worldview and values, and then you use that whole complex to test the issues of life so that you may discern what God's will is.

And it's not finding God's will. Discern, in a sense, has that idea of figuring it out. But at the end of the day, our discernment is tied to the scriptures, not something outside the scriptures.

We're not looking for extra-biblical information. We're looking to deal with the information that we already have. It's like one writer wrote a book on God's will, and it said Finding God's Will, and the subtitle was A Pagan Notion. The Bible never tells you to find God's will at any time.

That may sound strange to you. The Bible consistently says do, D-O, do God's will. Perform God's will.

Please, God. Bring pleasure to God by obedience. Obedience is a do category.

And so that's an important thing that we'll see as we process through the scriptures. So, the transform, that's the model that we're going to emphasize and show you in a number of lectures as we unpack all of that. Now let's move on here in our notes to the next slide to show you how that transform mind works to give you a big picture.

On the left side, you have common to all. That means data. That's your data side.

On the right side, the product. That's the product. But where does the product come from? It comes from the mind.

Now, notice how I've drawn the mind. The mind is drawn as a heart as a person believes in their heart.

The heart in the Bible is not the seat of emotion. The Splunk knob, the gut, the bowels of compassion, that's the seat of emotion in the Bible. But the heart in the Bible is right here.

That's why I drew the mind as a heart. And you need to think about that when you read scripture. For out of the heart, Jesus said, come the issues of life.

That's not out of your emotions. That's out of your thinking. So heart is mind in scripture.

So, you take the data from here, run it through the grid, and get a product. Okay, what about take the word sin, s-i-n. That is a term that has to be defined.

Okay, an atheist runs sin through their grid, and what do they come up with? Foolishness. A religious term that is telling you something that isn't true. You take a Christian, and you run sin through the grid.

It comes out, sin is a transgression against the revealed will of God. Okay, we get our definitions from here, not from here, and not just from here. We have to validate the data as we run it through our grid to the product of our thinking.

That's the process. We transform vertically through scripture. That creates a thinking block.

We run data through it. It gives us a product. So the transformed mind is at the very core of everything that we do.

Data, mind, meaning. All right, well, let's go another step. That's the transformed mind.

What is worldview and values? Well, worldview and value set. Guess what? The worldview and values is the same thing. The data goes in to the worldview and values complex.

The thing that you're developing by the transformed mind, and on the other side comes out the meaning. Let me give you an illustration. Okay, this guy is driving a Porsche down the road and you see his license plate or a bumper sticker.

It has to be a bumper sticker because there's a big one. He who dies with the most toys wins. That's a worldview.

That person has just told you that it's how much money you have that means how valuable you are and what you mean in life. No money, no good. Plenty of money, really good.

He who dies with the most toys wins. That's a worldview. Well, what happens if you run that idea through the transformed mind? You don't come out with the one who wins with the most toys.

He who has the most toys wins. You come out with love God, serve others, love God, and love your neighbor. You come out with a completely different view of life.

Life isn't about possessions. It's about living. Possessions are important.

Abraham had plenty. David had plenty. But the fact is that's not the focus.

The focus is upon obedience to God's word. So, you have a completely different way of thinking as you become a Christian. Here's another illustration I heard from a pastor once.

He said that before he was a Christian, he loved things and used people. Now you've experienced that, haven't you? Maybe I am and you are all guilty of that. Loving things, using people.

That's not a biblical worldview. So, what would the biblical worldview be? Not so much he loving things and using people, but the biblical worldview would be loving people and using things. People are not a means to an end.

Things are a means to an end, which is a completely different way of thinking. That's what we're working on here.

We're working on how do you think? And let me tell you, even if you're not even aware that you're thinking, you're still thinking and you're still being driven by what's here, even if you don't know it. You have a worldview. You have a value system.

When you become a Christian, you have to start changing that. You have to start adjusting to God's way rather than the world's way. And as you do that, you mature and you make better decisions.

In fact, as someone has said, God builds his work on our mistakes. He allows us to make mistakes so that we learn. And sometimes we have to adjust our worldview and values as a result of that.

All right. The transformed mind. What is it? The transformed mind is a process of education.

Now, notice that. Education. It's not a process of your devotions.

Have you ever wondered why you sit down for 15 to 30 minutes in the morning and have your devotions? You walk out and an hour later, you forgot what in the world you read. It's because you didn't learn anything. You read the Bible, which is a good practice.

But just reading isn't learning. What does it mean? Because when you find out what it means, it impacts you and you remember it. The process of education that brings our worldview and values into conformity with biblical teaching.

That's the transformed mind. Furthermore, this leads to a decision-making process that is the conscious engagement of our worldview and value system in the everyday struggle of life. Here again, this is a seminal slide.

This is a seminal statement that goes back to the statement we talked earlier about my goal for you in this course. That you might become a person who has self-conscious deliberation. This should go on a card as well.

You should read it over and over and over again to get your mind moving in that particular direction. All right, now let's move along here. So that's the transformed mind.

So, what is the goal of the transformed mind? Here, we get a little repetitive from the previous. To produce a person who with self-conscious deliberation can think critically. That means probing critically about life decisions in a manner that's consistent with biblical worldview and values.

So that little chart that seems so simple is very complex. It's all about the data our world is going through here. And what's here gives meaning to that data. Now in God's world, things have meaning, period.

You can suspend it in space and it has meaning. But we're talking about the functioning of a human being and of a believer. So, this is the main thing.

Let me just give you a little point here. As a Christian, when you witness the people, talk about worldview. Ask them what's your worldview.

They don't know what you're talking about. And you try to help them understand. You listen to them, and then you share your worldview.

And they can then start to be challenged as to which is the worldview that best explains life. That's a great approach to witnessing and to sharing your faith with

people and helping them to think, not just react to your assertions. So now let's move along here.

I need to move a little faster. This particular lecture is a little bit longer because we're dealing with these issues of getting an overview. So decision-making God's way and then discerning God's will requires an understanding of how worldview works.

All right, there we are. We've been talking about this all along. So, I don't need to labor that.

Worldview and values. A worldview is the mental framework by which we explain our world. See the chart I already told you about.

You got to get a hold of that. Furthermore, values are personal beliefs derived from our worldview that guide our thinking and actions. So, worldview comes first.

And then the product of our worldview is our values. If our worldview is to love God and love our neighbor, we don't say he who dies with the tallest wings. We say what's really important in life is to love God and love our neighbor.

And so consequently, that informs everything there is about life for us. It guides us. The worldview and the values are what guide us.

Everybody has a worldview. Everybody has values that come from it. I don't care who you are.

I don't care if you're completely oblivious to the fact that you have such a complex, but you do. And you need to get in touch with it and you need to develop it. All right, let's think a little more here.

All right. How we view our world. How do we view our world? You'll notice that the middle is that worldview that we've talked about in many ways through our minds.

But look, it makes judgments about education. It makes judgments about healthcare, legal institutions, and environmental concerns. See, we don't have proof texts that easily discern all these things for us.

Politics, religious institutions, family, and arts. But it's the worldview that guides us in every category of life. So, if you're making decisions about it, do I use public education? Do I use private education? Do I use homeschooling? You're making those decisions through your worldview.

And you need to be able to be conscious about that and be deliberate in how you do it. Take into consideration all of those issues about the nature of things. In some places in our country, public education half the time is being taught by Christians.

And that worldview permeates even though it's not part of the public arena. And yet, at the same time, sometimes a big city is not a good place for a child to be, particularly in a city that's dominated by a non-God attitude, which is many and most big cities. Therefore, you have to make judgments about that.

So that's how we view our world. We view it through the grid. We view it through the worldview and values process.

Look at it this way. Decisions about birth control, abortion, living wills, finances, and educating children. It's kind of a repetition, but here, I put it into the model.

Go through the worldview. Your answers to these kinds of questions are a product of your worldview and value system. All right.

Now you have to think about that because this is just an overview. I'm already well over what I want for my time. And so, I need to move along.

Remember, we come back to every one of these categories and we unpack it in a little more detail to help you. But right now, I want you to get the big picture. I hope you're beginning to get the big picture of what it means to discern God's will from a worldview and values process.

We have to learn how to read the Bible. I'm going to go very quickly right here. When we look at this in the Old Testament and New Testament, how does the Bible use the phrase will of God? The will of God means to desire, to please, to delight in God, to choose, to favor, to love, to determine.

We'll talk about that in OT and in New Testament. I don't need to labor it right now, but we will look at that material. Furthermore, a study of will of God language reveals several things.

God has a sovereign will. We'll define that. And that's not our territory.

The secret things belong to the Lord. The things that are revealed belong to us. Okay.

And by the way, notice that verse doesn't say you got to figure out what's hidden. That's not your job to figure out what's hidden. Your job is to obey the word and do God's will.

God's moral will reveals God's desires for human creation. Through scripture, we have everything from the Ten Commandments to a very minor section in the book of Exodus on law. They were legal codes.

For example, if you have an ox that can hurt your neighbor, you're responsible for that. If you have a dog that can bite your neighbor, you're responsible for that. And so it teaches very, very, very briefly.

But what we have is the narrative of the Bible, OT and NT, that illustrates to us how God wants us to act. He gives us all kinds of stories in that regard. And he gives us Proverbs.

He gives us Psalms and many places where wisdom comes out. Talk more about that later. Also, biblical exhortation about God's will are to do.

Nowhere in the Bible are we ever told to find God's will. Now we have to discern. We have to look.

We have to study. We do find by study. But the fact is, it's there.

It's not something that's there that we got to get and grab out of heaven. Therefore, remember that God's will is performative. God's will is not something that you have to say, well, Lord, tell me what to do.

Okay. If you heard a voice from heaven, it would be this. I already told you.

Get to work. Transform your mind. Apply that transformed mind to the questions of life from my values.

That's the message that God has for us. We'll unpack that again. I have to move along here just to try to show you the process and that we're going to be covering a lot of these different details.

So a careful reading of the Bible about God's will drives us to read the Bible in larger ways. How does scripture address our questions? Our task, my friends, is not to look for a proof text, a direct proof text. And I'll talk about direct implications and creative constructs in another lecture.

It's not to find a proof text. It's to find a meaning. God's will derives from the Bible in large ways.

How does God deal with humanity? There's the fall, but from fall until Jesus comes, God is redeeming us. He's chasing us, as it were. He sent prophets.

He sent apostles. And he sent his messengers to give us information to help us to get to him through that information, not around it, not in addition to it, but through that information. A careful reading about God's will drives us to read the Bible in a lot larger ways.

The Bible is sufficient. It doesn't give us a proof text for everything, but it gives us a mindset from which we can reason the issues of life. Now, there are three levels of teaching.

This will be an entire lecture later. Directly, I've already mentioned implied and creative constructs. The direct is an easy level.

The teaching intent of scripture that we can demonstrate, and most Christians across the board would agree there. But then you get to the implicational levels and the creative constructs. I'll explain that at a later time.

And as you go from the bottom to the top, you go from, and I'll call it simple, even though it's not necessarily simple, the direct teaching to the more complicated constructs like all millennialism, pre-millennialism, and things in the domain of Calvinism or Arminianism. Those are all creative constructs based on scripture. They're not necessarily proof text.

Now, that's a big thought for you to think about. Worldview and values development. Giving God's will requires an expanded paradigm for developing a biblical worldview and values set.

I've said it over and over again, haven't I? Repetition is the key to learning. Observing how successive generations of believers in scripture have developed, and here comes a very important statement, a values deposit, a values deposit from when we reveal truth gives us a model. We see the stories.

One of the great stories I'll talk about to you in more detail is the story of Lot and how he is a model for violating the values deposit that he got from Abraham long before the scriptures were even written and even codified like in the Moses era. So, revelation becomes more focused as time goes on. We have the gives us some foundations.

Then the Psalms, the prophets, and then we get to Jesus, and the New Testament in a sense kind of repeats a number of things out of the Old Testament in its development. But all of that is developing values. You don't have to have a command to have a value.



You see the development, you see the values from the stories, how the psalmist deals with his discouragement, how he deals with conflict. Those are all developing values that guide us in our own lives. That's where wisdom comes from.

Wisdom doesn't drop out of the sky. Wisdom isn't my bright idea. Wisdom is something that develops from a biblical worldview and values set.

Wisdom is not doing what's expedient. Wisdom is not doing what makes sense because in a fallen mind, we don't make sense in and of ourselves. We make sense through a transformed mind in terms of what God has taught us.

We'll look at this later. God's will is revealed at the bottom of the chart. God has a sovereign will.

God has a moral will. And how do you apply God's will? Well God's will is applied through godly discernment. It's applied through godly discernment.

God's will is found in godly discernment. This is kind of a variation on the stick model with the worldview and values issue. You can see how this runs from the teaching intent of scripture to its theological analysis.

Godliness is being able to follow the Bible when you don't have a proof text. That's extremely important. We'll talk about that here again.

We're doing a survey. We're getting a big picture. All right.

We come to discerning God's will involves confronting subjective challenge. Now we're about we're going to be about 20 minutes over what I normally want a lecture to be. I want to normally want to be an hour and under on lectures.

But this one you can see I'm trying to tell you the whole story and it's coming rather quickly. But I hope that you'll go over this and over it so you get the big idea and then you can begin the breakout lectures that I'll give you piece by piece. The subjective challenges are the challenge of conscience, the challenge of the role of the spirit, providence, and prayer.

Those are some of the big ones. And we'll talk about them. I have lectures that will relate to each of these categories.

I'm not going to unpack that now. But in the worldview and values model, all of that's taken into consideration. And we'll talk about how conscience and spirit work internal to us in relation to that information.

All right. This is I wanted to say more here, but I'll say it later. Is this true or false? Let conscience be your guide.

We're going to answer that question later. True or false? Conscience is an independent entity within you. Is that true or false? How is conscience a part of the human composition? Third, true or false? Conscience is an open audience room for voices.

Maybe the voice of God, maybe the voice of the devil. How do you discern that? And is it an open conscience, open audience room anyway? Those are questions about conscience that we'll talk about. Characteristics of conscience.

It's a God-given capacity for self-critique. God created us with this mechanism we call conscience. And the Bible specifically defines it within the New Testament.

It's a mechanism to evaluate our worldview and values. We'll talk to you about that later. It's a witness.

That word witness is the key term. Conscience is a witness to the worldview and value system that we recognize and apply. When Paul persecuted Christians, probably present at the stoning of Stephen, Paul thought he was doing God's service.

His worldview and values were messed up. He had not seen God's way with Christ at that point. God had to interrupt Paul's life on the road to Damascus and change him so that his worldview and values started getting straightened out.

And he was able to critique himself and see the error of his way. So without a good worldview and value system, we have a limited capacity for self-critique. Now I'm going to say something that may shock you a little bit, but there's a lot of nasty Christians.

There's a lot of prima donnas in the church. There's a lot of selfishness. There's a lot of authoritative control.

People who don't know themselves. Ruling rather than leading. Leading is a very different thing than ruling.

And your worldview has got to get to you. And if your worldview is messed up, you'll think you're doing the right thing. But the Bible needs to get to you better and help you understand that you're not there.

It's a witness to the worldview and value system that we recognize and apply. That's what conscience is. It's a monitor.

It's not a judge. The Bible uses the term witness. A witness tells you what he sees.

The conscience sees the worldview and values and tells you about it. It's not a judge. It doesn't give you the worldview and values.

And I'll explain that to you in detail later. The Holy Spirit is another one that's going to raise a lot of questions in your mind. True or false.

The Holy Spirit's role is to supplement biblical information with additional content. I'll answer that later. True or false.

Illumination is a term that's often used. Not a really great term, but it's used. It's God's way to provide the correct interpretation of the Bible.

We'll talk about that later. I'm going to tell you now. The same thing is true with providence.

We'll have a whole lecture in providence in GM 13. Furthermore, we'll talk about prayer. Prayer is a challenge here, and that's another subjective domain.

That's in GM 14 later on. All right, so discerning God's will requires a system that processes biblical knowledge within your worldview framework. That's that simple little diagram of data, mindset, and meaning.

But that's a huge thing, isn't it? I mean, we have got to become aware of ourselves. One poet said that even a poet who wasn't a believer in God made a statement that's very true. The unexamined life is not worth living.

And I'm sorry to say that a lot of Christians have never really examined themselves and how they deal with life. They've not examined the scriptures and how they relate to the scriptures and how they go about life. They manipulate life.

They manipulate people rather than deal with the issues of life. Okay, that system is represented by just one representation in that chart. You'll want to make yourself a big copy of this from the slide, a full-size page.

We'll go over that in detail at a later time. I'm at the very, very, very, very end of what I wanted for time. I knew it would take a little longer in relation to this particular slide set, but I think it's important.

And I know we went fast, but you've got the notes. You can listen to the lecture a couple of times. It's only an hour.

You can piecemeal it in different segments of time that you may have available. Try to get your arms around the big picture, the big point of the transformed mind, and the value system that comes from that so that when we break it out, you'll know where it fits in the total paradigm. Well, thank you for listening.

Sorry, my voice is getting a little raspy. I haven't been teaching in the classroom lately, and so, therefore, I am doing it here. Becomes a little bit of a challenge.

So thank you for being here. Thank you for listening. Please continue at your own pace, but you have it right here, convenient to you, with plenty of information for you to think about.

So you have my contact information in the notes on the first page. I have an email that you can communicate with. I've also mentioned my website that you can work through that.

And as you have questions, I'm more than happy to interact with them. Remember, sometimes social media, phones, and even computers will make judgments about things that come in and flip them to trash or flip them somewhere where they shouldn't be. And so if you don't hear from me when you've asked a question, try again, because sometimes it goes where I don't see.

All right, so God bless you. Have your own prayer time in relation to the things we've talked about, and I'll see you in lecture GM2 in the next segment. Thank you.