

# **Dr. Gary Meadors, Knowing the Will of God, Session 15, Select Illustrations of How to Make Decisions 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 15, Select Illustrations of How to Make Decisions, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL**

Dr. Gary Meadors' lecture on "Knowing God's Will" emphasizes developing a biblical worldview and value system for discerning God's will, rather than relying on simplistic steps. He explains that becoming a biblical decision-maker requires ongoing study and research, similar to mastering a professional field. **Meadors then applies this framework to several complex contemporary issues where direct biblical commands are absent, including birth control, reproductive technology, abortion, euthanasia, genetic science, transgender issues, sexuality, and war.** He highlights the need to move from direct biblical texts to implied principles and ultimately to creative theological constructs to address these matters ethically. **The lecture encourages consulting knowledgeable sources, including theologians and scientists, and engaging with diverse perspectives to form well-reasoned judgments.**

**2. 13 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of  
Dr. Meadors, Knowing the Will of God, Session 15 – 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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on15.mp3**

### 3. Briefing Document: Meadors, Knowing the Will of God, Session 15, Select Illustrations of How to Make Decisions

#### Briefing Document: Knowing God's Will - Select Illustrations of How to Make a Decision

##### Overview:

This document summarizes the main themes and important ideas presented by Dr. Gary Meadors in Session 15 of his series on the Biblical Theology of Knowing God's Will. This session focuses on practical application, moving beyond simplistic "step-by-step" approaches to discerning God's will by emphasizing the development of a "transformed world mind, worldview, and value set" grounded in biblical principles. Meadors argues that knowing God's will, especially in complex modern issues, often requires moving beyond direct biblical commands and engaging in careful study, reflection, and "creative constructs" based on a biblical framework. He illustrates this through several challenging ethical dilemmas.

##### Main Themes and Important Ideas:

1. **Critique of Simplistic Approaches:** Meadors begins by criticizing the common approach to knowing God's will that offers easy steps for a "wonderful life." He states, "Most of the literature on knowing God's will gives you steps; do these and life will be wonderful." He contrasts this with his aim to "teach you how to fish rather than just giving you a fish," emphasizing the development of discerning abilities.
2. **Importance of a Transformed Worldview:** The core of Meadors' approach lies in the transformation of one's "world mind, worldview, and value set" as described in Romans 12:1-2. This is not an instantaneous process but requires ongoing effort: "That's not going to happen overnight, and it's not simple. It means that you have to read and research." He draws a parallel to professional development, stating, "The same thing is true for a Christian; it's not some walk in the park where you become a Christian and God slips in a disc in your head, and everything's hunky-dory; it doesn't work that way."
3. **Moving Beyond Direct Biblical Commands:** Meadors highlights that many contemporary ethical issues lack direct biblical instruction. He explains, "If you're going to answer that question, you're going to ask yourself, do I have direct Bible verses to answer that? Do I have implied Bible verses, or do I need to construct

them creatively?" This necessitates a deeper engagement with biblical principles and their application to novel situations.

4. **Illustrative Case Studies:** Meadors uses several complex issues to demonstrate the need for this "creative construct" approach:
  - **Birth Control:** He notes the absence of direct biblical prohibition and contrasts the ancient agrarian context, where large families were essential, with modern motivations often driven by "our own selfish desires." While the "mandate of the Bible is have kids," he acknowledges the changing cultural context and the lack of a "proof text," requiring reflection on biblical principles and wisdom from various sources.
  - **Reproductive Technology (e.g., IVF, fetal tissue):** Meadors points out the complete absence of direct biblical guidance on these modern technologies. He emphasizes the need to consider one's "Christian worldview and my value system" and to consult with competent sources, including both theologians and scientists: "When you want to know something, you have to ask this question. Is the person that I'm reading in a position to know, in a position to be able to speak accurately?"
  - **Abortion:** While acknowledging the lack of a "direct text," Meadors believes there are "plenty of implicational texts" regarding the value of life. He touches upon historical practices like exposure and the evolving definitions of when life begins, highlighting the philosophical influence on contemporary views, such as Planned Parenthood's stance. He stresses the importance of understanding "what the Bible teaches about life, about respect for life, and about who controls life."
  - **Euthanasia and Suicide:** Similar to abortion, Meadors notes the lack of direct teaching on these issues, despite biblical accounts of suicide. He argues that a biblical worldview must inform one's understanding of these matters, considering who gives and controls life.
  - **Genetic Science and Cloning:** Meadors briefly mentions the ethical dilemmas arising from these scientific advancements, noting the potential conflict with religious views of life and the lack of direct biblical guidance, requiring "creative constructs from Scripture."
  - **Transgender Issues:** Meadors suggests this is "a little easier" due to the biblical creation account of male and female and teachings on "deviant sexuality." He

believes "the case is against it" but emphasizes the need for reasoned arguments based on Scripture.

- **Sexuality Issues (Homosexuality and Lesbianism):** He states that the Bible is "relatively clearer" in condemning these practices in both testaments, despite liberal reinterpretations. He clarifies that this stance is not out of hatred but a belief in following God's created order. He also acknowledges the complexity introduced by the "fall and the distortion" of humanity, raising the nature vs. nurture debate but ultimately grounding his view in the biblical text.
- **War:** Meadors acknowledges the challenging nature of this issue, pointing to instances of God commanding war in the Old Testament. He suggests consulting resources like the "Counterpoints series" which present multiple perspectives on complex topics like war, pacifism, and homosexuality to facilitate informed study. He emphasizes that while different views exist, they are not necessarily equally valid.
- 1. **Importance of Discernment and Study:** Throughout the session, Meadors underscores the ongoing nature of developing discernment. He encourages listeners to engage in serious study, read reputable sources, and critically evaluate different perspectives. He contrasts the complexity of these ethical issues with more trivial decisions, stating, "You see, you thought that knowing God's will meant whether you buy a Chevrolet or a Ford as your next vehicle. Well, that's juvenile stuff. This is real stuff here."

#### Key Quotes:

- "Most of the literature on knowing God's will gives you steps; do these and life will be wonderful."
- "I was trying to teach you how to fish rather than just giving you a fish."
- "...the transformed world mind, worldview, and value set that we talk about is so crucial; Romans 12:1, and 2..."
- "You've got to grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ and in your capacity to apply a worldview and value system that God has provided us to the issues of life that we confront."
- "...you're not going to find a proof text that tells you to practice birth control."
- "The mandate of the Bible is have kids. The Bible doesn't mandate you decide whether you want children. The mandate is to fill the earth and multiply."

- "So, birth control is going to have to be a creative construct because we don't have direct verses and really not even implicational verses because everything is in the other direction."
- "You have to ask, what is my Christian worldview and my value system, and how do I approach this?"
- "Is the person that I'm reading in a position to know, in a position to be able to speak accurately?"
- "Traditionally, the Christian church has said that conception is when an embryo becomes a person."
- "...in sin did my mother conceive me. That doesn't mean sex is a sin, but it means I was a person, and I was a sinner from conception."
- "To make it convenient for them and justify their actions. And they say that a person is not a person until they're born."
- "You, if you're going to do God's will, you've got to come up with an understanding of what the Bible teaches about life, about respect for life, and about who controls life..."
- "The Bible makes it quite clear that we're created male and female..."
- "Sexuality issues. For example, homosexuality and lesbianism are condemned in both the Old and the New Testament."
- "...the fall and the distortion of not only our minds and as the flood came, the earth, but human beings are distorted. The DNA code is not what God originally designed. It's distorted in different ways."
- "You see, you thought that knowing God's will meant whether you buy a Chevrolet or a Ford as your next vehicle. Well, that's juvenile stuff. This is real stuff here."
- "Zondervan has probably 50 volumes on four views on war, four views on pacifism, and four views on homosexuality."

**Conclusion:**

Dr. Meadors' Session 15 provides a framework for discerning God's will that moves beyond simplistic formulas. He emphasizes the critical role of a biblically transformed worldview in navigating complex ethical issues where direct scriptural guidance is lacking. Through various illustrative case studies, he demonstrates the necessity of careful study, reflection, and the development of "creative constructs" grounded in biblical principles and informed by competent sources. This session serves as a call to mature Christian decision-making that engages deeply with both Scripture and the complexities of the modern world.

## 4. Study Guide: Meadors, Knowing the Will of God, Session 15, Select Illustrations of How to Make Decisions

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

#### Quiz

1. According to Dr. Meadors, what is the primary difference between most literature on knowing God's will and the approach taken in his lectures?
2. What does Dr. Meadors mean by the "transformed world mind, worldview, and value set," and why is it crucial for biblical decision-making according to Romans 12:1-2?
3. In the context of birth control, why does Dr. Meadors suggest it requires a "creative construct" from Scripture rather than direct verses?
4. How has the understanding of when life begins changed over time, according to the lecture? Provide an example of how this change has manifested.
5. What does Dr. Meadors suggest as a key method for Christians to develop an understanding of complex ethical issues like abortion and euthanasia?
6. Why does Dr. Meadors state that transgender issues are "a little easier" to address biblically compared to topics like genetic science?
7. While acknowledging the biblical condemnation of homosexuality and lesbianism, what additional point does Dr. Meadors raise regarding individuals who identify as such?
8. How does the concept of "the fall" relate to discussions about complex issues like homosexuality, according to Dr. Meadors?
9. What is the significance of the biblical accounts where God commanded war in the context of a Christian's decision-making regarding war and pacifism?
10. What is the purpose of the "Counterpoints" series of books recommended by Dr. Meadors in navigating complex ethical issues?

#### Quiz Answer Key

1. Most literature on knowing God's will provides steps for decision-making, whereas Dr. Meadors aims to teach a process for discernment by focusing on

developing a biblical worldview and value system. He emphasizes learning "how to fish" rather than just being given "a fish."

2. The "transformed world mind, worldview, and value set" refers to the process of aligning one's thinking and values with biblical principles. It's crucial because Romans 12:1-2 calls for a transformation of the mind to discern God's will, implying that sound decision-making stems from a biblically informed perspective.
3. Birth control requires a "creative construct" because there are no direct biblical verses addressing it. Instead, the Bible offers principles and cultural contexts (like the encouragement to have many children in an agrarian society) that need thoughtful interpretation and application to modern circumstances.
4. The understanding of when life begins has shifted. Traditionally, the Christian church considered conception as the beginning of personhood, as reflected in Psalm 51. However, modern perspectives, including some medical and philosophical viewpoints, have proposed implantation or even birth as the defining moment.
5. Dr. Meadors suggests reading and engaging with individuals who are knowledgeable and competent in the relevant fields, such as theologians for biblical perspectives and doctors or scientists for scientific understanding. He also recommends consulting resources that present multiple viewpoints on complex issues.
6. Dr. Meadors suggests that transgender issues are "a little easier" to address biblically because the Bible clearly establishes the creation of humanity as male and female and discusses matters related to sexuality, seemingly offering a more direct basis for understanding God's design.
7. While the Bible condemns homosexual and lesbian behavior, Dr. Meadors points out that individuals in these categories can often exhibit admirable qualities like kindness and helpfulness. He uses this observation to highlight the complexity of the issue beyond simple condemnation.
8. According to Dr. Meadors, "the fall" has distorted not only our minds and the earth but also human beings at a fundamental level, potentially affecting their nature. This concept is brought into the discussion on homosexuality to explain deviations from God's original creation of male and female.



9. The biblical accounts of God commanding war, such as in the Canaanite situation, demonstrate that war is a reality within the biblical narrative and even divinely sanctioned in specific contexts. This complicates a simple embrace of pacifism and necessitates a careful examination of different perspectives on war and self-defense.
10. The "Counterpoints" series presents multiple scholarly views on controversial topics, allowing individuals to access different perspectives, study the arguments, and develop a more informed understanding rather than relying on a single viewpoint.

### Essay Format Questions

1. Discuss the implications of Dr. Meadors' emphasis on developing a "transformed world mind, worldview, and value set" for the practical process of making decisions as a Christian. How does this approach differ from simply following a checklist of rules?
2. Analyze the challenges and methods involved in constructing biblical guidance on contemporary ethical issues, such as reproductive technologies or genetic science, where direct scriptural commands are absent. Use examples from the lecture to illustrate your points.
3. Critically evaluate Dr. Meadors' perspective on the Bible's clarity regarding transgender and sexuality issues. Consider potential counterarguments or alternative interpretations of the relevant biblical texts.
4. Explore the complexities Christians face when grappling with the issue of war, considering the biblical accounts of divinely commanded warfare alongside the principles of love, peace, and non-violence often emphasized in Christian theology.
5. Reflect on the importance of consulting diverse perspectives and expertise when seeking to understand God's will on complex matters. How can resources like the "Counterpoints" series contribute to a more nuanced and informed decision-making process for Christians?

### Glossary of Key Terms

- **Biblical Worldview:** A comprehensive framework for understanding reality based on the teachings and principles found in the Bible. It shapes one's beliefs, values, and how one interprets the world.

- **Value System:** A set of moral principles and beliefs that guide an individual's behavior and decision-making process, ideally rooted in biblical ethics for a Christian.
- **Proof Text:** A specific verse or passage of Scripture cited to directly support a particular theological or ethical position. Dr. Meadors notes that many modern issues lack direct proof texts.
- **Implied Bible Verses:** Scriptural passages that do not directly address a topic but offer principles or insights that can be reasonably applied to it through logical inference.
- **Creative Construct:** The process of thoughtfully and prayerfully developing an understanding or application of biblical principles to contemporary issues where direct or implied scriptural guidance is limited.
- **Agrarian World:** A society and culture primarily based on agriculture and farming, which was the context for much of the Old Testament and influenced its social norms and values.
- **Fetal Tissue:** Biological material derived from a fetus, which can be used in scientific research and medical treatments, raising ethical considerations.
- **Conception:** The moment when a sperm fertilizes an egg, traditionally considered by many Christians as the beginning of human life.
- **Implantation:** The stage in early embryonic development when the fertilized egg attaches to the wall of the uterus. Some modern definitions have used this as the start of personhood.
- **Hermeneutical Gymnastics:** A term often used critically to describe interpretations of scripture that are seen as forced, convoluted, or distorting the plain meaning of the text to support a pre-determined conclusion.
- **The Fall:** In Christian theology, the event in which Adam and Eve disobeyed God, resulting in sin entering the world and causing a fundamental brokenness and distortion in creation, including human nature.
- **High Taxonomy Discussions:** Complex and detailed discussions involving intricate categorizations and distinctions, often requiring specialized knowledge.
- **Pacifism:** The belief that war and violence are always unjustifiable and that conflicts should be resolved peacefully.

## 5. FAQs on Meadors, Knowing the Will of God, Session 15, Select Illustrations of How to Make Decisions, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

### Frequently Asked Questions on Discerning God's Will

**1. The majority of resources on knowing God's will offer specific steps. How does this lecture series differ in its approach?** This lecture series focuses on developing a system for discerning God's will rather than providing a set of steps. It aims to teach you "how to fish" by emphasizing the importance of a transformed mind, biblical worldview, and value system as the foundation for making godly decisions. The process is presented as one of growth that requires ongoing reading, research, and study, similar to gaining expertise in any professional field.

**2. The lecture mentions different levels of biblical guidance when making decisions. Can you explain these levels and provide an example of each?** The lecture outlines a spectrum of biblical guidance:

- **Direct Bible verses:** These are explicit commands or statements in Scripture that directly address an issue. However, for many modern dilemmas, direct verses are absent.
- **Implied Bible verses:** These are principles or ideas that can be inferred from Scripture and applied to a particular situation, even if not directly mentioned.
- **Creative constructs:** When neither direct nor clearly implied verses exist, believers must develop reasoned conclusions based on their understanding of the overall biblical worldview and value system. This requires careful thought, study, and consideration of various perspectives.

An example of needing a creative construct is the issue of birth control, as the Bible doesn't offer a direct command for or against it in the modern context.

**3. When facing decisions lacking direct biblical commands, what resources or approaches are recommended?** When direct biblical guidance is unavailable, it's crucial to engage in thoughtful reflection informed by a Christian worldview and value system. This includes:

- Studying Scripture to understand overarching principles about life, relationships, and God's character.

- Seeking wisdom from Christian traditions, church teachings, and theological scholarship.
- Consulting experts in relevant fields (e.g., doctors for medical ethics, theologians for biblical perspectives).
- Critically evaluating the sources of information to ensure they are knowledgeable and objective.
- Recognizing that personal biases and selfish desires can influence decision-making.

**4. How does the lecture address complex ethical issues like abortion and euthanasia, where direct biblical texts are debated?** For issues like abortion and euthanasia, the lecture highlights the absence of direct, explicit commands in the Bible as we understand them today. Instead, it emphasizes the need to develop "creative constructs" based on broader biblical principles. This involves considering what the Bible teaches about the value of life, who has the authority over life and death, and how to apply a Christian worldview to these modern contexts. The lecture notes the historical and philosophical shifts in defining when life begins and underscores the importance of understanding the biblical perspective on the sanctity of life.

**5. The lecture touches on contemporary issues like genetic science and transgenderism. How should Christians approach these topics biblically?** When addressing issues like genetic science and transgenderism, where the Bible may not offer direct commentary due to the novelty of the concepts, the lecture advises Christians to reason from established biblical truths. For genetic science, this involves considering the ethics of manipulating life and the potential conflicts with a religious view of life. Regarding transgender issues, the lecture points to the biblical creation of humanity as male and female and biblical teachings on sexuality as foundational principles for discernment, while acknowledging the complexity introduced by the concept of the Fall.

**6. What is the significance of understanding the cultural context of the Bible when interpreting its guidance on various issues?** Understanding the cultural context of the Bible is crucial because practices and societal structures in biblical times often differed significantly from modern contexts. For example, the emphasis on large families in agrarian societies for labor and social security differs from modern economic realities. Recognizing these differences helps in understanding the original intent and application of biblical passages and in discerning how to apply underlying principles to contemporary issues where direct parallels may not exist.

**7. The lecture mentions the "Counterpoints series" of books. Why are resources presenting multiple viewpoints valuable in discerning God's will on complex issues?**

Resources like the Counterpoints series, which present various perspectives on debated topics (e.g., war, homosexuality), are valuable because they offer a range of informed opinions and interpretations. Engaging with different viewpoints encourages deeper study, critical thinking, and a more nuanced understanding of the complexities involved in applying biblical principles to challenging issues. It allows individuals to access well-reasoned arguments and make more informed decisions based on a comprehensive understanding of the different ways Scripture can be interpreted and applied.

**8. Ultimately, what is the ongoing process a Christian should engage in to grow in their ability to discern God's will according to this lecture?** Discerning God's will is not a one-time event but an ongoing process of growth. This involves:

- Continuously developing a biblical worldview and value system through consistent Bible study, research, and theological engagement.
- Cultivating a transformed mind (Romans 12:1-2) that is increasingly aligned with God's perspective.
- Learning to move beyond seeking simple "yes" or "no" answers and engaging in thoughtful reflection and the construction of reasoned judgments on complex issues.
- Seeking wisdom from credible sources and being willing to do the hard work of studying and understanding different perspectives.
- Recognizing that growth in discernment takes time and is not always simple or easy.