

GENERAL SESSION: BIBLICAL MASCULINITY

Having a biblical worldview must encompass one's view of men and women. Basic beliefs about what each sex should be like greatly impacts our own gender evaluations as well as the shaping of our boys and girls, the education of our young men and women, the success of our marriages, the effectiveness of the Church in the world, and even the stability of our society.

1. What Is Masculinity?

a. Reasons for various opinions

- focus on “How do I feel?” rather than truth.
- Wrong views of what a man is (think it means someone who is verbally abusive or Type A or passive)
- Egalitarian push (women can do whatever they want in whatever context)
- Loss of absolutes
 - “All truth is God’s truth” (all truth is equal in certainty and authority)
- BUT: Truth comes in descending order of certainty and authority
 - Revelation: absolute divine truth = 100% certainty and 100% authority
 - Science: “Hard” science, empirical = ?
 - But it changes: even “hard” sciences does different things today than 100 years ago
 - Philosophy & Psychology: a discipline or “soft” science = ??
 - Unsaved people studying unsaved people and telling what is normal.
 - Intuition: Man’s own personal thoughts & feelings = ???
 - Lowest level
 - “I think” or “I feel”
- Today’s culture has flipped the paradigm upside down (now elevates intuition above revelation).

b. A reliable standard is needed (God's Truth Will Lead the Way)'

c. Basic characteristics of masculinity

i. Man was created in God's image (Gen. 1:27).

Genesis 1:27

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

- gender confusion is purely a social construct. It is not scientific but flows from an agenda that is demonic at its source.
 - This is a spiritual warfare against God and His creation.

ii. Man was created a worshipper (Rom. 1:21-25; Jn. 4:23).

Romans 1:21-25

For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.

Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

John 4:23

But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him.

- Man is always worshipping but we were created to worship God.
 - Man may worship other things above God, such as:
 - What people think of us.
 - Our appearance
 - Our pleasure / comfort
- How know you are worshipping something?
 - **Key Questions:**
 - ***What do I sin to get it, or***
 - ***What do I sin when I don't get it?***
 - Ex: why get angry when on the road?
 - Want for yourself perfect order or comfort. The roads are magically empty and have all green lights.
 - Ex: why get angry at end of day?
 - Want comfort and ease at own pleasure. Want everything to go your way and be left alone.
- Truth: We want to grow in our love for God and decrease in our worship for anything other than God.
- What need to do? Repent and be a lover of God. Pursue what is right (not just stop doing something. It takes action.).

iii. Since the Fall, man has been a sinner by nature and by choice (Rom. 3:12, 23).

Romans 3:23

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Titus 3:3

For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another.

- We are all born this way.
 - Slaves to various passions and pleasures
 - Envy = I want to be like the other, I am discontented with what I have

- Transgenderism is rooted in envy

iv. Man is in need of God's saving grace (Jn. 3:16; Ti. 3:4-7).

John 3:16

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

Titus 3:4-7

But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

- The Gospel: Repent & Believe -> Blessing
- Knowledge (cognition) -> Agreement (affection) -> Personal trust (volition)

v. Man was not created self-sufficient but needing God and others (Jn. 15:5; Acts 17:28; Gal. 5:14; Col 1:16; Heb. 4:16).

- Biblical growth involves both loving God and loving others.
 - Cannot separate the two.
- Someone who says they are mature in their walk with God but immature in their walk with God has too high a view of themselves.

John 15:5

I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

Acts 17:28

“‘In him we live and move and have our being’; as even some of your own poets have said, “‘For we are indeed his offspring.’”

Galatians 5:14

For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

Hebrews 4:16

Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

vi. Man was created to be different from woman (Gen. 1:27; Mat 19:4; 1 Cor 11:8-9; Eph 5:22-33).

1 Corinthians 11:8-9

For man was not made from woman, but woman from man. Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man.

- God made us different for our roles and responsibilities.
- Both sexes (male and female) are equal both personally and spiritually.
 - Persons: Both created in the image of God
- While same in person, different in function.

d. Characteristics of the Perfect Man-Jesus Christ

Eternal Mindset

- Did the will and work of the Father (Jn. 4:34; 5:30; Jn. 8:28-29)
 - Not working towards his own success/desires
- Was filled with the Spirit (Word) (Lk. 4:1, 14)
 - Not the world's wisdom/ways
- Gave the gospel to others (Mk. 1:14-15; Jn. 3-4)
 - Not temporary pleasures or relief
- Lived a holy, obedient life (1 Pt. 2:22; Phil. 2:8)
 - Not sinfulness

Love/Understanding

- Sought to meet needs of others (Lk. 4:18-21; Mt. 4:23)
 - Not uncaring/self-focused
- Sacrificed self and own desires (Phil. 2:6-8; Lk. 22:42)
 - Not self-preserving/selfish
- Was gentle whenever possible (Mt. 11:29; Jn. 21:15-19)
 - Not harsh/demanding

Zeal/Courage/Confidence

(because of God and His promises)

- Led the Disciples and others (Lk. 9:6; Jn. 6:2)
 - Not a follower when he shouldn't be
- Showed initiative when He should have (Lk. 6:12-16; Mk. 6:34-44)
 - Not waiting for someone else
- Confronted when necessary (Mk. 11:15-18; Mt. 23:1-36)
 - Not a compromiser/man-pleaser
- Was decisive according to God's revealed will (Mt. 4:1-11; Mk. 8: 31-38)
 - Not wishy-washy or afraid

Conscientiousness

- Fulfilled responsibilities (Jn. 17:4; Jn. 19:30)
 - Not irresponsible
- Was diligent (Jn. 5:17)

- Not lazy or a quitter

Humility

- Served and listened to others in His leadership (Heb. 12:2-3; Jn. 13:12-17; Jn. 6:5-10)
 - Not proudly lording it over others
- Glorified another the Father) (Jn. 8:50,54; Jn. 17:1,4)
 - Not greedy for attention or recognition

e. Characteristics drawn from the qualifications of male leadership in the Church (1 Timothy 3:2-7; Titus 1:6-9).

- Habitual characteristics. Not perfection.

1 Timothy 3:2-7

Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.

Titus 1:6-9

if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.

Titus 2:6

Likewise, urge the younger men to be self-controlled.

- Focus: Self-control
- Note: the average age of a gamer is 35.
- Ex: A husband and wife came in for counseling. He was an incessant gamer. He lost jobs and did not much other than gaming.

f. Role characteristics a man must excel In

1. Leader (Matt. 20:26-28; 1 Cor. 11:3, 7-9; Eph. 5:23-24; Phil. 2:5-8)

2. Lover (1 Corinthians 13; Eph. 5:1-2)

- Love like Christ loved:
 - Giving
 - Gentleness
 - Consideration
 - Kindness
 - Servant hood
 - Purity
 - Self-sacrifice
 - Love when inconvenient and uncomfortable.
 - Difficult but it will help you be more like Jesus.

Matthew 20:28

even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

3. Protector (John 10:11-13; Eph. 5:26-29)

- Physical and spiritual protection.
 - Look after others.
 - Be aware of the dangers and risks in the world.

Acts 20:28

Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.

4. Provider (Psalm 23:1; 2 Thess 3:6-12; 1 Tim. 5:8)

- Qualities:
 - Diligence
 - Personal involvement
 - Servant hood
 - A good/adequate job

Ephesians 4:28

Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.

Galatians 6:9

And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.

2. What tends to keep one from growing in these qualities and fulfilling his God given roles?

- See next General Session

3. What are counterfeit expressions of masculinity?

a. Machismo or Authoritarianism

- Control: can be both godly or ungodly. Not all control is good.
- Not the love of rule but the rule of love.
 - Not “it’s my way or the highway”

b. Passive or Effeminate Men

4. Suggestions and helps for change

- **Deal with relevant heart issues**
 - What is it that I tend to worship above or alongside God?
 - When I am angry, what is it that I am angry about?
 - Put it on your “repent” list.
 - Not just behavior modification. Deal with heart issues.
- **Renew mind against wrong thought patterns.**
 - Think about what you are thinking behind any ungodly habit.
 - Ex: Wife asks “Can you help me out?” But respond with “ok” with a bad tone.
 - Thinking want comfort and ease and a hassle free evening. Thinking hard all day and deserve a break.
 - Behind your behavior is what you want and what you think.
 - If don’t change the heart or mind, merely behavior modification, which is superficial / temporary / ingenuine.
- **Make plans.**
 - See Chart.
 - Where can lead, love, provide, or protect.
 - In areas of:
 - Wife
 - Children
 - Family/relatives
 - Church family
 - At Work
 - Discipleship
 - Evangelism.

Philippians 2:12

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,

- You cannot coast to godliness. It requires effort through the power of the Spirit in you.

Conclusion

So, what does it mean to be a real (biblical) man?

- Understand what God's Word says.
- The mostly manly thing you can do?
 - Possessing saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Rent and belief.
- If a Christian, be more like Jesus tomorrow than today.
 - Definitively capitalize on the key qualities of Biblical masculinity.

Masculinity (mas-kyoo-lin-i-ty): The pursuit and possession of a redeemed life and perspective, growing in and reflecting Christlike character, enhanced by qualities consistent with the distinguishing male roles of leading, loving, protecting, and providing—all for the glory of God.

GENERAL SESSION: LEADERSHIP

We can gain more insight into the kind of men we should be from what God has said concerning male leadership in the church. In the Scriptures we find two very precise lists of positive and negative qualities by which leaders are to be measured: one found in 1 Timothy 3:2-7 and the other found in Titus 1:6-9.

Key Distinction:

- Natural man
 - Self-confident
 - Makes his own decisions
 - Ambitious
 - Originates own methods
 - Motivated by personal considerations
 - Independent
- Spiritual man:
 - Confident in God.
 - Knows God
 - Seeks to follow God's will
 - Follows God's ways out of love for God and love for man.

Truth: Your strength is God's rival

- Your weakness will be His instrument.

2 Corinthians 4:7

But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.

2 Corinthians 12:9

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

- Point of encouragement:
 - The Holy Spirit will energize what He has revealed.
 - When we pray, He will help us to do what He tells us to do.
 - But if we go outside of God's will, we are left on our own.

Philippians 2:13

for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

- We need not be fearful or concerned about perceived inabilities.
- We are all called to be leaders wherever God has ordained us to be.
 - God has graciously given us what we need to lead.

- As a male, how can I fulfill the roles that God has given me to do?
 - Lead, love, protect, and

I. WHAT IS LEADERSHIP?

- Stewardship
 - Stewarding God's-given abilities, gifts, opportunities to influence and serve others.
- Temptation: Give in to the fear of man.
 - More concerned about what other people will think of me. In turn, then be private and isolated.

A. Reasons for various opinions (review)

- Loss of absolutes need God's standard as revealed in His Word.

B. A reliable standard is needed (review)

- God's Word alone is perfect: 100% authoritative and certain.

C. Characteristics drawn from the qualifications of male leadership in the Church (1 Tim 4:16)

D. Role characteristics a man must excel in

It is only by exploring God's intention concerning gender roles that we can know for sure how we should specifically differ from women and display our uniqueness. Herein lies the key to our distinctive qualities. If we understand from Scripture what God intended for a man to do, then it is much easier to determine what characteristics must be maximized.

I. WHAT IS A LEADER? (Mt 20:26-28; 1 Co 11:3, 7-9; Eph 5:23-24; Php 2:5-8)

- **Aspects of leadership:**
 - **Wisdom**
 - **Initiative**
 - **Decisiveness**
 - **Humility**
 - **Encouragement**
 - **Courage**
 - **Personal involvement**

A. Wisdom

- Definition: knowledge applied to a moral end
- Contrast:
 - Average time people spend in God's Word (Lifeway): 5 minutes per day for 20% of those polled.
 - Average time people spent on social media: 9 hours/day

Colossians 1:9-11

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, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy;

Colossians 3:16

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

B. Initiative

- Leadership requires initiative

1 John 4:19

We love because he first loved us.

- As Jesus took the initiative, we are called to do the same.
- It is a learning process. Take small steps as grow.
 - Ex: introduce you and your wife to new people you meet (instead of your wife are introducing the two of you)
 - Mentor others.

Ephesians 4:16

from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

C. Decisiveness

- See next General Session

D. Humility

- Key attribute
 - Oxymoron: Proud leaders (like “wicked saint”)

Philippians 1:27a

Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ,

Philippians 2:1-8 (Jesus’ example of humility)

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

- The Gospel of Jesus should humble you.
 - When reflect what Jesus did on your behalf, we cannot be proud.

Ephesians 4:1-2a

I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility...

- The most effective leaders are those who grow in humility.
- Contrast: Pride
 - Defensiveness
 - Focus on weaknesses of others

Source: https://livinghopechurch.net/cache/Manifestations_of_Pride_by_Stuart_Scott.pdf

E. Encouragement

- Jesus was an encourager as well as many others in the Bible (Paul, Barnabas, etc.)
- Revelation 2-3 (80% were encouragement)
- Look for the things people are doing that are good.
 - It's easy to point out what people don't do well.
- We should be known as people of encouragement.

F. Courage

1 Corinthians 16:13-14

Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love.

- dependently courageous
 - Not on your own strength

G. Personal involvement

- loving people

II. WHAT KEEPS US FROM BEING A LEADER?

Many sins will keep a man from possessing these qualities and fulfilling his God-given roles.

A. Distraction

2 Corinthians 11:3

But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

- “Led astray”
 - Satan's common temptation to draw us away from Christ.

2 Corinthians 11:4

For if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or if you accept a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it readily enough.

- Different “gospels” / different sources of satisfaction will be presented.
- Instead: encourage one another to focus on Christ.

B. Idolatry

- We are easily prone to worship anything other than God.
- Reflection: what causes us to sin?
 - Laziness
 - Comfort
 - Pleasure

III. WHAT IS LEADERSHIP IN THE HOME?

A. Leadership in submission to God with God-given limited authority

- Once you are married, God has endowed on you headship over the home.
- Even if single, God has given you similar characteristics in your context.
 - How can I lead, love, protect others?
- Submission
 - We are all under submission. Men are to first submit to God and what He has ordained.
- God-given limited
 - Every ordained authority God has given has limits. (Romans 13:1)

B. Leadership as a “Shepherd-Leader” (Psalm 23; Matt. 20:26-28; Mark 10:45; John 13:13-17)

1. **A shepherd knows where he is growing.**
2. **A shepherd knows how to lead lovingly.**
3. **A shepherd knows how to initiate with grace.**
4. **A shepherd leads by example.**
5. **A shepherd knows how to oversee.**
6. **A shepherd is involved.**

- Shepherd should smell like sheep: be involved.
- Love the people you lead or speak to.

John 10:14

I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me,

- Objection: it is uncomfortable reaching out to others.
 - Truth: it’s not about you. It’s about loving others. God will help you.

7. **A shepherd is diligent in his responsibility.**

1 Peter 5:2

shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly;

- show leadership in being responsible.
- Reflection: How can I grow in responsibility?
 - Ask people around you what might be the best one. (Wife, parents, etc.)
 - Just start with one area and grow from there.

8. A shepherd protects

- not only physically but also spiritually.
- Reflection: What are you reading?
 - Where are the influences are coming in to distract from sincere devotion to Christ?

John 10:11-13

I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

9. A shepherd provides

- main provider and burden rests on the men's shoulders.
 - A wife can help

10. A shepherd instructs

- but with much humility.
- Your wife is your equal as a person. Not treat her like one of the children (words, tone)

11. A shepherd corrects

Proverbs 27:5-6

Better is open rebuke than hidden love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend; profuse are the kisses of an enemy.

12. A shepherd seeks to restore others

Galatians 6:1

Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.

C. LEADERSHIP AS A 'SERVANT-LEADER'

Matthew 20:26-28

It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Mark 10:45

For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

- Question of reflection for children: Who is the greatest servant in our home?
 - Answer should be Dad (not Mom)

John 13:13-17

You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

D. LEADERSHIP IN ACTION

1. Know your own God-glorifying goals.

- maybe less distractions
- Ex: spend more time each day in prayer than what happens

2. Know the areas to oversee:

a. Her spiritual welfare

Ephesians 5:25-27

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

b. Her decision-making (Col. 1:9-10)

c. Her relationships (Titus 2:3-5)

d. Her ministries (1 Pet. 4:10)

e. Her physical well-being (Eph. 28-29)

3. Know when to act

a. Make sure you have adequate information (Prov. 18:13, 17).

Proverbs 18:13

If one gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame.

Proverbs 18:17

The one who states his case first seems right, until the other comes and examines him.

b. Pray for biblical wisdom (James 1:5)

c. Think through the proper approach

d. Have the right goals (1 Cor. 10:31; 2 Cor 5:9).

e. If at all possible, remember to communicate your reasons and goals (God's glory and the other's good) when you must go against what your wife wants or believes is best (Phil. 2:3-4; Mark 10:32-40; 1 Cor 13:5).

E. Leading an unsaved wife (1 Cor. 7:12-16)

F. Know when to stand strong (1 Cor 16:13; Gal. 1:10)

G. Know how to make God-honoring decisions (Ps. 1; 19:7; Col 1:9-11; 2 Pet. 1:19)

HANDOUT OUTLINE

A GODLY MAN

Must Be

Above reproach (anegkletos, anepileptos): blameless, not able to be accused, having a good reputation

- **Must Not be: A drunkard (paroinos): not addicted to strong drink**

A one-woman man (andra)

- **Must Not be: Violent (plektes): violent, quickly angered, explosively angry**

Sober-minded (nēphalios): temperate, alert, clear-headed, watchful

- **Must Not be: Quarrelsome (amachos): contentious, argumentative**

Self-controlled (sophrōn): in control of thinking, emotions and passions

- **Must Not be: A lover of money (aischrokerdes): covetous, greedy for money, materialistic**

Respectable (kosmios): orderly, in time, in responsibilities and behavior, not chaotic

- **Must Not be: Arrogant (self-willed) rather than a steward (authadas): pushing his own ideas, desires, goals or gain**

Hospitable (philo xenos): welcoming to others, loves strangers, serves others

- **Must Not be: Double-tongued (dilogos): saying two different things to people, gossiping**

Gentle (epieikes): considerate, gracious, patient, kind in dealing with others

- **Must Not be: Quick tempered (orgilos): inclined to anger habitually, soon angry**

Managing his own household well (proistemi): governs, presides over, has authority over, is faithful to lead spiritually, cares for, protects; has children who are not riotous or insubordinate; oversees and/or fulfills affairs of the home

SESSION: DECISION-MAKING (How to Know and Do God's Will)

Introduction

“Wrong ideas about God’s guidance lead to wrong conclusions about the right thing to do.”

- J.I. Packer

It is taking God’s name in vain when apply God in the wrong way and wrong context.

Psalms 119:105

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

John 5:39

You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me,

1. Behind the Scenes (beliefs and practices)

A. The Importance of Knowing and Doing God's Will (Deut 29:29; PS 19:14; 119:105; 143:10; Isa 46:9-10; Mat 12:50; Eph 1:11; 5:17ff; Col 1:9-14; 2 Tim 3: 15-17; Heb 10:36; 13:20-21; 2 Pt 1:3ff; 1 Jn 2:17; 5:14-15)

What does God say about knowing His will

Matthew 12:50

For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.”

Ephesians 5:17

Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

Hebrews 13:20-21

Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

1 John 2:17

And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

- Many passages mention God's will and to do it.
- How do we know it?
 - It is written. It is revealed in His Word.
 - God's revealed will in His Word is the ultimate authority.

B. Beliefs about it and Current Practices

Current practices

- Twist a narrative passage as a principle.
 - Watch out as many are prone to twist out of context.
 - Ex: "promise calendars" (pull out verses out of context)
 - "Name and claim it"

2. The Vital Place of Study, Meditation and Prayer (Accurately Interpreting God's Revealed Will)

A. Principles:2 (With a Redemptive Christo-telic Story Line for God's glory)

Five Key Principles

1. Literal Principle

2. Historical Principle

3. Grammatical Principle (context)

4. Synthesis Principle (correlation: what does all of Scripture say about the topic)

5. Practical Principle (how does it apply to you?)

B. Key Definitions (two aspects of God's Will)

1. God's Will

- Two aspects of it:

a. God's Decretive (Sovereign) Will

- What God has decreed.
- Secret to God alone for His purposes and His plan.

b. God's Preceptive (Revealed) Will

- God's Word is His revealed will.

- We don't know what God has decreed in the future unless it is in the Bible in prophecy.
- I may disobey God's revealed will but will never be outside of God's decreed will.

2. Other Terms

a. **Wisdom** (knowledge of the Bible applied to your life)

- What Scripture is applicable or relevant to your situation?
 - Not an epiphany of some kind.

b. **Mysticism** (subjectivity in the religious realm)

- "It is the essence of mysticism to separate the operation of the Holy Spirit from God's objective Word." (R.B. Kuiper)
- "God laid it on my heart"
 - This is identity theft. Don't put God's name on a thought.

C. **Experience** (intuition, impressions, experiences)

"Discernment is not knowing the difference between right and wrong. It is knowing the difference between right and almost right." (Charles Spurgeon)

3. **WHAT NOT TO DO**

(Examining Popular Ways to Know and Do God's Will (Methods and Motives, some avoid using; others, be cautious of; and the rest do not see as normative for Christians today)

A. **Misusing the Bible**

Hebrews 1:1-2

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.

B. **Personal Advice (without checking it out)**

- Can be good but must be grounded in God's Word and principles

C. **Circumstances / Results**

- Numbers 20: Moses got the result of water but did not wrongly.
- Circumstances should not make your decision.
 - Don't go with the flow.

D. Setting Up Conditions (Fleeces)

- Gideon is not an example in making decisions.
 - He was an example of God's patience.

E. Opened and Closed Doors

- Paul referenced this but it was only about evangelism (open a door to tell people about Jesus)
 - Not about daily decisions.

F. Ideas, Inner Feelings, Desires, and Impressions

- Most common / least talked about in Scripture
- "God laid this on my heart..."
 - Really means = "I have a desire..."

2 Samuel 7:1-3

Now when the king lived in his house and the LORD had given him rest from all his surrounding enemies, the king said to Nathan the prophet, "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in a tent." And Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that is in your heart, for the LORD is with you."

- David had a good desire to build a temple. But he did not consult with God. God revealed David's desire was not right and the timing was wrong.
 - Even good desires need to be checked out with Scripture.

G. "Led by the Spirit"

- Merely a statement of fact (descriptive but not prescriptive).
- Meaning "being sanctified", not an actual directing of decisions.

H. An Audible Voice

- Could be result of medication or unique physical state (lack of sleep, etc.)

I. Misusing Prayer

- Prayer is not you listening but only you talking.

J. Inner Peace

- Some self perceived absence of pause or caution. Very subjective.

K. Devices

- Drawing straws or casting lots.

L. Signs

M. Isolation

Proverbs 18:1

Whoever isolates himself seeks his own desire; he breaks out against all sound judgment.

N. Dreams

O. "Waiting" on the Lord

- Use in Bible means “trusting God and moving forward.”
 - Not passively do nothing.

P. Conscience

Q. Reason (relying on)

R. Pseudo Faith

- Not following Scripture. Coming up with what you think God wants and claiming it as your own.

S. Fasting

- If fast for a day or week, then think it affirms God’s favor on your decision.

T. The "Call" (all subjective & experienced based)

U. Small Group ("...where two or three are gathered...")

V. Prophecy (modern day practice)

W. Over analysis (of the unimportant)

- One spends hours and hours before making a decision.
 - But this is wasting time.

X. Etc.

4. WHAT TO DO

- Examining a Biblical Way to Know and Do God's Will: The Biblical Principles and a Suggested Method

A. Prerequisites for Biblical Decision-Making

1. Be rightly related to Christ by responding to the Gospel of Jesus Christ in context (2 Cor. 5:14-21)

2. Pursue a life of worshipping and glorifying God (John 4:23-24; 2 Cor. 5:9; Phil. 1:21; 3:10-14; Col 1:9-12; 1 Cor 10:31)

3. Recognize God's sovereignty over all (Ps. 115:3,8; Eph. 1:11; Eph. 5:17; James 4:13-16; Prov. 16:9; Rom. 8:28-29).

- God's sovereignty works in sync with (never apart from all His other attributes (e.g. Goodness, Wisdom, etc.).

Proverbs 16:9

The heart of man plans his way, but the LORD establishes his steps.

- We can never depart from God's decreed will.
- Study God's revealed will and be faithful, He will help us.

4. Take responsibility for your choices (Ezk 18).

- God will not obey for you. He will hold you responsible (2 Cor 5:9-10).

B. Methodology and Process (these all interrelate).

1. SUBMIT

- Humbly pray for wisdom as you gather data.

a. Continually have a humble, yielded, and dependent will before God (Rom. 12:1-2).

- This would be reflected in the prayer request "Your Kingdom come, Your will be done...." (Mt.6:10, Luke 22:42). Remember that knowing and doing God's Will is

"so that we might walk worthily as unto the Lord..." Col 1:9-14

b. Continually pray for wisdom

- for the Spirit to assist you in bringing Scripture to apply to the situation (Jas. 1:5).

c. Gather as much factual data as you can to make a wise decision (Prov. 18:13).

- The amount of time spent on this process often depends on the weight of the decision (e.g. Jesus choosing the twelve -Luke 6:12).

2. COMMANDS. (Follow directly - specific guidance)

- Study any direct commands in Scripture concerning this particular issue (2 Tim. 2:15; 3:15-17).
- This may take on the form of positive commands or the form of prohibitions.
 - (Make use of a Bible concordance, Topical Bible (with caution), and other Bible reference books.)

3. PRINCIPLES. (Like a compass - general guidance)

- Study the applicable principles in Scripture concerning this issue (2 Tim. 2:15; 3:15-17).
- Wisdom is at its purest in Scripture and then starts to rely more on human reasoning, advice and experience after that (obviously less reliable).
- This is one of the most neglected areas of decision making. (many of these questions below are from The Discipline of Grace, Jerry Bridges, 213)

1. WALK WITH CHRIST

- Is this something I can thank God for? (Rom. 14:6; 1 Cor. 10:30; Col. 3:17)

- **Is this something that will glorify God? (1 Cor. 10:31; 2 Cor. 5:9)**
- **Is this following the example of Christ? (Rom. 15:7-8; 1 Cor. 11:1; 1 John 2:6)**
- **Is this beneficial? Does it promote my spiritual life?**
- **Is this a practice that over time will tend to master me? Will it stimulate a desire that will be difficult to control?**
- **Is this an occasion where my "flesh (sinfulness) is seeking to indulge itself? (Gal. 5:13)**

2. INFLUENCE ON OTHERS

- Is this worth imitating?

- (1 Cor. 11:1; Phil. 4:9)
- **Are you not seeking outside counsel due to wanting what you want?**
 - (Prov 18:1-2; 24:6)
- **Is it self-serving at the expense of someone else's benefit?**
 - (Rom. 15:1-2; 1 Cor. 10:33; Gal. 5:13; Phil. 2:1-4)
- **Will my choice affect others around me? If so, in what way?**

- **Is it constructive?**

Will it promote the spiritual well-being of other believers if they engage in this practice that is permissible for me?

3. NEED (Is there a God-given need to pursue this?)

- **Is there a God-given need for me to do this? (1 Jn.3: 17-18, Acts 6:1-6, 2 Cor.2:12-13)**

- Every need is a divine calling but evaluate how to meet it.

4. OPPORTUNITY

- **Is there an opportunity to do this?**

- Does God appear to be orchestrating circumstances (Providence) to provide you with the opportunity to do this? (2 Cor.2:12-13, Gal.6:10)
- **DESIRES... Affirm that your desires are God-honoring (Ps. 37:4; John 15:7).**
- What do I want ("wish") to do? Will it bring glory to God? (1 Cor. 7:36,39, 10:24,31)

5. If you still can't decide, then HOLD:

a. Rom. 14:23; Heb. 11:25

- ("holding principle" = if it involves the troubled conscience - you might possibly sin in moving ahead)

b. Possibly go back and gather more data

- both in the initial data gathering or in the commands and principles of Scripture.

6. DECIDE... Humbly and dependently make your decision and trust God (Prov. 16:9, Acts 16:7)

5. Practically Applied

A. Key Issues within Life and Marriage

- Further Education
- Choosing a church
- Choosing where to serve at church
- Vocation Choices
- Schooling Choices
- Singleness or Marriage
- Renting vs buying a house
- When to have children
- Relocation (Job, Church, Family)

- Birth Control (non-abortive)
- Finances (spending, saving and giving)
- Buying a car
- Caring for Parents)
- Dealing with In-laws
- Transitioning to being an in-law
- Transitioning to "empty nest"
- Parenting adult children
- Wayward children
- Dealing with chronic illness
- Etc.

B. DECISION-MAKING PRINCIPLES

Stewardship

- **Finances (2 Cor 8-9; avoiding debt - Ps 37:21; Pr 22:7)**
- **Time (Ps 90:12; Eph 5:16)**
- **Priorities (Martha and Mary, Luke 10:38-42; Jer 2:13; Rev 2:5)**
- **Rest and Margin (Ex 20:8-11; Prv 21:20; 22:3; Paul in Acts - weeks to months in between the verses)**
- **Exercise (Self-control like an athlete - 1 Cor 9:27)**
- **Eating (Eccl 10:16-17; Col 2:16; 2 Thess 3:6-15; 1 Tim 4:3-5)**
- **etc.**

Working

- **Created for (Ex 20:8-11)**
- **Attitude while working (Col 3:17, 23-24)**
- **Provision (1 Tim 5:8; Eph 5:29)**
- **to give to others (Generosity - Eph 4:25; 1 Jn 3:17)**
- **to save (Prov 6:6; 30:25)**

Relationship principles

- **Communication (Proverbs, Eph 4:25-32)**
- **Conflict resolution (Rom 12:18; Eph 4:25-32)**
- **Loving and serving (putting other's interests before self - Phil 2:1-11)**
- **Who to marry (as a Christian) - 1 Cor 7:29; 2 Cor 6:14**

Put off and put on principles (Eph 4:22-31; Col 3)

Hospitality (commands and principles) - Heb 13:2; 1 Pt 4:9

Self-control (1 Cor 9:27; Titus 2:11-14)

Seek godly counsel (Prv 15:22)

Being humble and teachable (Ps 32:8-9; Ps 99; Phil 2:1-11)

Honor and respecting others (Rom 12:10)

Contentment (Ex 20:17; Mat 6:25; Phil 4:11-12; Heb 13:5)

Walk on earth with eternal focus (Matt 6:33; 2 Cor 4: 16-18; Heb 12:1-3)

• Etc.

CONCLUSION

Will you seek to please the Lord Jesus more in your daily decisions?

Will you diligently study and meditate on God's Word concerning your decisions?

What decision are you facing right now that you need to put more time and effort into examining what God's Word says before moving ahead?

Have you made a major decision lately that you need to re-evaluate in light of God's commands and principles?
