

# Dr. Gary Meadors, Knowing the Will of God, Session 9, Components that Emerge in a Biblical 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 9, Components that Emerge in a Biblical Model, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Meadors' lecture, "Knowing God's Will," focuses on the crucial role of a reasoned biblical worldview and value system in making decisions aligned with God's will. He emphasizes that understanding God's will involves processing decisions through this framework, acknowledging the implications of humanity being created in God's image and the pervasive effects of the Fall on human reasoning and capacities. **Meadors stresses the essential nature of serious biblical interpretation, warning against the misuse of scripture through proof-texting and advocating for contextual understanding.** He discusses the limitations of human freedom due to our fallen nature and highlights that wisdom in decision-making stems from a biblically informed worldview, not mere pragmatism or feelings. **Ultimately, the lecture introduces key components for discerning God's will, setting the stage for further discussion on processing decisions and the subjective challenges involved.**

**2. 13 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of  
Dr. Meadors, Knowing the Will of God, Session 9 – 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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on09.mp3**

### **3. Briefing Document: Meadors, Knowing the Will of God, Session 9, Components that Emerge in a Biblical Model**

**Briefing Document: Knowing God's Will - Components of a Biblical Model (Dr. Gary Meadors, Session 9)**

#### **Overview:**

This session (GM 9) serves as a review and synthesis of key components that emerge in a biblical model for discerning God's will. Dr. Meadors emphasizes that making decisions aligned with God's will requires a reasoned approach grounded in a biblical worldview and value system. He revisits several crucial themes discussed in earlier sessions, highlighting their significance in the decision-making process. The session also briefly introduces upcoming topics, including processing decisions and the challenges of subjective factors.

#### **Main Themes and Important Ideas/Facts:**

##### **1. The Foundational Role of Biblical Worldview and Values:**

- Decisions regarding God's will must be processed through a "reasoned biblical worldview and value system." This forms the basis for obtaining information and making choices aligned with God's intentions.
- The session reiterates that these components are not static but require ongoing engagement and understanding. As Meadors states, "...knowing God's worldview and values... is a review of the components, we can think through these components one more time, and I think it will help us to do that."

##### **2. Reflecting the Image of God (Imago Dei):**

- Humans are representatives of God, reflecting His image. This carries significant ethical implications, as we are called to "be conformed to the ethical image of Christ."
- The Imago Dei is understood existentially rather than purely ontologically, meaning it's expressed through our thinking, feeling, choosing, and our capacity to glorify or act against God through these choices.
- Thinking, feeling, choosing, and self-determination are highlighted as traditional functions of the Imago Dei, differentiating humans from the animal kingdom.

- Reflecting on God and engaging His worldview and value structure in decision-making glorifies Him. Abandoning the search for answers can be seen as a violation of this reflection.

### **3. The Pervasive Impact of the Fall:**

- The Fall has a "noetic effect," impacting our minds and thinking capacities. "We are not what we could have been, even mentally."
- The Fall affects our ability to accurately perceive and understand the world and God's will. It overshadows our skills and capacities.
- The only way to protect ourselves from the implications of the Fall is to "engage the Scriptures in transforming your mindset." Ongoing education based on biblical teaching is crucial for moving beyond the damage of the Fall.
- Many approaches to discerning God's will fail to adequately account for the profound impact of the Fall on human reasoning and desires.

### **4. The Essential Role of Biblical Interpretation:**

- The Bible is presented as "our only means of knowledge of God" in a comprehensive sense. While nature reflects God, it needs to be interpreted through a biblical lens.
- Interpretation must be done in context, considering the various literary genres within Scripture (poetry, narrative, etc.). "You can't say what the Bible means until you understand what the Bible means. You must engage the scriptures on their own terms."
- "Proof texts are precarious." Using isolated verses to support pre-existing opinions without considering their context is a flawed methodology. "A person with a proof text is a person with a pretext."
- Serious biblical interpretation and research are essential for those who desire to grow in understanding God's Word and lead others.

### **5. The Nuance of Freedom to Choose:**

- While humans are free to choose, this freedom is not absolute. "Freedom is a myth because we're not free from ourselves. We're not free from the presuppositions that drive us."

- Our choices are heavily influenced by our nature (both old and new for believers) and our established worldview and values. "The traction of our will... is in the direction of our nature."
- True freedom for believers involves educating and transforming their nature through God's Word so that their choices align with godly principles.

## **6. Wisdom Derived from Worldview, Not Pragmatism:**

- Biblical wisdom is not simply general prudence but is "derived from a worldview." It involves reasoned judgment based on a biblical foundation.
- Decision-making should not be based on pragmatism (what seems sensible) or personal hunches. "Knowing and doing God's will is not based on our hunches but on what we can explain as our worldview and values."
- Decisions should be supported by "lines of reason" connecting biblical principles to the specific situation.

## **7. Implications for Friesen's View:**

- Meadors critiques the view of Dallas Willard and Garry Friesen (likely referring to Friesen's book "Decision Making and the Will of God").
- He argues that Friesen is "naive about human freedom" and does not adequately consider the impact of the Fall, particularly the "noetic effect," on believers' ability to discern what is "spiritually expedient."
- Meadors disagrees with Friesen's dictum that "Any decision made within the moral will of God is acceptable to God," suggesting that discerning God's will involves more than just avoiding explicitly immoral choices. Wisdom plays a crucial role in discerning good decisions within God's moral boundaries.

## **Upcoming Topics:**

- Lesson 10 will focus on "Processing Some Decisions," involving more practical application and "thinking out loud."
- Part 3 will delve into "Discerning the Subjective Challenges," including the role of conscience and spirit in decision-making.

## **Quotes:**

- "Decisions must be processed by a reasoned biblical worldview and value system."

- "We're representatives of God, not representations."
- "Be holy, for I am holy, and God has presented to us particularly an ethical approach to life."
- "The Fall affects our minds, our thinking, and our capacities. We are not what we could have been."
- "You can't say what the Bible means until you understand what the Bible means. You must engage the scriptures on their own terms."
- "Proof texts are precarious. Like someone said, a person with a proof text is a person with a pretext."
- "Freedom is a myth because we're not free from ourselves. We're not free from the presuppositions that drive us."
- "Wisdom is derived from a worldview."
- "The Bible is our only means of knowledge of God."
- "Adjudicating God's will for your actions is not a game. It is serious business and deserves serious reflection."
- "Human freedom is, at the end of the day, a myth. Because we are sinners..."
- "Knowing and doing God's will is not based on our hunches but on what we can explain as our worldview and values."
- "His dictum, Friesen's dictum, is that Any decision made within the moral will of God is acceptable to God. I don't think that's adequate at all."

### **Conclusion:**

Session 9 of Dr. Meadors' lectures on knowing God's will provides a valuable recap of the essential components for a biblical model of decision-making. The emphasis on a reasoned biblical worldview and values, the implications of the Imago Dei and the Fall, the necessity of sound biblical interpretation, the nuanced understanding of human freedom, and the nature of biblical wisdom all contribute to a robust framework for discerning God's will. The critique of simplistic approaches, particularly the foreshadowing of a disagreement with Friesen's perspective, highlights the complexity and importance of this topic. The anticipation for the upcoming sessions on processing decisions and subjective challenges suggests a deeper exploration of the practical application of these principles.

## 4. Study Guide: Meadors, Knowing the Will of God, Session 9, Components that Emerge in a Biblical Model

### Knowing God's Will: A Study Guide

#### Key Concepts Review

This section outlines the core components and themes discussed in Dr. Meadors' lecture on discerning God's will through a biblical worldview and values model.

**1. The Foundational Model:** \* Decision-making for knowing God's will must be rooted in a reasoned biblical worldview and value system. \* This model provides the framework for obtaining information and making choices aligned with God's will.

**2. Reflecting the Image of God (Imago Dei):** \* Humans are representatives of God, reflecting His image through their thinking, feeling, choosing, and self-determination. \* Engaging God's worldview and values in decision-making is a way to glorify Him, while neglecting thoughtful searching for answers can be seen as a violation of this reflection. \* The Imago Dei is understood more existentially (how God images Himself in humans) than purely ontologically (the nature of being).

**3. The Impact of the Fall:** \* The Fall has a significant "noetic effect," impacting our minds, thinking capacities, and overall human potential. \* It overshadows our skills and affects our perception of the world. \* Understanding the consequences of the Fall is crucial for an accurate model of discerning God's will. \* Protection from the Fall's implications comes through engaging Scripture and transforming our mindset according to biblical teaching.

**4. The Essential Role of the Bible:** \* The Bible is the primary means of knowing God, and nature should be interpreted through a biblical lens. \* Serious biblical interpretation within context is essential; proof-texting (cherry-picking verses) is a precarious and flawed methodology. \* Even direct biblical commands require careful understanding of their deeper meanings. \* Adjudicating God's will is serious and requires thoughtful reflection, not mere pragmatism or personal hunches.

**5. The Nuance of Human Freedom:** \* While humans have the freedom to choose, this freedom is bounded by our nature (both old and new) and our level of spiritual maturity. \* Our choices tend to align with our nature and our established worldview and values. \* True freedom requires the transformation and education of our nature in a godly direction. \* We are self-determining in choosing which nature (old or new) we will obey.

**6. Worldview, Values, and Wisdom:** \* Wise decision-making is based on the consistent application of a biblical worldview and values, not on feelings, hunches, or pragmatic considerations without reasoned justification. \* Knowing and doing God's will should be explainable through our understanding and application of this model. \* Biblical wisdom is more than general prudence; it is skillful living derived from Scripture and a biblical framework.

**7. Critique of Alternative Views (Friesen):** \* Meadors suggests that some views, like Friesen's, are naive about human freedom and do not adequately consider the impact of the Fall on believers' ability to discern what is "spiritually expedient." \* The idea that any decision within God's moral will is acceptable is deemed insufficient for guiding believers toward good and wise choices. \* Biblical wisdom is presented as more complex than simply acting in a way one deems "spiritually expedient."

**8. The Ongoing Process:** \* Discerning God's will is an ongoing process that involves recognizing and navigating subjective challenges. \* Tension and a degree of uncertainty are inherent in human decision-making. \* Moving forward with the best possible decision involves careful reasoning grounded in a biblical worldview and values.

#### **Quiz: Short Answer Questions**

1. According to Dr. Meadors, what is the foundational basis for knowing God's will and making decisions aligned with it?
2. Explain the concept of humans being "representatives" of God and how this relates to ethics in decision-making.
3. Describe the "noetic effect" of the Fall and how it impacts our ability to discern God's will.
4. Why is it crucial to interpret biblical texts within their proper context, and what is problematic about using "proof texts"?
5. In what way is human freedom considered a "myth" according to the lecture, and what factors limit our choices?
6. How does Dr. Meadors define biblical wisdom in the context of decision-making, and what is it based upon?
7. Explain the difference between pragmatism and biblical decision-making as presented in the lecture.

8. What is the significance of understanding both our "old nature" and "new nature" in the context of making godly choices?
9. Why should our understanding of God's will not be based on personal feelings or hunches, according to Dr. Meadors?
10. What are some of the main criticisms Dr. Meadors raises regarding the view that any decision made within the moral will of God is acceptable?

### **Quiz: Answer Key**

1. The foundational basis for knowing God's will and making aligned decisions is a reasoned biblical worldview and value system. This model provides the framework through which we understand information and make choices.
2. Humans are representatives of God, reflecting His invisible nature in a visible way. This representative role underscores the importance of ethical living and being conformed to the ethical image of Christ.
3. The "noetic effect" of the Fall refers to the negative impact of Adam's sin on our minds, thinking capacities, and overall human potential. This affects our ability to reason and discern God's will without engaging Scripture.
4. Interpreting texts in context is crucial because the meaning of biblical passages is tied to their literary genre, historical setting, and authorial intent. Proof-texting is problematic because it cherry-picks verses out of context to support preconceived ideas, potentially distorting their original meaning.
5. Human freedom is considered a "myth" in the sense that our choices are significantly influenced by our fallen nature and our existing worldview and values. We are not free from ourselves and our inherent tendencies until our nature is transformed and educated by God's Word.
6. Biblical wisdom is defined as skillful living derived from Scripture and a biblical worldview and value system. It involves reasoned judgment and application of these principles, not merely asserted or assumed knowledge.
7. Pragmatism bases decisions on what seems sensible or what works, whereas biblical decision-making is rooted in reasoned judgment derived from a biblical foundation and involves logical connections (lines of reason).
8. Regenerate persons possess both an old (sinful) nature and a new (godly) nature. Understanding these competing mindsets is crucial because we constantly choose



which nature we will obey, and spiritual growth involves actively choosing the new nature through education in Scripture and love for God.

9. Our understanding of God's will should not be based on feelings or hunches because these are products of our untransformed minds and may not align with a biblically informed perspective. True discernment requires reasoned application of our worldview and values.
10. Dr. Meadors criticizes this view for being naive about human freedom and the pervasive impact of the Fall, suggesting that even decisions not explicitly violating God's moral will may not be the wisest or best choices. He argues that God's will is larger than simply avoiding the immoral.

### **Essay Format Questions**

1. Discuss the interconnectedness of a biblical worldview, values, and the process of discerning God's will as presented by Dr. Meadors. How do these components work together to guide decision-making?
2. Analyze the implications of the Fall on human reasoning and the ability to know God's will. According to the lecture, how can believers mitigate the "noetic effects" of the Fall in their decision-making?
3. Evaluate the role and importance of the Bible in discerning God's will, contrasting proper biblical interpretation with the pitfalls of proof-texting. Use examples from the lecture to support your analysis.
4. Critically examine Dr. Meadors' perspective on human freedom in the context of sin and redemption. How does his view challenge common understandings of free will in decision-making, particularly for Christians?
5. Compare and contrast Dr. Meadors' understanding of biblical wisdom with the concept of "spiritual expediency," as critiqued in the lecture. How should believers approach the pursuit of wisdom in their decision-making process?

## Glossary of Key Terms

- **Biblical Worldview:** A comprehensive framework for understanding reality based on the teachings and principles of the Bible.
- **Biblical Values:** The moral and ethical principles derived from the Bible that guide beliefs and behaviors.
- **Discernment:** The ability to judge well, especially in moral or ethical matters, with insight and understanding.
- **Imago Dei:** (Latin for "image of God") The theological concept that humans are created in God's likeness, possessing certain attributes that reflect His nature.
- **The Fall:** The biblical event in which Adam and Eve disobeyed God, resulting in sin entering the world and affecting all of humanity.
- **Noetic Effect:** The impact of the Fall on human intellect and cognitive abilities, affecting our capacity for clear thinking and understanding.
- **Proof Text:** A biblical verse taken out of its original context to support a particular doctrine or viewpoint, often misrepresenting its intended meaning.
- **Pragmatism:** An approach that evaluates theories or beliefs in terms of the success of their practical application. In the context of decision-making, it prioritizes what seems to work or make sense based on immediate outcomes.
- **Wisdom (Biblical):** Skillful living and decision-making that is rooted in knowledge of God's Word, reflecting a biblical worldview and values, and leading to godly outcomes.
- **Moral Will of God:** The aspects of God's will that relate to right and wrong behavior, often expressed through direct commands and ethical principles in Scripture.

## **5. FAQs on Meadors, Knowing the Will of God, Session 9, Components that Emerge in a Biblical Model, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)**

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

#### **1. What is the foundational basis for discerning God's will according to the biblical worldview and values model?**

Discerning God's will and making decisions aligned with it is fundamentally based on reasoning derived from a biblical worldview and value system. This framework provides the essential information and principles for evaluating choices. It emphasizes understanding and applying God's perspective and ethical standards as presented in Scripture.

#### **2. How does the concept of humanity being created in the Imago Dei (image of God) influence our decision-making process?**

As beings created in God's image, humans are representatives of God, possessing the capacity to think, feel, choose, and be self-determining. This inherent reflection of God implies that our decision-making process should strive to glorify Him by engaging with His worldview and values. To neglect thoughtful consideration and choice in our lives is to fall short of reflecting God's nature.

#### **3. In what ways does the Fall impact our ability to know and do God's will?**

The Fall has a significant "noetic effect," meaning it has negatively impacted our minds, thinking, and overall capacities. We are not what we were created to be, and our inherent nature now tends towards self-interest rather than God. This fallen state affects our ability to reason clearly and interpret situations objectively, making it crucial to actively counter these effects through engaging with Scripture and ongoing biblical education.

#### **4. What is the essential role of the Bible in understanding God's will, and what are some common pitfalls to avoid in its interpretation?**

The Bible is our primary means of knowing God and His will. However, it requires serious and contextual interpretation. A common pitfall is using "proof texts" – cherry-picking verses out of their original context to support pre-existing opinions. True understanding necessitates engaging with the different literary genres of the Bible (poetry, narrative, etc.) and researching their intended meaning.

### **5. How does Dr. Meadors view human freedom in the context of knowing God's will?**

While humans possess the ability to choose, Dr. Meadors argues that "human freedom is a myth" in the sense that our choices are heavily influenced by our inherent nature, which is fallen and self-oriented. We are "free" to choose according to our nature and established worldview and values. Therefore, true freedom in aligning with God's will requires the transformation of our nature through biblical truth and the development of a godly worldview and value system.

### **6. What is the relationship between wisdom and discerning God's will, according to the presented material?**

Biblical wisdom is not simply general intelligence or pragmatism. Instead, it is a sophisticated domain of skillful living that is derived from a biblical worldview and value system, even when Scripture isn't directly quoted (as in wisdom literature). Discerning God's will requires applying this biblically informed wisdom through reasoned judgment and understanding the logical connections in our decision-making process, rather than relying on mere assertions or feelings.

### **7. How does Dr. Meadors critique the idea that any decision made within the moral will of God is acceptable?**

Dr. Meadors disagrees with the notion that simply avoiding a violation of God's explicit moral commands ensures a good or God-honoring decision. He argues that God's will is broader than just the moral law and that discernment and wisdom are necessary to choose the *best* course of action, even in situations where multiple options might not be explicitly sinful.

### **8. What is emphasized as crucial for navigating the complexities of decision-making and knowing God's will?**

Navigating the complexities of decision-making requires a conscious and ongoing effort to cultivate a biblical worldview and value system. This involves rigorous engagement with Scripture, thoughtful reasoning, and recognizing the impact of the Fall on our thinking. It also necessitates self-awareness regarding our presuppositions and tendencies, allowing us to make choices that align with a transformed nature and a desire to honor God.