

Dr. Gary Meadors, Knowing the Will of God, Session 10, Processing our Decisions by a Worldview & Values 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 10, Processing our Decisions by a Worldview & Values, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Meadors' lecture focuses on a model for Christian decision-making, emphasizing the crucial role of one's **worldview and values as a framework for interpreting life and scripture**. He introduces the concept of a "**perceptual set**" through which individuals ascribe meaning and stresses that discerning God's will involves moving from biblical revelation to practical application, not through privatized systems. The lecture advocates for **self-critical reflection on presuppositions and traditions**, a deep understanding of the Bible within its context, and a conscious application of a **structured decision-making process**, especially for complex issues lacking direct scriptural answers. Ultimately, **the goal is not merely to discover God's will, but to actively live it out** through a transformed mind informed by biblical principles.

**2. 15 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Meadors, Knowing the Will of God, Session 10 – 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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on10.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Meadors, Knowing the Will of God, Session 10, Processing our Decisions by a Worldview & Values

Briefing Document: Processing Decisions Through Worldview and Values

Overview:

This briefing document summarizes the key themes and important ideas presented by Dr. Gary Meadors in Session 10 of "Knowing God's Will," focusing on the process of making decisions guided by one's worldview and values, particularly within a Christian context. Dr. Meadors emphasizes that understanding and applying a biblical worldview and values framework is crucial for godly discernment and navigating the complexities of decision-making.

Main Themes and Important Ideas:

1. Worldview and Values as a Decision-Making Grid:

- Dr. Meadors reiterates that our worldview and values act as a "grid by which we interpret our life and world" and "kick out meaning on the other side." He introduces the term "perceptual set" as a way to understand how we perceive the world and ascribe meaning to it based on our worldview complex.
- **Quote:** "Well, because it gives us a grid. We've seen that grid in the road picture I've given you. It gives us a grid by which we interpret our life and world by our worldview and model, and we kick out meaning on the other side. It is our perceptual set."

1. The Process from Revelation to Application:

- Meadors outlines a process for understanding God's will, moving from revealed (sovereign and moral) will to godly discernment and ultimately to application. This involves a progression from "teaching intent to theological analysis," similar to his earlier framework of direct, implied, and creative constructs in biblical interpretation.

1. Guidance is Personal but Not Privatized:

- While God's guidance is personal, it is not a system where every decision has a specific, private revelation. Instead, we process decisions through our God-informed worldview and values.

- **Quote:** "God's guidance is personal, but it's not privatized. We process. We don't have a system in scripture where every little thing comes up, or every big thing... God hasn't given a system of privatizing it. He's given a system of adjudicating that through worldview and values."
- Meadors highlights that some decisions are not inherently moral issues, allowing for freedom of choice within the boundaries of one's worldview and values.

1. **Developing Discernment Skills through Self-Criticism and Biblical Knowledge:**

- **Self-Criticism:** Meadors stresses the importance of being "self-critical about your presuppositions, including your traditions," personality, and ingrained decision-making tendencies. He emphasizes the need for external perspectives from trusted friends to gain a clearer self-understanding.
- **Quote:** "My friends, there are very few people in life who end up in situations in which they truly become self-critical, where you know yourself... we need someone outside of ourselves to help us to be self-critical."
- **Knowing the Bible in Context:** Deeply understanding the Bible, not just generally but in its historical and literary context, is crucial for discerning God's will. Meadors points out that the Bible was "written for you but not to you," requiring careful interpretation of the original meaning before applying it to contemporary situations.
- **Quote:** "The Bible was written for you but not for you... You've got to understand what it meant to those individuals before you can say what it means for you."
- He recommends using resources like Erdman's Dictionary of the Bible to aid in this contextual understanding.
- **Quote:** "A text without a context is a pretext."

1. **Practical Steps for Processing Decisions:**

- **Journaling and Self-Reflection:** Meadors encourages journaling about one's worldview and how it influences daily life, as well as identifying and clarifying personal values.
- **Applying a Decision-Making Process:** He refers to a chart (provided separately) and suggests a structured approach to evaluating decisions.
- **Case Study Method:** For serious decisions, Meadors recommends writing a case study that includes:

- Clearly stating the decision.
- Defining the issues involved.
- Creating a story to flesh out details.
- Running the decision through the decision-making grid.
- Raising and clarifying research questions.
- Researching those questions using biblical and other relevant resources.
- Bringing findings back to the grid.
- Listing pros and cons and reflecting.
- Stating potential options and working through them.
- Making a decision and cycling through the process.
- **Addressing Novel Issues:** For questions lacking direct biblical text (e.g., genetic engineering), believers must think in "larger categories" informed by their biblical worldview and values, and potentially consult with experts like Christian philosophers.
- **Quote:** "...nine times out of 10, you're going to be asking a question that there is no direct text in the Bible to answer your question, so therefore you must think in larger categories..."

1. **The Goal is to Do God's Will, Not Just Find It:**

- Meadors emphasizes that the ultimate aim is obedience and action based on discerned understanding.
- **Quote:** "Our task is not to find God's will but to do it."
- Our freedom to choose is framed by our transformed nature and the application of our biblical worldview and values.
- **Quote:** "Our freedom to choose is conditioned by our nature and applying our worldview and values."

1. **Future Topics:**

- Dr. Meadors mentions that future sessions will delve into specific aspects related to decision-making, including conscience, the role of the Spirit, prayer, and providence.

Key Takeaways:

- Decision-making for Christians should be a deliberate process informed by a biblically grounded worldview and values.
- Simply seeking a direct, personalized command from God for every decision is not the normative pattern presented in Scripture.
- Developing discernment requires ongoing self-reflection, a deep understanding of the Bible in its context, and engagement with a supportive community.
- Utilizing structured processes like case studies and decision-making grids can aid in navigating complex issues.
- While the Bible may not provide specific answers to every modern dilemma, its principles and overarching narrative offer a framework for making godly decisions.
- The ultimate goal is not just intellectual understanding but active obedience to what is discerned as God's will through this process.

Action Items/Further Considerations:

- Reflect on your own worldview and values. How do they currently influence your decision-making?
- Consider engaging in the self-critical process outlined by Dr. Meadors, perhaps by seeking feedback from trusted individuals.
- Dedicate time to studying the Bible in its historical and literary context, utilizing helpful resources like Bible dictionaries.
- Familiarize yourself with the decision-making grid mentioned in the lecture and consider how to apply it to current or future decisions.
- Consider practicing the case study method for significant decisions you face.
- Look forward to future sessions that will explore conscience, the Holy Spirit, prayer, and providence in relation to knowing God's will.

4. Study Guide: Meadors, Knowing the Will of God, Session 10, Processing our Decisions by a Worldview & Values

5. FAQs on Meadors, Knowing the Will of God, Session 10, Processing our Decisions by a Worldview & Values, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions on Processing Decisions Through Worldview and Values

1. How does our worldview and values framework help us in making decisions

according to God's will? Our worldview and values act as a fundamental grid through which we interpret our lives and the world around us. This perceptual set shapes how we ascribe meaning to situations and ultimately influences our responses to decisions. By understanding our worldview and clarifying our values in light of biblical principles, we establish a framework for godly discernment, guiding us from the revealed sovereign and moral will of God to its practical application in our lives.

2. What is the process of moving from biblical revelation to making godly decisions?

The process involves moving from the teaching intent of biblical texts to theological analysis, which informs our godly discernment. This journey does not typically involve intermediaries providing specific answers for every situation. Instead, it requires us to engage with scripture, understand its original context, and apply its overarching principles through our informed worldview and values.

3. Why is personal responsibility emphasized in the context of God's guidance? While God's guidance is personal, it is not meant to be a privatized system where God directly dictates every choice. We are called to actively process decisions using our understanding of God's Word and our values. This necessitates taking responsibility for our actions and decisions, including self-reflection, admitting mistakes, and growing through our experiences.

4. What are some key skills for developing godly discernment in decision-making?

Developing discernment skills involves several crucial elements: being self-critical about our presuppositions and traditions, knowing the Bible in its context, and seeking feedback from trusted individuals. Self-criticism helps us identify biases and blind spots, while a deep understanding of scripture provides the foundational principles for our worldview and values. External perspectives can further refine our self-awareness and decision-making processes.

5. What does it mean that the Bible was "written for us but not to us," and why is this distinction important for decision-making? The statement "written for us but not to us" highlights the importance of understanding the original context of biblical texts. While the scriptures contain timeless truths and principles applicable to us today, they were initially addressed to specific audiences in particular historical and cultural settings (e.g., letters to churches in the ancient world). To properly apply biblical teachings to our decisions, we must first grasp what those texts meant to their original readers. A text taken out of its context can become a pretext for misinterpretation and misapplication.

6. How can we effectively research biblical principles and apply them to contemporary issues that are not directly addressed in scripture (e.g., genetic engineering)? When facing decisions lacking direct biblical proof texts, we must think in larger categories informed by our Christian worldview and values. This involves clarifying the specific questions related to the issue, researching relevant biblical concepts and principles (potentially using tools like Bible dictionaries and concordances to explore underlying themes), and even consulting with others who have expertise in relevant fields and a strong understanding of Christian ethics. The goal is to bring biblical thinking to bear on the issue through careful analysis and reflection.

7. What is the proposed process for working through significant decisions? A helpful process involves several steps: clearly stating the decision to be evaluated in writing, defining the involved issues, creating a case study to flesh out details, running the decision through a decision-making grid (informed by worldview and values), raising and clarifying research questions, researching those questions, bringing findings back to the grid, listing pros and cons, reflecting on the options, and stating the viable options in writing before making a decision and continuing to evaluate it.

8. What is the central idea behind the worldview and values model for decision-making, and what gives believers a "divine edge"? The central idea is that all decision-making is rooted in one's worldview and values. We interpret and respond to the world based on this underlying framework. For believers, the "divine edge" comes from the biblical component that transforms our minds and informs our worldview and values. By consciously integrating biblical truth into our perceptual set, we gain a unique perspective that enables us to discern and make decisions that are pleasing to God.