

WALKING  
IN THE WILL  
OF GOD

STEVE MCVEY



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## WALKING IN THE WILL OF GOD

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## The End of Agonizing



“I DON’T KNOW WHAT TO DO,” Trent told me after I had spoken at his church one Sunday. “There’s a good chance I might be offered a position with a new company where my salary would be almost twice what it is now, which of course is very attractive. On the other hand, I love the job I have now, and I’m afraid to give it up for something new that I could end up not enjoying nearly as much.

“If I could only *know* what God’s will is for me, I would do it without hesitating. I’m just not sure. If I could be sure, I’d be willing to go either way. I just need to know.”

Trent’s situation and question are very much like those we all seem to face regularly in our lives. We want to do the will of God. We certainly don’t want to miss it, but how can a person know for sure what God’s will is in any given situation? The idea of making a wrong choice, which could put us on the wrong track in life, is a scenario none of us want to see come about. How, though, can we be sure? As I travel and speak in various places, this is a question I am often asked.

There are probably many reasons why this question weighs so heavily on people’s minds. Maybe it does on yours. In my years of talking to believers, I’ve found that their concerns about finding the will of God fall into three main areas.

**Big reason #1.** To start with, there's *the burden of simply having to decide*. The consequences of our choices can be so many and so devastating that we naturally feel anxiety over our ability to know and do the right thing. Many people are like Trent in their perspective. On the one hand, they know what their life is like right now, and there's nothing happening that would motivate them to seek a change. It's not that hard to make a decision for change if the circumstances you're in aren't what you want, but when everything is okay it becomes easy to follow the "leave well enough alone" mind-set. In one of our discussions about his options, Trent said to me, "Maybe I just shouldn't rock the boat." This perspective betrays a subtle fear about change in life, but Trent certainly isn't in a minority here. Underlying fears have paralyzed many people, keeping them from moving forward in life.

On the other hand, these same people want to be open to the possibility that God may have bigger and better things in store for them. If that's what is going on when they are faced with the potential of a move, they don't want to miss out. So they find themselves at a place where making a decision is, in and of itself, a stressful place to be. *Do I do it or not do it?* Just in itself, that's often a challenging question.

**Big reason #2.** How to understand God's will also often triggers a sense of anxiety in people because of *misconceptions regarding what God wants and expects from us*. If we have wrong ideas about expectations He may have for us, we will be stuck when it comes to confidently making life-altering decisions. After all, we certainly don't want to mess up. Some people think they have to find God's will by determining the exact spot in the universe where He wants them to stand so they can do the exact thing He has in mind for them. To make matters worse, they think it is up to them to figure it all out for themselves. What a burden! That kind of viewpoint will cause anybody to be nervous and tentative about life.



It's all up to Him. The word for that kind of situation is...grace!

As you move through this book, you will see that God never intended for us to live like that. In the chapters ahead, you are going to find yourself being set free from fears about the future based on decisions you make today. You will be pleased to discover how to make choices grounded in a calm confidence that your loving Father isn't going to let you make some foolish decision now that is going to wreck His perfect plan for you later. God is bigger than you, and He loves you enough to make sure that you discover His plan for you. It's up to Him, not you, to make it happen. Take note of that statement: It's all up to *Him*. The word for that kind of situation is...grace!

*Grace* means *He* does what needs to be done and you simply live in faith, as the beneficiary of His actions. You just respond to Him. That's it. Knowing how to do that is what this book is about.

**Big reason #3.** Additionally, many people are stressed out over knowing God's will due to *the common belief that His plan is mysterious*—so mysterious that it takes some kind of miraculous breakthrough in order to find exactly what it is. If we should miss that plan, we fear that it is gone forever and we will never recover from the loss. No wonder we feel anxiety and pressure! However, that's simply not the way it is and, again, you'll come to understand the truth about this issue as you move ahead in your reading.



It amazes me how many Christians live with the fear they are going to miss God's best for their lives. The encouraging truth is, God *does* have a specific plan for you that He wants to fulfill through you. The best news, though, is that it's not up to you to figure out that plan. It's up to Him to *reveal* it to you. And He will!

You may find what you're going to read here about knowing God's will to be different from what you've heard or read on the subject in the past. This book is a grace-book, and that perspective is going to make all the difference in how you perceive and pursue God's will for your life.

As Christians walking in grace, we don't have to agonize about whether or not we are going to miss God's will. Our God is completely capable of making His plan clear to us and then enabling us to fulfill that plan. Not only is He capable of showing us, He is *eager* for us to know His will. Those two facts ensure a winning combination!

Are you ready to discover how you can confidently walk in the will of God? Before you begin the first chapter, why not pause now and ask your Father to enable you to set aside any faulty preconceived ideas about how to know His will? Ask Him to reveal biblical truth to you concerning this subject.

It's true: Your Father has a plan in mind for you. It's a great plan, because great plans are the only kind He can design. Do you want to discover and do what He has designed for you? Open your mind and your heart, and let's begin with a basic truth that deals with understanding who is in control of your life.

## Remember Who Is in Charge



“TRENT, I WANT TO ASK YOU A QUESTION,” I said to the friend I introduced a few pages ago. “How did you get the job you have now?”

“Well, it was really strange in some ways,” he answered. “My sister was dating a guy who worked for the company I’m at now. She happened to mention to him one day that I was looking for a job in computer graphics. He told her that, just within the past few days, he had heard something about their computer graphics guy resigning to go back to school.”

“So you sent in your résumé?” I asked.

“I didn’t have to,” Trent continued. “My sister’s boyfriend told his boss about my degree in computer graphics and gave me a glowing recommendation. The boss asked him to have me call for an interview. The first time he saw my résumé was when I handed it to him in person.”

“And, as they say, the rest is history?” I asked.

“Yep, that’s pretty much it. He liked me from the get-go and asked me to come back for a second interview with his boss, who also liked me enough that he offered me the job on the spot.”

“Wow, that’s great,” I continued. “I’m curious—is your sister still dating that guy?”



“No, they only went out a few times.”

“Hmm...sounds like God may have been more interested in you having a great job than your sister having a great date,” I said with a chuckle.

As we talked, I encouraged Trent to realize that, just as God had worked through his circumstances to get him into his current job, He could do the same thing with this opportunity. “God stopped your sister from going forward with the guy she was dating, right?” I asked him.

“Yes,” he answered.

“And God caused you to start a new job?”

“That’s right.”

“So it sounds like, as the saying goes, the stops and steps of a person are ordered by the Lord,” I continued.

As we discussed it further, Trent began to see the big picture. The fact is, it isn’t up to us to make things happen or to keep things from happening because, when it comes to how our life unfolds, it really isn’t about us. *God* is in control. The best part of that truth is, He will always work out the details of our life for His own glory and our highest good. That’s just the kind of God He is!

To put it another way, yours is a graced life, which means that God assumes the responsibility for revealing His will to you. It isn’t a matter of being smart enough, careful enough, or even spiritual enough to figure it all out. *You* aren’t the one who has to be sure that you do His will. That’s *His* role. As I’ve already pointed out, that’s why it’s called *grace*. He does it all.



*You aren't the  
one who has  
to be sure that  
you do His will.  
That's His role.*

## Is Anyone Really “Independent”?

In the Psalms, there is a great passage that assures us of God’s ability to see to it that we find out and follow His will.

The LORD has established His throne in the heavens,  
And His sovereignty rules over all.  
Bless the LORD, you His angels,  
Mighty in strength, who perform His word,  
Obeying the voice of His word!  
Bless the LORD, all you His hosts,  
You who serve Him, doing His will.  
Bless the LORD, all you works of His,  
In all places of His dominion;  
Bless the LORD, O my soul.

—Psalm 103:19-22

David tells us in this passage that God is able to cause us to fulfill His will, and that His will *will* be done. Look again at verse 19: “The LORD has established His throne in the heavens, and His sovereignty rules over all.” What a difference from how many people see things! The philosophy of the world suggests that man somehow determines his own destiny based on *his* abilities, *his* goals, and *his* self-confidence in achieving those goals. The Psalm quoted above also says,

As for man, his days are like grass;  
As a flower of the field, so he flourishes.  
When the wind has passed over it, it is no more,  
And its place acknowledges it no longer.

—Psalm 103:15-16

It is foolish for any of us to think we can determine our own destiny apart from God! At best, man apart from God is a wilting flower—here today and gone tomorrow.

And yet, many still believe they can independently decide their own destiny. You can go to any bookstore and find shelves filled with books telling you that you create your own destiny. These self-help books have gone so far as to tell us that if our minds can conceive it and we can believe it, then we can achieve it. How absurd. Only Almighty God has that kind of sovereign power. Jesus told His followers, “Apart from

Me you can do nothing” (John 15:5). However, it is equally true that “I can do all things *through Christ* who strengthens me” (Philippians 4:13 NKJV).

The world tells us that we, in and of ourselves, can do anything. The Christian knows better. The value of anything we do apart from Christ adds up to nothing. However, as we depend upon Him and recognize His authority and guidance over our lives, we can accomplish supernatural feats in this life.

We understand that God has given us our lives and has a unique purpose for each of us. The question for most Christians, therefore, is not *whether* God has a plan for us. The issue revolves around *how we can know* what that plan is, and *how we can live* in the center of God’s will for our lives.

Let’s begin at the center, the appropriate starting place in any scenario of life, by considering a fundamental question.

## Just Who Is in Charge?

Anywhere you go in life, somebody has to be in charge. If there is absolutely no ruling presence in a situation, chaos exists. We know that God did not create, and does not promote, chaos. He is a God of logic, reason, and order, and He created a world of order. This world and its inhabitants don’t live in some sort of helter-skelter, nonsensical realm without order or purpose. God is the One in charge, and the Scripture says that His reign extends over *all*. Don’t be deceived about this point: “All” means *all*. There is no hidden place in this immense universe where God does not have control even to the minutest detail. He is God, and He is supreme.

As Trent began to understand this truth, he decided to go ahead and finish the interview process for the new job possibility. During the course of the process, he began to sense a few personality issues in his potential new boss that didn’t sit well with him. That was enough for him to realize he didn’t want to make the move.

Later, when he explained to me what had happened, he said, “I

initially felt a little disappointed that the job wasn't the chance of a lifetime I had hoped it would be. On the other hand, the process did encourage me by helping me to see that, just like you and I discussed, God can stop us from moving in a wrong direction just as easily as He can start us moving in a right direction."

In the end, though it didn't lead to a new job, Trent was thankful for the experience. Through it, the truth was more firmly established in his mind that God really is in control. It's not up to us to make anything in life happen. Our only role is to calmly trust Him, knowing that, when the time comes for something to happen to move us further toward the fulfillment of His will for us, He will see to it that we are in the right place at the right time and will make the right decision.

To think we are the captains of our own destiny is not only a lack of faith—it is a symptom of pride. God's plan is that we yield ourselves to Him in humble submission, knowing He will guide us into His will.

### *Nobody Is Bigger than God*

The fourth chapter of Daniel records the "education" of a totally arrogant king, Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. Having been firmly put in his place by God, he humbly acknowledges that the Lord alone is sovereign.

All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing,  
But He does according to His will in the host of heaven  
And among the inhabitants of earth;  
And no one can ward off His hand  
Or say to Him, "What have You done?"

—Daniel 4:35

God is going to get His way. Make no mistake about it; He is in complete charge of everything. If He isn't, then He is in charge of nothing, in which case we might as well "eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die." The fact is, He *is* in control. He is in charge of the universe and everything in it.

Psalms 22:28 says, "He rules over the nations." God sets up

kingdoms; He overthrows empires; He determines the course of dynasties, according to what best pleases Him.

We are often impressed, even awed, at what we call human achievement. We can see examples from ancient history, like the empires of Alexander or Caesar. Contemporary examples abound in nations, corporations, or organizations that are prominent in the news. But none of them impress God.

You have rebuked the nations, You have destroyed the wicked;  
You have blotted out their name forever and ever.  
The enemy has come to an end in perpetual ruins,  
And You have uprooted the cities;  
The very memory of them has perished.  
But the LORD abides forever; He has established  
His throne for judgment,  
And He will judge the world in righteousness;  
He will execute judgment for the people with equity.

—Psalm 9:5-8

As I've traveled the world speaking over the past years, I've seen the evidence of man's greatest achievements. I've stood on the Great Wall of China. I've walked through the Taj Mahal in India. I've seen the ancient ruins of the Incas in Peru and the Mayas in Mexico. In Japan and Korea, I've stood outside temples made from pure gold. Across the world, on every inhabited continent, there have been many "great civilizations," some of which lasted hundreds of years. They once were impressive; now they are neglected ruins. Things made by humans pass away, but God and His Word are forever.

It's no wonder the apostle Paul referred to God as "the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords" (1 Timothy 6:15). God asks nobody's advice or permission about anything. He does what He wants and, as much as we may wish otherwise, He doesn't have to explain His reasoning to us.

Somebody bigger than us is in charge! Any meaningful discussion about knowing and doing God's will must begin with this

understanding. This leads to two foundational truths that will guide us in our investigation. We will examine the first here, and then take up the second in the next chapter. Both of these truths point us toward God, not man.

## God's Rule over Everything Includes *You*

To say that I'm not very good with directions would be an understatement. In fact, I often tell people, "I know left from right, but I don't speak compass." It is ridiculously bad—once, when somebody in a strange town mocked me for not knowing which direction was east by reminding me that it's where the sun comes up, I jokingly responded, "I haven't been in this town when the sun came up!" I remind myself that there are other things I'm good at, which proves I'm not a complete moron.

On one such occasion, I was trying to find my way to a location in a town I'd never visited. Somebody had given me directions, and I was driving along trying to find the spot. I had been told to begin in a certain direction, turn south, and continue for six miles to my destination. My male ego wouldn't let me admit that I didn't know one direction from another.

After exiting the road and driving for ten miles, I knew I had done something wrong. I eventually discovered that instead of turning south, I had turned north. Maybe it's some sort of mental wiring that has short-circuited in me. Whatever the cause, that old, familiar feeling of being lost began to rise in me yet again, despite the fact I had tried so hard.

### *Do You Need to Make a Turnaround?*

I had meant well. I was sincere, but I could never succeed by going in the wrong direction. That's the way it is in determining the will of



He's in charge.  
That's a fact you  
can't afford to miss.

God for our lives. If we fail to look toward His sovereign control—if we choose to look in another direction—we will never find the satisfaction of living confidently in His will. We will never be sure about knowing His plan for our lives if we don't realize that the Lord Himself is the source for revealing His will.

What do we mean when we say that God is *sovereign*? In defining *sovereignty*, the dictionary uses descriptions like “supreme excellence”... “supreme power”... “freedom from external control; autonomy; controlling influence.” All of these are true to the ultimate degree when it comes to God. He's in charge. That's a fact you can't afford to miss.

Why do we begin this subject with the sovereignty of God? Because it is unavoidable and inescapable! If God rules the universe and everything in it—and *you are in it*—then God's rule extends over *you* too.

I once heard somebody tell about the time he'd talked to a trapeze artist in the circus. He had watched the man swing high above the ground, doing twists and turns, hanging upside down, and doing other amazing tricks. What surprised him was the perspective of the trapeze artist about the net below.

“I guess the fact that there is a net beneath you is something you're always aware of,” he remarked to the circus performer.

“Why so?” asked the man.

“Well, I'm sure that when you're up there doing such daring tricks, you are constantly aware you could fall,” he continued.

“No, not at all,” the performer answered. “I never think about falling. In fact, I don't even think about the net. I know it's there, but I don't think about it. I used to, but now I guess the unconscious awareness that it would catch me if I were to fall just gives me the courage and boldness to attempt things I never would have tried otherwise.”

This man didn't do his circus routine thinking constantly about the possibility of falling. The underlying awareness of the safety net emboldened him to do his thing with confidence. He was empowered by that perspective.

The fact is, we have a safety net under us because we have the Holy

Spirit in us. The Spirit of Christ is our internal Guide. This guarantees that we are able to walk in the will of God. When you understand the meaning of grace, it takes the pressure off.

We don't have to go through life praying, "Catch me if I fall," over and over again. When we come to rest in the reality that our loving and sovereign God is always there for us, it instills in us a boldness to live more courageously and daringly than we would ever live otherwise. Knowing that God is in control isn't primarily about knowing what would happen if we fall. It's about learning to live life with gusto—or "more abundantly," to use the words of Jesus (see John 10:10).

You don't have to be afraid that you will fall by missing God's will, because it is not up to you to find it or to fulfill it. You can relax about the idea that you may fall out of it. *It's up to God to reveal His will to us and to keep us in it*, and He will do it. If God rules everything, and God rules you, then you don't have to worry about getting out of His will.

### *The Whole Creation Is Glad He Made It*

God rules as Creator of all things. In Revelation 4:11 we can read one of the hymns that will be sung in heaven, words that are being sung in heaven even now:

Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory  
and honor and power; for You created all things, and  
because of Your will they existed, and were created.

What a song! God willed the physical universe to exist, and so it did. Why did God create the universe? Proverbs 16:4 tells us that "the LORD has made everything for His own purpose." He did it for one simple reason—because it was what He wanted. The psalmist said, "He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast" (Psalm 33:9).

The universe exists because it was the will of God. The stars don't hang up there on nothing. They are held in place by the will of an omnipotent God. The tide at the beach doesn't just coincidentally stop



at its boundaries and return to the sea. It is ordered back by divine design. The earth isn't spinning on its axis because of its own momentum. That's the will of God at work. He designed it that way. The inanimate world in which we live conforms to the will of God.

This is why many of the psalms celebrate God's creation: from the stars and planets to the earth and sea; from the cycles of the seasons to the living creatures. As John Calvin wrote, "There is not one little blade of grass, there is no color in this world that is not intended to make men rejoice." He liked to refer to nature as "the theater of God's glory." Martin Luther felt the same, and remarked, "But I can't understand what must be in a man's mind if he doesn't feel seriously that there is a God when he sees the sun rise."

These believers are responding to God's self-revelation in creation. They are following the example of David, who wrote, "The heavens are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands" (Psalm 19:1). These are examples of the only proper response to seeing a glimpse of the greatness of God, which is to bow in humble worship.

### *He's Not Worried that Things Will Go Awry*

All these things exist and occur simply because they are God's will. But not only is He Creator of all things; He rules as *Sustainer* of all things. In contrast, *Deism* is the belief that "God" somehow started up this whole universe, but since then has left it to run on its own; that He "wound it up, turned it loose, and let it go." Now He's just watching it run down. That's not what the Christian believes, and that's not what the Bible teaches.

The writer of Hebrews asserts that not only did the Son of God create the world, but He also "upholds all things by the word of His power" (Hebrews 1:3). In the same vein, Paul says of Christ that "in Him all things hold together" (Colossians 1:17). God did not create the world, set it in motion, and walk away, waiting for it to run out of steam. The Word of God declares that God is *actively involved* in the ongoing affairs of the world.

Isaiah 46:9-10 says,

I am God, and there is no other;  
I am God, and there is no one like Me,  
Declaring the end from the beginning,  
And from ancient times things which have not  
been done,  
Saying, "My purpose will be established,  
And I will accomplish all My good pleasure."

If God has declared the end from the beginning, then He is the Lord of history and has planned it all. "History" is truly *His story*. He says He will carry out all His will on this planet. To hear some people talk, you'd think God was sitting on His throne in heaven, rocking back and forth and fighting off an anxiety attack about what's going on in the world. But that conception is completely foreign to what the Bible teaches. God is absolutely sovereign, sovereign over every person, and He will use every person who ever lived to accomplish the Divine Plan He has for this universe.

## God Is Even Sovereign over Evil

"Hold on a minute!" Loren said to me one day. "You don't really mean to say that God will use everybody, do you? There have been many wicked people in the world. Are you saying that God could use a man like Hitler or other monstrous people to accomplish His purpose?"

"Loren, it really comes down to one question," I responded. "Is God in control or is He not?"

"But God can't do evil!" Loren countered. "He gave man a free will."

"So are you suggesting that man sometimes does things that get the best of God and leave Him on the losing side?" I persevered. "Loren, make no mistake about it—God can't do evil. It isn't in His nature. However, He has chosen to allow evil to exist while He weaves it into

His greater purposes. Man is always responsible for the evil he chooses to do, and yet God remains in total control of the overall plan. Both are true at the same time.”

I think Loren’s problem was that he wanted to make sense of it all. But that’s just not possible sometimes in this world. His argument for man’s “free will” is a weak one when compared to the biblical teaching of a sovereign God who is in total control. When it comes down to who ultimately wins—man’s will or God’s word—I’ll go with God’s word every time.

### *Don’t Give Free Will Too Much Credit*

The truth is, this whole idea of man’s free will is overrated. By that, I mean that no man or woman who has ever been born is going to make a decision that trumps God’s eternal purposes. When it is all said and done, whatever happens is what God wanted to happen. Otherwise, God has made His desires subservient to man’s desires. God doing what man wants? The very idea is a slap in the face of His sovereignty.

When I look at events like the Nazi Holocaust, or the 9/11 attacks, or other horrible things that happen in this world, I can make no more sense out of them than anybody else. The fact is, though, we don’t *have* to make sense out of them. What we can do is to trust God in the midst of them. When this world has ended and we see things from the perspective of the One who is “all in all,” it will all make sense then. For now, however, all we can do is trust. To insist on more than trust is to insist on control, and we aren’t in control—God is. That fact shouldn’t disturb us. To the contrary, it should encourage us.

Speaking of evil people, consider Judas. In Scripture he is called “the son of perdition”—literally, the son of hell. If we had been witness to



When it is all said and done, we will be left with a God who was never blindsided by anything.

what Judas did and then saw the resulting crucifixion of Jesus, there is no way we could have come to the conclusion that it was God's will, but it was. God used even the evil choice Judas made, didn't He? The most evil act of betrayal in history helped bring about the most important event in human history—our salvation in Jesus Christ. As much as anybody who has ever lived, the life of Judas shows that there is no evil person or evil circumstance that can frustrate God in His eternal plan.

We neither have to defend or explain what God allows in this life. Somehow, when it is all said and done, we will be left with a God who was never blindsided by anything that happened throughout the history of this world. To the contrary, He will have somehow fit together all the pieces, from the most beautiful to the most ugly, into the panorama of the ages He has designed.

### *Nobody Scares God*

God isn't intimidated by evil. Nor is He reacting to evil men by putting out fires they've started. He is bigger than that. It is no problem in the slightest for Him to turn evil around and use it creatively to accomplish His will.

Think about the other people who put Jesus on the cross. It was unspeakable evil in action, but God worked it into the fabric of His great tapestry. It fit right in with His sovereign plan for the universe. Out of the depths of such evil, God worked the greatest good man has ever known!

In a way that our finite minds can't grasp, human responsibility and divine sovereignty held hands and walked together when Jesus died. As the apostle Peter speaks of Jesus Christ during his sermon on the Day of Pentecost, he affirms how both fit together:

This Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to the cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death. But God raised Him up again (Acts 2:23-24).

Do you see how the two fit together? Human beings were completely

responsible for crucifying the Son of God. “You nailed [Him] to the cross,” Peter said. But God was sovereign over even this, and in fact, had planned it before the foundation of the world: Christ was “delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God.” We do have an awesome God!

So what about all the evil people in the world? They don’t intimidate God, and they cannot evade God’s rule over them. The Bible is clear that even evil will one day bow in submission to God’s sovereign rule over His creation.

## Everyone Will Own Up to God’s Sovereignty

Concerning all moral beings—evil people and faithful believers alike, and angelic beings, both good and evil—God has determined “that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:10-11).

Evil people cannot and will not thwart God’s plan. At the proper time, all without exception will acknowledge the sovereign God and His Son Jesus Christ—the only difference being that some do it now, while others will do it later. But at the end of the day, *all* will bow and confess.

God is sovereign. I repeat myself, and I do it purposely, to help counter the resistance I know by experience is in so many people’s minds. Nothing catches God by surprise. *Nothing*. There has never been an occasion where something slipped past Him so that He had to come up with a “Plan B.” God has never once said, “Oops,” or asked, “*Now* what am I going to do?”

Remember, God created *time itself*. He is transcendent. He stands above time, over time, so that He sees the end from the beginning and everything between. In His eternal Now, He knows every decision made by every man and woman who ever lived or will ever live. He sees every event that will unfold. And from the perspective of eternity,

He is able to work in such a way that every action that takes place in the universe, from beginning to end, will contribute toward the fulfillment of His sovereign plan.



It may seem strange that I begin a study on knowing and doing the will of God with this emphasis on His sovereignty, but this has to be the starting place. I am laying the essential foundation upon which you can build a house of faith, a foundation from which you can know the will of God with certainty and be able to carry it out with enthusiasm.

As we proceed, keep the statement I have made in mind: God rules the universe and all that is in it...*and you are in it!* God rules. He rules over everything, and that means you don't have to be fearful. I meet so many Christians who are afraid. They ask, "Pray for me that I don't miss the will of God." I usually answer by asking, "Is your heart directed toward the Lord? Are you depending on Christ? Are you resting in Him?"

"Yes," they answer.

"Do you know that Jesus Christ is your very Life?"

"Yes."

"So then, what are you worrying about?" I ask. "You have a sovereign God who is in control of every event that happens in this universe. You have the life of Jesus Christ in you to empower you to do the will of the Father. You have the Holy Spirit in you to guide you into His will. What are you worried about?"

I often think that if we would give the Lord as much credit for His capacity to keep us *in* His will as we do our enemy, the devil, for his ability to influence us to fall *out* of God's will, we could move forward through life with a lot more boldness and confidence!

Why is it that some people are not comforted by the knowledge that God is sovereign and that He is in control of all things? People sometimes privately wonder, *What if His purposes for me aren't good?*

*What if this happens or what if that happens? How can I know He has my best interests at heart?*

Those questions point to the topic of the next chapter. The door that leads to our conscious experience of God's will swings on this hinge. Though God is in charge and that's an objective fact, in order to feel the truth of that fact in your own experience, you have to swing the door wide open on this hinge. What is it? *Trust*—a small word with huge ramifications.

### ❁ G.R.A.C.E. GROUP QUESTIONS ❁

A G.R.A.C.E. (Giving & Receiving Affirmative Christian Encouragement) Group is any gathering of people who meet together to encourage and strengthen each other in the grace of God. Use these discussion questions, which you'll find at the end of each chapter, to facilitate further learning and discussion. As you consider them, the truths of this book will be worked more deeply into your life. If you aren't a member of a small group, answer the questions on your own by writing a brief response to each one.

1. Read Psalm 103:19. How would you define the word “all” in that verse? Does God rule over everything in this world? In what sense does He “rule” over the people and affairs we encounter in this life, when it seems that so many wrong choices are made in this world?
2. Have you ever read any self-help books that teach that all people are capable of determining their own destinies? Which one of the

books you may have read comes to mind? What was the main message of that book? How does this chapter contradict the secular approach to accomplishing great things in our lives? Read Isaiah 31:1, Psalm 20:7, and Zechariah 4:6. What do these verses say about this subject?

3. Put Daniel 4:35 in your own words. Write a version of the verse in such a way that it makes application to the circumstances of your own life.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. When we believe that the sovereignty of God over our lives is a safety net for us, how might this change the way we live? Read Psalm 48:14. How might that truth affect a person who is deciding where to attend school? Which career path to pursue? Who to marry? Which local church to participate in? What is another verse that encourages us about God's sovereignty over the details of our lives?



