

Dr. Gary Meadors, Knowing the Will of God, Session 1, An Overview of Meadors' Model Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Meadors, Knowing the Will of God, Session 1, An Overview of Meadors' Model, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Gary Meadors' lecture introduces his model for discerning God's will, emphasizing the necessity of a biblical worldview and values. He explains that knowing God's will requires a biblical understanding of knowledge (epistemology) and a proper interpretation of scripture within its context. **Meadors stresses the importance of a "transformed mind," developed through education in biblical teachings, which acts as a filter for understanding life's data and making decisions.** He contrasts this with simply seeking proof texts and highlights that discerning God's will is an active process of "doing" based on this transformed understanding. **The lecture also provides an overview of how worldview and values function as a framework for navigating various aspects of life and briefly touches upon the role of subjective challenges like conscience and prayer in this process.**

2. 24 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Meadors, Knowing the Will of God, Session 1 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Theology → Knowing the Will of God).



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3. Briefing Document: Meadors, Knowing the Will of God, Session 1, An Overview of Meadors' Model

Briefing Document: Dr. Gary Meadors on Knowing God's Will - Session 1 Overview

This briefing document summarizes the main themes and important ideas presented by Dr. Gary Meadors in Session 1 of his course, "Knowing God's Will." The session provides an overview of Meadors' model for discerning God's will, emphasizing the need for a biblical epistemology, contextual Bible reading, and the development of a biblical worldview and values.

Main Themes:

- **Overview of Meadors' Model:** The primary goal of this session is to provide a "big picture" understanding of Meadors' paradigm for knowing God's will. He intends to delve into the specifics in subsequent lessons.
- **Biblical Epistemology is Foundational:** Discerning God's will requires a "biblical view of knowing." This involves understanding the sources, nature, and validity of knowledge from a Christian perspective.
- Meadors introduces the philosophical concept of **epistemology** ("from the Greek word, which means to know") and its relation to **ontology** (being) and **axiology** (doing).
- He discusses traditional sources of knowledge (senses, reason, authority, intuition) and how a Christian worldview uniquely interacts with these.
- A key challenge in the Christian worldview is the "**dilemma in knowing God**" due to the distortion caused by the fall. "When we look to see God, we're looking through... distortion."
- God's solution to this dilemma is **revelation, specifically the Bible**. "For us, the revelation we have is the Bible, and that's it."
- However, even with a perfect Bible, we have "imperfect readers" and "uninspired interpreters," leading to confusion and diverse opinions.
- **Contextual Bible Reading is Crucial:** Meadors strongly cautions against "proof text[ing]" and using the Bible "like a Ouija board." He emphasizes the importance of reading the Bible in its full 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." The goal is to move "from meant to means" – understanding the original meaning to apply it to our current situations.

- **Romans 12:1-2 as a Model for Transformation:** This passage is presented as a "key passage" in understanding how to know God's will. It emphasizes the need to "be transformed by the renewing of your mind." This transformation is central to Meadors' model.
- **Worldview and Values Model as the Core Paradigm:** Meadors states that the "core of my paradigm for knowing God's will, is to function from a worldview and values model." This model is developed through the transformed mind and acts as a "grid" through which we process data and derive meaning.
- **Worldview** is defined as "the mental framework by which we explain our world."
- **Values** are "personal beliefs derived from our worldview that guide our thinking and actions."
- The transformed mind, through education in biblical teaching, brings our worldview and values into conformity with scripture. "The process of education that brings our worldview and values into conformity with biblical teaching. That's the transformed mind."
- Decision-making, therefore, becomes a "conscious engagement of our worldview and value system in the everyday struggle of life." This is referred to as "self-conscious deliberation" and "critical thinking."
- **Goal of the Study: Self-Conscious Deliberation:** Meadors hopes to produce individuals who engage in "self-conscious deliberation," meaning they "can think critically about life's decisions in a manner consistent with biblical worldviews and values." He emphasizes that Christianity involves a "mental process" and encourages students to actively engage with scripture.
- **Discerning vs. Finding God's Will:** Meadors highlights that the Bible doesn't tell us to "find" God's will, which he terms "A Pagan Notion." Instead, the emphasis is on *doing* God's will through obedience and a transformed mind. "The Bible consistently says do, D-O, do God's will. Perform God's will."

Important Ideas and Facts:

- **Epistemology's Relevance:** Understanding how we know what we know is crucial for discerning God's will from a biblical perspective, especially considering the impact of the fall on our perception.
- **The Danger of Proof Texting:** Relying on isolated verses without considering their context is an "abuse of the Bible" and a flawed method for understanding God's will.
- **Transformation as a Mental Process:** The renewing of the mind in Romans 12:2 is not merely an emotional or spiritual experience but an intellectual process of aligning our thinking with God's.
- **The Interplay of Worldview and Values:** Our fundamental beliefs about the world (worldview) shape our personal principles and priorities (values), which then guide our decisions.
- **The Active Role of the Believer:** Discerning God's will is not a passive reception of divine instructions but an active process of engaging scripture and applying a biblically informed worldview and values to life's questions.
- **God's Will as Performative:** God's will is primarily something to be *done* through obedience, not something to be found as a hidden secret.
- **Three Levels of Biblical Teaching:** Meadors briefly mentions direct teaching, implications, and creative constructs as ways scripture addresses our questions, indicating a nuanced approach to biblical interpretation.
- **Values Deposit:** Successive generations of believers develop a "values deposit" from revealed truth, providing a model for understanding and applying biblical principles.
- **Godly Discernment:** Applying God's will involves "godly discernment," especially in situations where there isn't a direct proof text. Godliness involves following biblical principles even in the absence of explicit commands.
- **Subjective Challenges:** Aspects like conscience, the role of the Spirit, providence, and prayer are subjective challenges that need to be understood within the framework of a biblical worldview and values.
- **Conscience:** Defined as a "God-given capacity for self-critique" and a "witness to the worldview and value system that we recognize and apply." It is a monitor, not a judge.

- Meadors poses questions about the role of the Holy Spirit and providence, indicating these will be addressed in later lectures.
- **The Unexamined Life:** Meadors quotes a non-believing poet, emphasizing the importance of self-examination and critical engagement with scripture and life for Christians.

Quotes:

- "learning needs not only the hearing but the looking, the seeing."
- "We need to read the Bible in its context."
- "be transformed by the renewing of your mind." (referencing Romans 12:2)
- "that's the core of my paradigm for knowing God's will, is to function from a worldview and values model."
- "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."
- "Friends, Christianity is, in some senses, above all religions, a mental process."
- "That's why the Bible was so important, because it is our base for knowledge."
- "God has disclosed himself. The Bible is God's word."
- "The Bible never tells you to find God's will at any time. ... The Bible consistently says do, D-O, do God's will."
- "Worldview is the mental framework by which we explain our world."
- "Values are personal beliefs derived from our worldview that guide our thinking and actions."
- "Godliness is being able to follow the Bible when you don't have a proof text."
- "Conscience is a God-given capacity for self-critique."
- "Conscience is a witness to the worldview and value system that we recognize and apply."
- "The unexamined life is not worth living."

Key Takeaway:

Session 1 lays the groundwork for Meadors' model of discerning God's will. He argues against simplistic approaches and emphasizes the necessity of a robust biblical epistemology, careful contextual Bible study, and the development of a consciously held and biblically grounded worldview and value system. This framework provides the foundation for making decisions and understanding God's will in the complexities of life. The goal is to move beyond simply seeking answers to actively living out God's will through a transformed mind.

4. Study Guide: Meadors, Knowing the Will of God, Session 1, An Overview of Meadors' Model

Study Guide: Dr. Gary Meadors on Knowing God's Will, Session 1

Quiz

Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each.

1. According to Dr. Meadors, what is required in terms of our thinking when discerning God's will? Why is this foundational?
2. Explain why Dr. Meadors considers using the Bible like a "Ouija board" to be an abuse of scripture. What approach to reading the Bible does he advocate instead?
3. What is the core of Dr. Meadors' paradigm for knowing God's will? Briefly describe the relationship between its two key components.
4. What is the primary goal that Dr. Meadors hopes to achieve for individuals who engage with his lectures on knowing God's will? Explain what "self-conscious deliberation" entails.
5. Define epistemology as presented by Dr. Meadors. Why is understanding epistemology important for discerning God's will within a Christian worldview?
6. Explain the "dilemma in knowing God" that Dr. Meadors describes. What is God's primary solution to this dilemma, and what ongoing challenge remains?
7. According to Dr. Meadors, what is the significance of Romans 12:1-2 in the context of discerning God's will? What key action does this passage emphasize?
8. Describe the "transformed mind" as presented by Dr. Meadors. What is the primary process involved in achieving a transformed mind?
9. What is the relationship between worldview and values, according to Dr. Meadors? How do these influence our judgments and decisions in various aspects of life?
10. According to Dr. Meadors, what does a careful reading of the Bible about God's will consistently reveal regarding our role? What action does he emphasize rather than "finding" God's will?

Answer Key for Quiz

1. Discerning God's will requires a biblical view of knowing, which falls under the philosophical category of epistemology. This is foundational because our understanding of how we know influences how we interpret scripture and apply it to our lives.
2. Using the Bible like a "Ouija board" involves randomly opening it to find verses that seem to fit a situation, disregarding the surrounding context. Dr. Meadors advocates reading the Bible in its context, considering the whole Bible, sections, books, chapters, and paragraphs to understand the original meaning and then apply it to our situations.
3. The core of Dr. Meadors' paradigm is functioning from a worldview and values model. Worldview is the mental framework for explaining the world, and values are personal beliefs derived from this worldview that guide our thinking and actions.
4. Dr. Meadors hopes to produce a person who is self-conscious in deliberation, meaning they can think critically about life's decisions with conscious reasoning consistent with biblical worldviews and values, rather than making pragmatic or accidental decisions.
5. Epistemology, derived from the Greek word for "to know," is the study of the sources, nature, and validity of knowledge. Understanding epistemology is crucial for Christians because it helps us recognize how we obtain knowledge and how the fall has impacted our ability to know God, highlighting the importance of scripture as a reliable source.
6. The dilemma in knowing God stems from the fall, which has distorted our perception of nature and our own ability to understand God. God's primary solution is the revelation of himself through scripture, but the ongoing challenge is that we, as imperfect readers, can still face confusion in interpretation.
7. Romans 12:1-2 is a key passage because it serves as a model for knowing God's will, emphasizing the need to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. This transformation, according to Dr. Meadors, is essential for developing a biblical worldview and values that enable us to discern God's will.
8. The transformed mind is a process of education that brings our worldview and values into conformity with biblical teaching. It involves consciously engaging our developed worldview and value system in the everyday decisions and struggles of life.

9. Worldview is the overarching mental framework through which we understand the world, while values are the specific personal beliefs derived from that worldview that guide our thoughts and actions. Our worldview shapes our values, and together they influence how we make judgments about various aspects of life.
10. Dr. Meadors states that a careful reading of the Bible consistently tells us to *do* God's will, perform it, and obey it, rather than focusing on trying to "find" it as if it were hidden. He emphasizes that God's will is performative and tied to the teachings within scripture.

Essay Format Questions

1. Discuss the significance of epistemology in Dr. Meadors' model for discerning God's will. How does the concept of the fall influence our ability to know, and how does scripture address this challenge?
2. Explain Dr. Meadors' concept of the "transformed mind" and its central role in discerning God's will. How does education, as opposed to mere devotional practices, contribute to this transformation?
3. Analyze the relationship between worldview and values as presented by Dr. Meadors. How do these concepts function as a "grid" through which we interpret data and make decisions consistent with biblical teaching? Provide examples.
4. Critically evaluate Dr. Meadors' assertion that the Bible never tells us to "find" God's will but rather to "do" it. How does this perspective shift our focus in the process of discernment, and what are its implications for Christian living?
5. Dr. Meadors briefly introduces several "subjective challenges" in discerning God's will, such as conscience, the role of the Spirit, providence, and prayer. Based on the overview provided, discuss how these factors might interact with the worldview and values model in the process of discernment.

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Epistemology:** The branch of philosophy concerned with the nature and scope of knowledge, including its sources, nature, and validity.
- **Ontology:** The branch of philosophy concerned with the nature of being or existence.

- **Axiology:** The branch of philosophy concerned with the study of values, including ethics and aesthetics.
- **Proof Text:** A verse taken out of its original context to support a particular doctrine or viewpoint without considering the surrounding scripture.
- **Worldview:** The fundamental cognitive orientation or comprehensive perspective of an individual or group, encompassing their beliefs about the cosmos, nature, and society.
- **Self-conscious Deliberation:** The process of thinking critically and making decisions with conscious awareness of one's reasons and in a manner consistent with biblical worldview and values.
- **The Fall:** The biblical account of Adam and Eve's disobedience to God in the Garden of Eden, which resulted in sin entering the world and distorting humanity's relationship with God and creation.
- **Revelation:** God's act of disclosing himself and his will to humanity, primarily through scripture.
- **Transformed Mind:** A mind that is being renewed and brought into conformity with biblical teaching through a process of education and conscious engagement with a biblical worldview and values.
- **Values Deposit:** The accumulated understanding of biblical values developed by successive generations of believers as they engage with revealed truth.
- **Sovereign Will of God:** God's ultimate plan and control over all things, often considered beyond human comprehension.
- **Moral Will of God:** God's revealed desires and commands for human behavior and conduct, as expressed in scripture.
- **Godly Discernment:** The ability to make wise and righteous judgments and decisions in accordance with God's will, informed by a biblical worldview and values.

5. FAQs on Meadors, Knowing the Will of God, Session 1, An Overview of Meadors' Model, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions: Knowing God's Will According to Dr. Gary Meadors' Model

1. What is the foundational requirement for discerning God's will, according to Dr. Meadors' model? Discerning God's will fundamentally requires a biblical view of knowing, also known as biblical epistemology. This involves understanding the sources, nature, and validity of knowledge from a biblical perspective, recognizing that while the world engages with senses, reason, intuition, and authority, Christians have the unique challenge of understanding God through the lens of a fallen world and their own fallen nature. Scripture, as God's self-disclosure, becomes the primary source of objective truth, but even with the Bible, imperfect readers necessitate a careful and reasoned approach to interpretation.

2. How should Christians approach reading and interpreting the Bible when seeking to know God's will? Christians must read the Bible in its full context – the whole Bible, sections, books, paragraphs, and individual verses. Avoid "proof texting," which is taking verses out of context to support pre-determined ideas. The goal is to understand what the Bible meant in its original context and then discern what it means for our particular situations, moving from "meant" to "means." The Bible provides the foundational truth through which we understand and navigate life's decisions.

3. What is the significance of Romans 12:1-2 in the process of discerning God's will? Romans 12:1-2 is a key passage that serves as a model for knowing God's will. It calls believers to present their bodies as living sacrifices and to not be conformed to the world but to be transformed by the renewing of their minds. This transformation is a mental process of developing a biblical worldview and values, which then enables us to test and discern what the will of God is. This passage emphasizes our active responsibility in the process, rather than passively waiting for God to reveal specific answers.

4. What is a "worldview and values model" and why is it central to Dr. Meadors' paradigm for knowing God's will? A worldview is the mental framework through which we explain our world, while values are personal beliefs derived from this worldview that guide our thinking and actions. This model is central because Dr. Meadors argues that discerning God's will involves understanding life's issues through a consciously developed biblical worldview and value system. This transformed mindset acts as a filter

through which we process data and arrive at meaning consistent with God's teachings. Everyone has a worldview, but Christians must intentionally align theirs with biblical truth.

5. How does the concept of a "transformed mind" function in making decisions according to God's will? The transformed mind is the product of a continuous process of education that brings our worldview and values into conformity with biblical teaching. It's not just about devotional practices, but about truly learning and understanding the meaning of scripture so that it impacts our thinking. This transformed mind then engages consciously with our worldview and values when facing life's decisions, enabling self-conscious deliberation and critical thinking consistent with biblical principles.

6. What does Dr. Meadors mean by the statement "God's will is performative," and how does this contrast with the idea of "finding God's will"? When Dr. Meadors says "God's will is performative," he means that God's will is something to be done, obeyed, and enacted, rather than something to be passively discovered or found. The Bible consistently calls believers to "do" God's will, to please Him through obedience. This contrasts with the "pagan notion" of "finding God's will" as if it were a hidden treasure. While discernment through study is necessary, the emphasis is on actively living out the revealed will of God through a transformed mind.

7. How does Dr. Meadors address the role of subjective experiences like conscience, the Holy Spirit, providence, and prayer in discerning God's will? Dr. Meadors acknowledges the importance of subjective challenges like conscience, the role of the Spirit, providence, and prayer, but places them within the framework of the worldview and values model. These subjective aspects are considered at the end of the model, suggesting they function in relation to the foundational understanding gained through scripture and a transformed mind. He will address each of these in detail in later lectures, emphasizing that conscience is a God-given capacity for self-critique acting as a witness to our worldview and values, not an independent guide or judge.

8. What are the three levels of teaching Dr. Meadors identifies in scripture, and why is it important to understand them when discerning God's will? Dr. Meadors identifies three levels of teaching in scripture: direct, implied, and creative constructs. Direct teaching is the clear intent of scripture on which most Christians agree. Implied teachings are inferences drawn from the direct teaching. Creative constructs are broader theological frameworks built upon the entirety of scripture (e.g., different eschatological views). Understanding these levels is crucial because many of the decisions we face are not directly addressed in the Bible, requiring us to reason and discern God's will through implication and by applying a biblically informed worldview and values.