

Dr. Gary Meadors, Knowing God's Will, Session 5, The Will of God in the New Testament

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Excuse me for having to maneuver here; I am recording these lectures in my small retirement office in Florida, and so,, therefore,, you don't want to see the mess that is on the perimeter of the camera; you just want to see the screen and listen to the talking head. All right, we're coming to lecture five now, which is the will of God in the New Testament. These are GM5 slides and notes. GM5, be sure you have them in front of you so that what we do is more profitable for you.

Remember that learning is not just listening; learning requires that we engage in the things that we're doing. Sorry, I'm also having trouble with my eyes. I've got about five glasses, and none of them work. So your patience is certainly appreciated.

All right, so you're following your table of comments, and here we are with knowing God's will and how to read the New Testament. We've got a great foundation from what we did in the Old Testament, and I just want to remind you that the Bible is the Bible; it's not Old Testament and New Testament; it's the Bible. And that the New Testament is very dependent upon what the Old Testament laid down as its foundation.

Certainly, there are differences because there are differences in time and context, but the fact is, don't ever dismiss the Old Testament. It is what we call the prolegomenon, and it's what comes first. And when we know it, we will know the New Testament better.

Okay, so lecture number five, GM5, follow along with me now if you will. Okay, New Testament patterns for knowing God's will. In the New Testament, we have the will of God language, the language that people in churches use to know God's will, and so forth.

That's all kind of derived from the New Testament. The Old Testament uses a different vocabulary, even though it's saying the same thing. To please God is to do God's will.

And so we've already been over a good deal of that. Will of God categories, so we've got language, we've got the categories, and we have the pursuit of God's will that we'll be talking about. All right, will of God language.

Like my slides, they kind of go around. Stereotype language about God's will is mostly from the New Testament. I say stereotype language.

We don't have new ideas coming up now. We have kind of the honing of those ideas with some different perspectives, but the language itself, will of God, is dominant in translations for the New Testament. There are 51 texts in the New Testament with the word will and a divine referent, will of God, will of the Lord, God's will, those sorts of things.

You can see the GM5 supplement, which I'll be looking at later. And there is also a chapter in my book, of course, on this if you happen to have it and want to read it. As I've mentioned before, I'm going to be writing a new edition.

It'll have the same ideas and much of the same material, but I think put in a better sequence and expand it in a number of ways. Furthermore, the New Testament patterns for knowing God's will. These will of God categories.

The will of God is a recognition of God's sovereignty in a variety of ways. If you think of the salutations to epistles in the New Testament, by God's will, I'm an apostle. I write to you by God's will.

In other words, those are statements that are placing the flow of redemptive history under the hand of our sovereign. Our sovereign is God, and he acts sovereignly. And so, salutations are very much that way.

Look at Acts chapter 21; we'll look at a few verses here, keep within our time restrictions, and also see this. I want you to read them. In fact, if you had read these things before we started the lecture, it would have been good.

But nonetheless, please follow along. 21:14. Get my eyes focused if you don't mind.

Bibles are written in small print, aren't they? Here it is. I'm not reading context, and I'm just reading the passage. And since he would not be persuaded, we ceased and said, let the will of the Lord be done.

This is the context in which Paul was going to Jerusalem. And the elder said, no, you can't do that. They're going to kill you.

He says I've got to do it. This is my task. This is what I'm called to do.

And finally, after they couldn't dissuade him, they said, let the will of the Lord be done. That's not a resignation. That's a recognition of God's sovereignty.

They're accepting the event while they disagree with it. And this is fascinating. They disagree with it because they had the direct revelation that Paul was going to be bound when he got there.

And so, they were talking to Paul about information that they knew from a prophet. Paul said I'm sorry because the prophet says I'm going to be bound. That's not going to stop me.

My values are that I've got to go there and fulfill God's will for me to preach the gospel in Jerusalem. And so, consequently, they said, let the will of the Lord be done. Not resignation but recognition of God's sovereignty.

Romans 1:10 if you turn over to Romans 1:10, verse 8, I thank God through Jesus Christ for all of you because your faith is proclaimed in all the world. For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing, I mention you always in my prayers, asking that somehow, by God's will, I may now at last succeed and come into you. By God's will is a statement of Paul's submission to God's sovereignty.

It's Paul's desire to go, but the timing isn't right. So therefore, he can't go. He can't fulfill his personal desires.

And he's praying that in God's plan, in God's sovereign will, he will eventually get there. So, a sovereignty of, in 1 Peter 3:17, over there near the end of the New Testament, 1 Peter 3:17, verse 15. But in your hearts, regard Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you.

Yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior to Christ may be put to shame. Verse 17. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will than for doing evil.

Suffering is God's will. It's his sovereign will. We don't choose it.

It's not a matter of being immoral and being punished, but we live in an evil world that hates God. And the apostles were experiencing that very much. If, by God's will, suffering is your lot, accept it and live as best you can in that context.

This is an international lecture. It's going into many languages. Some of you may be in countries where you have to listen behind closed doors.

And you could be persecuted if people knew you were Christian in that public sense and doing this. So, you know better than a U.S. citizen what it means that Peter is saying here. And so, the sovereignty of God, the Bible is full of this.

The Old Testament is. I gave you verses in the Old Testament, but I didn't read them to you. And that sovereignty has to do with God acting on his plan on his behalf.

It's not something for us. Sometimes, we know it. We usually only know it after the event, certainly not before the event.

And we are not to try to figure it out. In other words, you don't say, Lord, I'm praying that you'll let me know what your sovereignty is going to do to me when I get to such and such a place. No, no model like that.

The fact is, as it comes, our knowledge of it comes after. But God, whom we can trust, orchestrates the work. Now, there are a lot of things to discuss about how God sovereignly rules the work.

The Bible makes statements, but it doesn't unpack for us that process. Don't tell us ahead of time. They just tell us to be prepared.

God is sovereign, and we need to be submissive to that sovereignty. That's one category, one major category of God's sovereignty in relation to the will of God. Now, New Testament patterns for knowing God's will.

There's another pattern, another category. The second category is the will of God, which is a call to conform to God's moral declarations. This is our territory.

Deuteronomy says the secret things belong to the Lord, but the things that are revealed belong to us. And the moral stipulations that God has given us all the way through the Bible are our property to be obedient toward, as that works out within our context and time and space. So, the will of God is a call to conform to God's moral declarations.

Look at Romans chapter 2. Romans chapter 2, verses 17 and 18. This is a particularly important chapter because it addresses issues that will come across a number of ways. But Romans chapter 2, verses 17 and 18.

But if you call yourself a Jew. Now, this passage is, in the early part of Romans, Paul was addressing Gentiles, and he is addressing Jews. In relation to the big picture of God's work in the world.

And he's right now speaking to the Jewish group. But if you call yourself a Jew and rely on the law and boast in God, the implication is boast because you've got the law. And you know his will.

What is his will? It's the law. It's what they know from the Torah, the law, and the prophets. They boast of that knowledge.

They know his will and approve what is excellent because they are instructed by the law. And so, what is this category of moral declaration? The law of God in the Old Testament is the moral declaration. Now, the technical codes of the law are rather slim.

There are only a few chapters in the whole Bible on that part. But God's teaching to the law and to the testimony, the testimony of God's teaching through Moses and the prophets, is something that has to be obeyed and recognized. And it's a moral teaching because they were to engage.

You know his will. So, his will is his teaching. 1 Thessalonians chapter four and verse three. 1 Thessalonians 4:3. A little farther over here. You know, when I start flipping like this in a Bible, I don't use a whole lot. I use a lot of different Bibles.

I can see how thin the New Testament books really are. You can pass over real quick. First Thessalonians 4.3. All right, let's just see the contents a little.

Fondly, then brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus that as you receive from us how you ought to live. That's ethics. That's teaching.

And to please God. There's Old Testament language. Basically, you could say had to do the will of God.

Just as you are doing, take that in that you do so more and more.

In other words, Paul's not exhorting them. Hey, go out there and find what you ought to be doing. No, listen to me and do what I tell you.

He goes on in verse two. For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. That's through the medium of the Lord Jesus.

Because the Lord Jesus was gone when Paul did that. But he was teaching what Christ had taught and what God revealed to him. For this is the will of God.

What's the will of God? Is instruction. And the will of God is your sanctification. What is sanctification? Sanctification is growth in your understanding.

To put it another way, sanctification is the development of a transformed mind. So that your worldview and values are in keeping with what the scriptures teach, that's basically at the bottom.

What is sanctification? It's a transformed process that you abstain from. And then it gives a litany of items.

So, the will of God is directly stated here. This is God's moral will, which is the dominant piece that's given to us to deal with. Sovereignty is God's business.

We see it after the fact. We can rejoice in it, or we live with the consequences of evil affecting us because God chose, for whatever reason, not to deliver us. John the baptizer had his head cut off.

Jesus was only a few miles away. Jesus didn't deliver him. For John, that was a negative providence, if you please.

And he died in that prison at the hands of the ignominious king who killed him because John taught moral truth the king didn't like. Okay, now 1 Peter 2:15. So back over to 1st Peter for a moment.

They're after Hebrews. And by the way, I'm just, if you please, I'll use this phrase cherry-picking text. I'm just giving you some text.

The Bible is just full of this teaching. I'm giving you examples. 1 Peter chapter 2 and verse 15, verse 13.

Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme or to governors as sent by him to punish those

who do evil and to praise those who do good. By the way, that wasn't easy for them to listen to. They were in the midst of persecution from the empire.

When Peter said that, I think a few heads were looking around and shaking their heads. For this, that is living in your society appropriately to the society, not to the violation of moral truth, not to the violation of your world, your values. But there are many, many things in our society that we can cooperate with if we don't like.

Liking isn't the issue. It's the issue of agreement with God's word. There's just a lot of things that don't relate to God's word.

Where do you park? What kind of house do you have? You have a church. Where are the bathrooms? How big are they? The codes. I've seen churches fight battles with cities over codes because they didn't like it.

Well, you're disobeying God when you do that. Verse 15. For this, you must be in conformity to your society when it doesn't violate God.

And you can't just claim that because you want to. For this is the will of God that by doing good, you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. That's fascinating, isn't it? The world expects Christians, when it comes to these kinds of things, to make a lot of noise.

Well, you'll arouse a sleeping bear sometimes. The scriptures tell you that to the extent that you're able, morally and within a Christian worldview and value system, to fulfill your culture's needs, like in building codes and all these other kinds of things, you should do so. That's not easy for many people to swap.

So, God's moral declarations. Being a good person is fulfilling God's will. A good person, as scripture described it, and sometimes even being a good citizen, as long as it doesn't contradict what the scriptures teach us.

Here's a third thing in these categories. The will of God phrases never exhort the believer to find God's will. The will of God database exhorts us to do God's will.

Let me say that again. You are not about finding God's will, other than reading the scriptures, of course. We can call that finding it, but that's not what we're talking about right now.

We're talking about something apart and above. You say, God, tell me what to do. Wait a minute.

He already did. Work it out. So, the will of God phrases never exhort the believer to find God's will but to do it.

As one writer said, God's will isn't lost. You don't have to find it. It's in the scriptures.

You've got to discover and pull out and deal with it. That's what God has planned for us. And so, it's not a matter of finding.

There's a book by an Old Testament scholar, Waltke. His title is Knowing God's Will. And then it has the subtitle, Pagan Notion? Man, that's really in your face, isn't it? I know, I'm sorry.

It's not knowing, it's finding. Finding God's will. That's the title of the book.

I've got it behind me here. Finding God's will, subphase, a pagan notion? Frankly, class. Finding God's will, apart from working that transformed mind, worldview, and value system, is doing a divination thing that is condemned by scripture.

Now, that's a big thing for you to think about because I'm probably breaking in on a lot of stereotypes that you have about this process. The point is, is you don't go in the closet and say, God, tell me what to do. If you do go in the closet, turn the light on and read the text, study the text, discover parallel commandments, parallel narratives to your situation in life, and you'll find there what God wants you to do.

All right, so when the Bible tells you to do something, you know something. Paul writes these epistles, and they're short, and he's writing

to audiences, usually that he knows. And we call these epistles; we call them epistles; they're letters. And they are what we call in the literary genre of an epistle; they are occasional.

Paul is writing about occasions that he knew about, that the audience knew about. And so, he writes to them, and he expects them to understand what he's saying because they have the context to understand it. But when we come to an epistle, we're not the original audience.

The Bible is for us, but it's not for us. We have to understand the audience to whom it was written so we can understand the point that Paul is making as he writes to them. It's not on the surface.

Now, there's plenty of common moral truth, but to really understand scripture requires that we probe the original context, what it meant in its own time and place, and then contextualize that appropriately to situations that are similar in our context. That's a mouthful. There's a whole discipline called the contextualization of scripture.

Admissions use this heavily in different countries and so forth. How do you contextualize the Bible into another time and place, another culture? You have to know the Bible really well to do that because you've got to make those lines of connection, those lines of connection. And so when Paul gives a command where he says, I want you to engage what you know, well, they already have that information.

He didn't have to repeat it. So, when we're reading epistles, we've got a lot of stuff that has to show in between the lines. And that's part of the challenge of interpreting the epistolary literature.

So, it's a command to do something. Serve the Lord. What does that mean? Well, I told you what it meant.

Reflect on that. I'm not going to have to write it again. A command to do assumes a pool of knowledge that provides that guidance.

So, when you read the scriptures, be alert. It's not a novel that is omni-contextual. It had a context.

Paul spoke to that context and we have to study what that means in our context, which is not the same. The Bible is written for you, but it wasn't written to you. And you've got to understand to whom it was written originally before you start using proof text, as we call it.

Take words of the Bible and bend them into your own situation. Furthermore, knowing God's will is not a search for unrevealed information in order to make a decision. And many times people treat God's will as if I've got to find it.

I've got, God's got to tell me whom should I marry? What school should I go to? Should I go into the military? Yeah, you should. Should I do this? Should I do that? But the fact is, knowing God's will is not a search for unrevealed information. It's a search for applying the transformed mind with its worldview and values to the situations you confront in life.

That's a pretty big calling, frankly. Now, pastors and people who formally study scripture may be able to do that better. But the fact is, I don't care who you are.

I don't care what job you have. You have a noble task as a Christian, whether you're a businessman, a doctor, a lawyer, a dentist, a janitor, a bus driver, all of you are on level ground. You're on level ground.

You don't search for unrevealed information. You've got to engage the information that you have. You know, I've observed one thing in life in a number of churches.

When a person is a high-level professional, a doctor, a lawyer, somebody that the rest of the culture sort of looks up to and goes to for help, when they are Christians, they're often put into teaching positions because they're authoritative people. And I have observed this over and over again. They know medicine.

They know the law. They know this. They know that.

But they don't know diddly-squat about the Bible. They just tell you what it means to them. And I really don't care what it means to them.

I care what it means, what it means so that we can determine what it means to us.

That is a huge domain that every interpreter of the Bible has to face. You may not be in a position to do very much about that. Many Christians attending churches, you may even be in a situation where you can't even do that publicly.

There's the challenge of bringing Scripture together with your world. And yeah, you've got to be very diligent in how you go about that. And we all need help.

I've been doing this for more years than I can count, decades and decades. And I still have to study hard when it comes to preparing a lesson or preaching a sermon. So that's the issue of the will of God in terms of these categories.

The will of God phrase is never exhort a believer to find it, but to do it. Now, patterns for knowing God's will. There's exhortations to know.

This is the fourth of the categories. To be filled with the knowledge of God's will. Our invitations to engage already existing information, not seek new revelation.

Now this is a tough one. And I'd have to be able to do more with you than this video could do. But let me give you one illustration out of Colossians.

Colossians chapter one in verse nine. The Bible is so subject to abuse because people don't study it appropriately. They come to it as if it is self-interpreting.

The Bible is not self-interpreting other than clear moral commands that you know immediately you're not supposed to do in many of the virtue and vice lists. But in chapter one of Colossians, there's some language

that I've seen being abused so much. But I want to read it to you and give you a few pointers.

And so, remember, this is occasional literature written to the Colossians. The Colossians are being peppered by their culture to deviate from Christ, to deviate from the apostolic teaching. And Paul's coming in to try to help them.

It's a crisis. He says, and so from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding. Now, people will come to that passage and they say, oh, I have to ask God to fill me with understanding.

Well, wait a minute. What does the word fill mean? Fill is a metaphor. Be filled with the Spirit.

What does that mean? Does that mean opening up your cranium and getting a new data card? Does it mean opening up your chest cavity and taking in information that you can spit out like a computer? What does it mean to be filled? It's a metaphor. Dorcas, the Bible says in Acts, was full of good works. What does that mean for Dorcas? Does that mean she was a Martha like Jesus confronted in the book of John? That she was busy about many things? No, to fill as a metaphor needs to be understood not in the sense of getting more of something.

Fill needs to be understood in the sense of being characterized. Please make a note of that, of being characterized by information. Paul had taught them.

Actually, Paul's protege and Epaphras, in this particular case, had taught them and given them Paul's information. Now Paul is calling forth for that. Remember, an epistle doesn't have to be repeated.

An epistle can call forth things that they already have. So, from the day that I heard about this, I haven't ceased praying that you may be filled and be characterized with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom. Well, what in the world is spiritual wisdom? Well, spiritual is an adjective and spiritual has to do with meaning that in the realm of

information, spiritual wisdom, spiritual skill, skill to act according to that transformed mind and will.

Now, I'd like to unpack this a lot more, but what we're dealing with in this passage, and you'll deal with in a lot of passages in the New Testament, is what we call religious language. Metaphorical to the hilt. It's over your head with metaphors.

You've got to get the metaphors before you can get the meaning of these things. To fill needs to be characterized. Spiritual wisdom needs also to be characterized by the understandings that are in the realm of spiritual truth.

There are only four times in the New Testament where the word spiritual is used by a person. We've got him in 1 Corinthians and we've got him in Galatians. I'm not going to go through these at the moment, but the fact is that when you look at the place where people are described as spiritual, you're looking at people who are demonstrating the characteristics of skillful living from the basis of the knowledge of God.

Now, this is so hard to explain because if you're not, you're used to reading the Bible sort of on the surface and when you come to passages that have to use, that uses metaphors and if you don't get the metaphor, you will turn that into a strange doc. And people have said fill means to get more of something. No, it doesn't.

It means to be characterized about what you already have. Spiritualism means, well, I got to be spiritual. Well, spiritual means to be characterized by the word of God.

If you look at those four occasions, every one of them is an occasion of sanctification, which means living out what God has taught you. So, this is a tricky piece. The exhortations to know or be filled.

They're not an exhortation to find something. They're an exhortation to engage the information you already have and to demonstrate your obedience to God through that information. Now, Colossians is a great place to do that.

If you read all these texts and compare them, you'll start to see how that happens. Just remember this. It's not get something.

It's to live out something and it's using religious language, metaphors to bring out the fact that you need to obey God in that way. Well, that's all I can say at the moment. New Testament patterns for knowing God's will is also a pursuit.

It's a pursuit. Being a Christian is not a passive thing. It's an active thing.

Let me get myself to my slide here. Okay. How do we pursue God's will? We pursue God's will by that's telling us that we have agency.

We're the agents of doing this and we do it by living up to the moral will. Well, I think everybody knows that but I'm not sure that everybody engages it fully. By managing the direct, implied, and created construct levels of biblical teaching.

That is a big task. To understand the Bible when it teaches us something directly. That all are going to come to agree that it means that.

Don't lie. But you know, that's not easy to answer because when Joshua deceived those cities about retreating, he was deceiving them. All lies contain an element of deception.

But not every element of deception is a lie. So when the Bible says, don't lie, you've got to start asking the question, what does that mean? It's not so simple, is it? Don't denigrate the Bible down to our level. It's at a level that we have to reach up to.

Managing the direct, implied, and created construct levels of biblical teaching is part of the pursuit. And I've explained that in other lectures. Developing a critically self-conscious worldview and value set.

Remember we talked about this? I want you to develop into a person who self-consciously engages your worldview and value system knowingly

and applies it to the decisions that you make in life. Furthermore, being sensitive to providence.

You have to be sensitive to providence. Providence is the outworking of God's sovereignty. There's negative providence.

You had a car wreck. There's positive providence. You didn't have a car wreck.

Okay. So providence is something that takes a little bit of thought. We'll talk a little bit about that later.

Trusting in a sovereign God at the end of the day as Job. Though he kill me, yet will I trust him. This is not easy.

One of my life verses, there's a lot of them, but one of them is out of John when the person that came to Jesus said, Lord, I believe. Help. Help.

My unbelief. I pray that all the time. Lord, I don't understand.

Help. Lord, I believe you're just. I believe that you're orchestrating the world.

And yet I see some things and I'm having trouble. Help. My unbelief.

How does God help my unbelief? Take me to the scriptures, where I see people who suffer, die, and are ill-treated, and yet they don't give up on God. That's the story of the Bible. That's the story of the lives.

God doesn't, as a rule, intervene in the lives to make you rich, to make you happy, to make you pleased with the life that you have. We all have a life, and we have to live it in that context. And we may not be able to deliver ourselves from it.

But don't blame God. And that's a part of the negative providence of being in the world. And you glorify God as you engage it and obey him in the process.

That is a big, big lesson for all of us to learn. Now, the conclusion to all of God's language in the New Testament. When I obey the teaching of the Bible, I am in God's will.

People talk about that. You know, find God's will, be in the center of God's will. A lot of that is foolishness.

Be in the center of what the Bible teaches. That's OK. When I obey the teaching of the Bible, I am in God's will.

As I continue to live in this manner, I am guided by God's will, by his word, and by my development of a biblical worldview and values set. God's guidance is not based on a search-and-find mission. God's will is not based on a search and find mission, but on a follow the teaching given model.

That's huge. You know, there's not any room in diverse studies to show you're approved for lazy people. If you're lazy, it's your fault.

If you refuse to learn, it's your fault. If you won't do everything possible to answer a question, remember curiosity is the key to learning. If you're not curious enough to chase it, and in this world today, you may be in bad circumstances.

You may be in a country where you can't openly worship the Lord. You may be in a place where you have no library. You may even be in a place where you don't have Internet and you're going somewhere else to a computer lab to watch this.

You may be having some very bad circumstances, but you still have to rise to the occasion to deal with your challenges in a godly manner, which means to chase your questions as best you can. And today as the computer and the Internet expands in such ways, there are ways to do that. Now you can chase it in a wrong way or a bad way, not being aware of who you're getting to answer your question, but you can chase it in good ways.

I'll give a little advertisement here. Everybody uses Google almost. Anybody who has a computer uses Google.

If you want to chase biblical research, use [googlescholar.com](https://scholar.google.com). That will get you to vetted information, articles, books, and things that will help you more. Whereas, in general, Google will not surface that necessarily. Google Scholar.

It's free. Okay. So, this dictum is to obey the teaching of the Bible.

I am in God's will. So, you never have to ask that question. Am I in God's will? You have to ask the question, am I living up to the knowledge of God that I have? Through scripture and my transformed mind, where my worldview and values are being applied to all the things I deal with.

Now, I'd like to tell you, that'll haunt you. That'll put you in a situation to say, I don't like it. I don't want to live up to that.

We've all been there. But if you're going to please God, you're going to have to deal with it. Okay.

Let's move on. Illustrations of doing God's will in the context of the New Testament. Now, we're to a point here again where I'm giving you passages.

I'm going to expect you to pursue this, read the text, and so forth. I'm almost to my hour in this particular lecture. And it's just necessary for me to try to stay within my time limits.

But I'm giving you enough information that you could chase it. At the beginning of lectures, you'll find my email. I have a website, www.gmetors.com, where you can also communicate with me.

And you can see that I am a crazy guy. I play banjo and teach the Bible. So, banjos and Bibles are a part of my life.

All right. Illustration of doing God's will in the context of the New Testament. Jesus' example of pursuing God's will.

Well, Hebrews says, I came, I came to do your will, Father. Jesus did God's will. It was a will that God and Jesus were a part of in the eternal counsel, decreed for dealing with the sins of the world.

He came. Hebrews 10, Psalm 40. It's all over the place.

A life following God's plan. Jesus fulfilled Old Testament promises. He ordered his life according to God's plan.

Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word, every jot and tittle that comes from the mouth of God. He assumed Old Testament teaching. He expected people to know it, but they didn't.

He, oh, excuse me. Sorry. He ordered life, excuse me, directly guided, he was directly guided by Old Testament teaching.

Matthew 4 and the Sermon on the Mount comes out. He directed the apostles to continue this. In Matthew 28, go and teach, baptize, and teach everyone.

Tell them the things, teach them the things I've taught you. And Paul talks about this act of Timothy to be, to teach, to do the work of an evangelist as well. So we've got it all over the place.

He directed the apostles to continue that. The apostles are an example of pursuing God's will. Peter and Paul merely perpetuated what they had received from authoritative teaching.

Read those texts. They weren't giving us their own bright ideas. Even when Paul gave us something that had not been given before in Corinthians, he made it very clear.

This isn't my own bright idea. It was revealed to me, an apostle by God. He was in a special place to do that.

God doesn't reveal that to us. He revealed it to the apostle, and the apostle gave it to us to pursue. That is the sequence.

Authoritative teaching. All those texts are full. I wish I could unpack them all for you here.

We have to do a 16-week course, three hours a week, to get there. They expected those that they taught to do the same. What I've taught you, go teach somebody else.

It's all about education. And this is one of the biggest failures of the church in the modern world. It does not have a good educational program.

And I can unpack that in ways that I don't even want to talk about. They expected those they taught to pass it on to others. The content of this teaching and its derived values constitutes God's will.

God's will for those who hear and obey. That's where God's will is found. It's found in that transformed mind, which is constantly being updated.

It's like a computer. You have to put in another disc every now and then to be able to update. So how do we distinguish between proof text and pretext? Remember, the proof text is when you go to the Bible, and you have a verse that you pound people with rather than a verse that explains something.

People do it all the time. Knowing how the Bible teaches us. The three levels talked about that.

Direct, applied, and creative construct. You've always got to know where you are in that paradigm. Pro the prescriptive versus the descriptive teaching to determine normative teaching.

The Bible was written for us but not for us. If you can, you know, hold a Gordon Fee and Stewart's volume on reading the Bible for all it's worth. There are several versions.

I'll try to get the most reason. But reading the Bible for all it's worth, they'll help you to understand prescriptive and descriptive. They'll walk you through that.

Prescriptive is the text that we're given in a certain time and place, and they're pretty much restricted to that even though it might cover hundreds of years. Prescriptive teaching is something that's responsible for everybody in all of time and space; whether it's in the Old Testament or New Testament doesn't make any difference. It's prescriptive.

We're still responsible. Furthermore, learning how to deal honestly with text. We are not very honest.

Even the unbelieving David Thoreau, the poet, said that the unexamined life is not worth living. Let me say that again. The unexamined life is not worth living.

Are you self-conscious of where you are in life and how you deal with life, particularly your Christian life? If you're not self-examining yourself in this regard, then you're not moving forward. You have to deal honestly with the text. You have teaching intent.

You got theological analysis. I already gave you the lecture on the pyramid of how the Bible teaches. Go back and think about that.

Furthermore, issues that determine normativeness. Again, we'll be a little over, but we're getting more. No, we're doing better.

We'll be pretty close here. Issues that determine normativeness. And I'll just mention them.

I'm giving you material where you can chase the norm more. Descriptive and prescriptive. Analysis, teaching intent, theological analysis.

Those charts I gave you in the early lectures, gave them to you rather quickly, but you've got to go back and live in it a little bit beyond the Bible proposals. We all go beyond the Bible.

The Bible doesn't have a direct teaching for everything we want to know or need to know. Therefore, we have to look at the worldview and values aspect because they themselves are taking the Bible from where it stops and carrying it on by the implications and the constructs that Scripture gives us. That is an education in and of itself.

I actually wrote a book on that, *Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology*. It's a bit advanced, but it gives you a taste of it, and you can research it from that standpoint. How does the Bible teach and how do we move from text to theology? Ethics text.

Here are the ones that I liked. Dennis Hollinger would be a good place to start. Kind of do these in reverse order.

Dennis Hollinger, *Choosing the Good*. Great book on ethics that interfaces with what we're talking about. Richard Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament*.

Hays has been all over the map sometimes, and you may have heard some recent things about him, and you're turned off. Well, forget that. Read *The Moral Vision of the New Testament* in its original version, and you'll find yourself a great deal.

Charles Cosgrove has a book on five rules and it's in a later bibliography in your notes. It's very, very, very helpful. All right.

James Thompson. I just came across this—moral Formation According to Paul.

I just got the book as a used book and have to look at it a bit. All right. Further illustration of what it means to pursue God's will.

The New Testament Promotes the Value Deposit System. Now, you know what the value deposit is. We talked about it in the Old Testament.

These passages follow up on the idea. I don't have to babysit you here. Read the Bible and correlate it with what I talked about in terms of the

ongoing accumulation of values that become a deposit, that become what we live by, that have their lines of reason to the scriptures.

But actually, go beyond in a sense. Furthermore, who is a spiritual person? I need to answer this because we came across this spiritual expediency thing a little earlier in one of our lectures. First of all, there are only four places in the New Testament where the word spiritual, which is an adjective, becomes a noun and applies to people.

1 Corinthians 2:13, 1 Corinthians 3:1, 1 Corinthians 14:37, and Galatians 6:1. Every one of those contexts is a context about sanctification and learning. Who is a spiritual person? The answer to that out of all those texts is that a spiritual person is a person who abides by God's word. You have to understand it.

First, of course, a spiritual person is one who follows God, learns and applies that worldview and values that transform the mind to the issues of life. That's what it means to be spiritual. If you're doing that, you're spiritual.

Spirituality is not at some level that we arrive at, either accidentally or on purpose. But spirituality is growth, growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. And of His word, so that we can live better lives and come and prepare ourselves, as it were, for heaven.

When you stand before Christ, I'm afraid all of us are going to be running through our minds. Oh, man, look at all the failures. They crowd me.

All of my failures crowd me. The person I should have talked to. The thing I should have studied.

The advice I should have given. And I learned later that I was wrong. Man, when we're standing in that line, as it were, the metaphor here, and Jesus is going to be licking this eyeball to eyeball, we're going to answer that question.

Who's spiritual? And spirituality is judged by our correlation with God's teaching and our obedience to Him. Remember Romans 12:1, and 2? This

is not as clean a chart as I've had in the past. The data goes into the worldview, and it kicks out meaning on the other side.

So be transformed by the revealing of your mind so you can thank God's thoughts from Scripture. Because as a person thinks, so are they. So, the conclusion is to the will of God in the New Testament and the whole Bible.

When I obey the teachings of the Bible, and when I live according to the dictates of Scripture, I am in God's will. If I consciously break that teaching, then I'm not in God's will. But this is kind of piecemeal, isn't it? It's not one great big monolithic thing in and out.

But our lives are peppered with in and peppered without. And the whole point of our maturation is to be more in than out. To live by the new nature, that new set of characteristics like the fruit of the Spirit rather than our old nature where lust and disobedience reign.

As I continue to live in this manner, I am guided by my development of a biblical worldview and value set. God's guidance is not based on a search and find motif but on a follow the teaching given mark. That's it.

You don't have to find God's will. It's not lost. You just need to find the Scripture.

You need to do the kind of work that's necessary to build a basis of worldview and values from that text. You'll make decisions now that you'll thank for good. And 10 years from now, you'll say, man, oh, it's very bright.

I've missed all that Bible stuff that I've learned since then. Well, that's the way it's supposed to be. You grow.

Growth means progress. And we've got to progress from A to Z in the English language, Alpha to Omega in the Greek language, or whatever. You progress.

And as you progress, you're fulfilling God's will. He created you in his image to do that. So, live up to it.

Engage it. Be curious about learning. And God will bless you because you will move forward in your Christian life.

Thank you for this. Now, the next several lectures are the subjective challenges. We're going to have some fun with those because I'm going to be banging on all kinds of stereotypes.

About a conscience, spirit, prayer, and a few other things. So, tune in and tighten your seatbelts because we're going to continue thinking about biblical theology and how God guides us.

Thank you, and have a good day.