



## Divine Guidance

Divine guidance is the believer understanding the will of God for their life and applying those principles, commands, techniques, doctrines, and promises found in the Word of God to life's experiences under the filling of God the Holy Spirit. There is no divine guidance apart from learning the Word under the ministry of the Holy Spirit and thereby growing spiritually. Every believer should become spiritually mature in determining God's will for their life. Isaiah 58:11; Eph. 5:17; Rom. 8:14; 1 Cor. 2:16.

*"And the LORD will continually guide you, And satisfy your desire in scorched places, And give strength to your bones; And you will be like a watered garden, And like a spring of water whose waters do not fail." (Isaiah 58:11, NASB)*

*"So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is." (Ephesians 5:17, NASB)*

*"For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God." (Romans 8:14, NASB)*

*"For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, THAT HE WILL INSTRUCT HIM? But we have the mind of Christ." (1 Corinthians 2:16, NASB)*

God's Word is divided into principles, commands, techniques, doctrines, and promises. The Bible is the only source of the known will of God for mankind. Knowing the will of God results in the renewing of the believer's thinking. This renewing lines the believer's thinking with the will of God. In Romans 12:2, "good" is divine good, "acceptable" means well pleasing, and "perfect" means complete.

*"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." (Romans 12:2, NASB)*

To grow spiritually, the believer must learn to yield to the will of God. This is done only in the filling of the Holy Spirit. The only means of ensuring you are filled with the Holy Spirit includes confession of known sins to God the Father using 1 John 1:9. The result of yielding is a right mental attitude based on the *epignosis* Bible doctrine in your soul. 1 John 1:9; Rom. 12:1; Rom. 6:13; Eph. 5:18; Heb. 12:1-2.

*"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9, NASB)*

*"Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship." (Romans 12:1, NASB)*

*"and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God." (Romans 6:13, NASB)*

*"And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit," (Ephesians 5:18, NASB)*

*"Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."*



*(Hebrews 12:1-2, NASB)*

It is impossible to yield to the will of God until you know the Word of God. It is also impossible to do the will of God until you have the power to execute it, which power is provided only by the filling of the Holy Spirit.

### **Categories of Divine Sovereignty**

There are three categories of divine sovereignty that function in human history. The directive will of God, the permissive will of God and the overruling will of God.

The directive will of God includes all divine mandates to believers and unbelievers. This is tantamount to the sovereign will of God. This is God's choice for your life.

The permissive will of God is God permitting the function of free will in opposition to His divine mandates. This is not God's desire, but He allows it to happen. Man can go negative to the directive will of God. God's absolute righteousness (+R) says He cannot coerce man. Therefore, God's justice disciplines man for their disobedience.

The overruling will of God means that God prevents personal self-destruction or prevents national destruction because of the number of mature believers resident in that nation. The overruling will of God supersedes the directive and permissive will of God and involves the frustration of Satan's will. God controls the circumstances, but does not interfere with the operation of one's volition, like Jonah. God takes every situation in the life of the believer and makes it work together for the believer's good.

2 Corinthians 6:14 illustrates God's directive will about marriage to the unbeliever. God's sovereign will mandates believers to not marry unbelievers. His permissive will becomes involved when a believer chooses to marry one anyway, resulting in self-induced misery and divine discipline.

*"Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?" (2 Corinthians 6:14, NASB)*

1 John 3:23 and 2 Peter 3:9 state God's directive will that all be saved. God's permissive will is demonstrated in that He will not overrule people's volition because of His perfect righteousness. However, God's justice must condemn the negative volition. For those that die as unbelievers, this condemnation is administered at the Great White Throne Judgment or the Last Judgment.

*"This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us." (1 John 3:23, NASB)*

*"The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9, NASB)*

1 John 3:23 and Ephesians 5:17-18 state God's directive will that every believer be filled with Holy Spirit. This is His sovereign will. God's permissive will is based on the reality that not every believer is filled with the Holy Spirit. God's perfect righteousness does not interfere. However, His justice administers divine discipline.

*"This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us." (1 John 3:23, NASB)*

*"So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit," (Ephesians 5:17-18, NASB)*



In Numbers 22:12 and Numbers 31:8, God's directive will for Balaam was that he not go with them (depends upon human viewpoint) and that he not curse the people of Israel (cursing depends upon Satanic or demon influence). In God's permissive will, He permitted Balaam to go and did not coerce Balaam's volition. However, in His overruling will, God overruled this because it involved demons and involved cursing the children of Israel. The divine discipline to Balaam was the sin unto death. God protects His people from Satanic action.

*"God said to Balaam, "Do not go with them; you shall not curse the people, for they are blessed."'" (Numbers 22:12, NASB)*

*"They killed the kings of Midian along with the rest of their slain: Evi and Rekem and Zur and Hur and Reba, the five kings of Midian; they also killed Balaam the son of Beor with the sword." (Numbers 31:8, NASB)*

## **Discerning the Will of God**

### The Operational Will of God.

What does God want me to do? This is the same for every believer. The believer is to be filled with the Holy Spirit, use the grace apparatus for perception in its six stages, thus building an edification structure of the soul. There are specific grace resources provided from the operational will of God. They include: the completed written Canon of Scripture, the local church, pastor-teachers, evangelists, spiritual gifts, indwelling of the Holy Spirit, confession of sin by simply naming or citing your known sins to God the Father, the grace apparatus for perception, the mind, the human spirit, the priesthood, faith-rest, living in the Lord, occupation with Christ, prayer, witnessing, etc.

### The Viewpoint Will of God.

What does God want me to think? This is the same for every believer. His viewpoint will is what we are mandated to think. This is divine viewpoint. Divine viewpoint comes from *epignosis* Bible doctrine in the right lobe of the soul. With *epignosis* in the soul comes spiritual growth and maturity via erection of the edification complex.

### The Geographical Will of God.

Where does God want me to go? This is different for each believer. Is there a specific area of service for this specific time? If you are filled with the Holy Spirit, respect the authority of the communicator, comprehend the Bible doctrine taught, believe the doctrine thus building a frame of reference (*epignosis*) and the edification complex, and applying that *epignosis* doctrine to life, then you'll have no problem with geography.

## **Mechanics of Divine Guidance**

Peter received the news of the Gentile Pentecost in Acts 11:1. This was followed by the inevitable opposition from legalism in Acts 11:2. There is criticism of Peter, so Peter begins to relate various factors in God's leading as he came into contact with the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius in Caesarea. Acts 11:3.

*"Now the apostles and the brethren who were throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. And when Peter came up to Jerusalem, those who were circumcised took issue with him, saying, "You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them."'" (Acts 11:1-3, NASB)*



### Guidance Through Prayer.

Guidance through prayer is only when a believer is confronted with a situation not specified by some direct command in Scripture. In Acts 11:5 for example, a believer should never pray about marrying an unbeliever. 2 Corinthians 6:14 commands no marriage is to be contracted between a believer and the unbeliever. The male believer should use prayer when determining the right woman to marry and the female believer should use prayer in determining the right man to marry. Guidance is used in a specific instance by prayer and other grace assets. Heb. 4:16.

*“I was in the city of Joppa praying; and in a trance I saw a vision, an object coming down like a great sheet lowered by four corners from the sky; and it came right down to me,” (Acts 11:5, NASB)*

*“Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?” (2 Corinthians 6:14, NASB)*

*“Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” (Hebrews 4:16, NASB)*

### Guidance Through the Mind.

In Acts 11:6, “was observing it” means to set your mind on something. This is objective thinking that excludes emotion. It means to ponder it carefully. Scar tissue and subjective thinking gum up the works. God always leads in compliance with His Word. God never leads contrary to the Word. Basically, guidance comes through the Word, but the Word must be in the right lobe of the soul as *epignosis* or believed Bible doctrine in order to be applicable to life’s situations.

*“and when I had fixed my gaze on it and was observing it I saw the four-footed animals of the earth and the wild beasts and the crawling creatures and the birds of the air.” (Acts 11:6, NASB)*

### Guidance Through the Word of God.

In Acts 11:7-10, Peter was guided through divine revelation, which today is the written Word of God and only the written Word of God.

*“I also heard a voice saying to me, ‘Get up, Peter; kill and eat.’ “But I said, ‘By no means, Lord, for nothing unholy or unclean has ever entered my mouth.’ “But a voice from heaven answered a second time, ‘What God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy.’ “This happened three times, and everything was drawn back up into the sky.” (Acts 11:7-10, NASB)*

### Guidance Through Providential Circumstances.

In Acts 11:11, three men had arrived even while Peter was still on the rooftop. They had left Caesarea some time before and had made the journey to Joppa and to the house. This was providential circumstances.

*““And behold, at that moment three men appeared at the house in which we were staying, having been sent to me from Caesarea.” (Acts 11:11, NASB)*

Believers are to test any providential circumstance. It must not conflict with the statements, doctrines, and principles of the Word of God. Gideon, in Judges 6:36-40, was a pitifully weak believer and the only reason God honored Gideon’s two requests regarding the fleece as signs that He really was God was because of His marvelous patience and matchless grace. We don’t need to ask God for signs to prove the Bible is the Word of God! We need the Word of God in our souls with the resultant erection of the edification complex and spiritual maturity.



*“Then Gideon said to God, ‘If You will deliver Israel through me, as You have spoken, behold, I will put a fleece of wool on the threshing floor. If there is dew on the fleece only, and it is dry on all the ground, then I will know that You will deliver Israel through me, as You have spoken.’” And it was so. When he arose early the next morning and squeezed the fleece, he drained the dew from the fleece, a bowl full of water. Then Gideon said to God, ‘Do not let Your anger burn against me that I may speak once more; please let me make a test once more with the fleece, let it now be dry only on the fleece, and let there be dew on all the ground.’” God did so that night; for it was dry only on the fleece, and dew was on all the ground.” (Judges 6:36-40, NASB)*

#### Guidance Through the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit never guides the believer apart from the Word of God. The Holy Spirit cannot guide apart from the filling of the Holy Spirit and the *epignosis* knowledge of Bible doctrine. Today, the phrase “heard a voice” in Acts 11:7 refers to the written Word of God. The phrase “seeing the vision” in Acts 11:5 today refers to the completed Canon of Scripture. The phrase “The Spirit told me to go” in Acts 11:12 means the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit.

*“‘I also heard a voice saying to me, ‘Get up, Peter; kill and eat.’” (Acts 11:7, NASB)*

*“‘I was in the city of Joppa praying; and in a trance I saw a vision, an object coming down like a great sheet lowered by four corners from the sky; and it came right down to me,” (Acts 11:5, NASB)*

*“‘The Spirit told me to go with them without misgivings. These six brethren also went with me and we entered the man’s house.” (Acts 11:12, NASB)*

#### Guidance Through Comparison.

In Acts 11:13-15, the parallel phenomenon of Pentecost in Jerusalem confirmed the fact that Gentile believers were just as much part of the “Church” or the Body of Christ as Jewish believers. Eph. 2:14.

*“‘And he reported to us how he had seen the angel standing in his house, and saying, ‘Send to Joppa and have Simon, who is also called Peter, brought here; and he will speak words to you by which you will be saved, you and all your household.’” “And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as He did upon us at the beginning.” (Acts 11:13-15, NASB)*

*“For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall,” (Ephesians 2:14, NASB)*

#### Guidance Through Scripture Memory.

In Acts 11:16, Peter remembered what Jesus spoke in Acts 1:5. The memory of Scripture contributed considerably to his guidance. Peter remembered it at the proper time and therefore was guided by it.

*“‘And I remembered the word of the Lord, how He used to say, ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’” (Acts 11:16, NASB)*

*“for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” (Acts 1:5, NASB)*

#### **Moses’ Decision**

In making a good decision, the believer must be in fellowship and exercising faith-rest. In Hebrews 11:24-26, “refused to be called” means that Moses exercised his volition to refuse. “Choosing rather to endure ill-treatment” indicates that the will of God eliminates one thing and enables another choice.





“Considering the reproach of Christ” means to think the matter through using divine viewpoint! Select the pertinent doctrines and apply them. Moses did so. “For he was looking to the reward” means he made the decision with eternity’s values in view.

*“By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward.” (Hebrews 11:24-26, NASB)*

### **Knowledge of the Will of God**

Knowledge can be understood knowledge (*gnosis*) or believed or full knowledge (*epignosis*). Both are necessary to learn and apply Bible doctrine. In Romans 12:1-2, “renewing of your mind” is the cycling of *epignosis* doctrine throughout the right lobe of the soul as you grow spiritually.

*“Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.” (Romans 12:1-2, NASB)*

Many things are stated directly to be God’s will such as in 2 Corinthians 6:14 – to not marry an unbeliever.

*“Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?” (2 Corinthians 6:14, NASB)*

Other things are not directly stated and must be determined by deduction from known doctrine. There is no guidance for the believer apart from a knowledge of the Word and the filling of the Holy Spirit.

### **Guidance through Spiritual Growth**

The command in 2 Peter 3:18 is for the believer to grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Grace is the sum total of the plan of God.

*“but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.” (2 Peter 3:18, NASB)*

Full knowledge or *epignosis* Bible doctrine in the soul of the believer causes the construction of the edification complex and can only be acquired through the daily intake of the Word via the grace apparatus for perception.

This results in maturity. Divine guidance involves one step at a time. Each step must be growth and advance. There are three hindrances to doing the will of God - ignorance, carnality, and lack of spiritual growth (lack of an edification complex of the soul).

### **Seven Things Declared to Be the Will of God**

It is the will of God that every member of the human race be born again. 2 Peter 3:9; 1 John 2:17; 1 John 3:23.

*“The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.” (2 Peter 3:9, NASB)*

*“The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.” (1 John 2:17, NASB)*



*“This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us.” (1 John 3:23, NASB)*

It is the will of God that all believers be sanctified. This speaks of experiential sanctification, which is staying in fellowship. 1 Thessalonians 4:3 carries the idea that a believer is to be set apart unto God by being in fellowship with Him so that believers will be under His direction. See category on [Sanctification](#).

*“For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality;” (1 Thessalonians 4:3, NASB)*

It is the Will of God that all believers be controlled or filled with the Holy Spirit. Eph. 5:18.

*“And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit,” (Ephesians 5:18, NASB)*

It is the will of God that we give thanks in everything. If you are going to do the will of God and be guided by God, this must be your mental attitude. Suffering is designed to bless us, therefore the believer can give thanks in suffering. Discipline is designed to remind us to use 1 John 1:9. 1 Thess. 5:18; Rom. 8:28.

*“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9, NASB)*

*“in everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” (1 Thessalonians 5:18, NASB)*

*“in everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” (1 Thessalonians 5:18, NASB)*

It is the will of God that believers suffer at various times as they grow spiritually. Since it is God’s will that you suffer, then the purpose of that suffering must be blessing. Suffering is God’s way of blessing the believer. It is also God’s way of bringing spiritual maturity in a quicker way. It is also God’s way of directing our attention to the things that are really important in life such as fellowship with Him and knowing Bible doctrine. 1 Peter 3:17; 1 Peter 4:19.

*“For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong.” (1 Peter 3:17, NASB)*

*“Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.” (1 Peter 4:19, NASB)*

It is the will of God for every believer trust the Lord. Prov. 3:5-6.

*“Trust in the LORD with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight.” (Proverbs 3:5-6, NASB)*

It is the will of God for every believer to be productive. All spiritual production is in the area of divine good. Divine good results from the filling of the Spirit, the application of *epignosis* Bible doctrine, and the erection of the edification complex in the right lobe of the soul. 1 Peter 2:15.

*“For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men.” (1 Peter 2:15, NASB)*



## The Will of God for Paul

There is a tendency for some to deify the Apostle Paul. Some cults feel that Paul's writings are more authoritative than other Scriptures. To them he could do no evil. However, Paul had difficulty with the geographical will of God.

In Romans 15:22, God's will for Paul geographically was to go to Rome and Spain. Going to Jerusalem was not in God's will. He went with other believers back to Jerusalem to deliver an offering to poor saints at Jerusalem. Rom. 15:25; Rom. 15:26.

*"For this reason I have often been prevented from coming to you;" (Romans 15:22, NASB)*

*"but now, I am going to Jerusalem serving the saints." (Romans 15:25, NASB)*

*"For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem." (Romans 15:26, NASB)*

Paul had nothing to do with delivering offerings. Paul's spiritual gift was Apostleship. This offering was taken up at Philippi, Corinth, and Thessalonica. This office of Paul's did not include handling or carrying finances. 2 Cor. 8; 2 Cor. 9.

### God's Warnings to Paul

In Acts 21:4, "through the Spirit" means that through the instrumentality of the Holy Spirit, Paul was not to go to Jerusalem.

*"After looking up the disciples, we stayed there seven days; and they kept telling Paul through the Spirit not to set foot in Jerusalem." (Acts 21:4, NASB)*

In Acts 21:11, Agabus used a visual aid to warn Paul not to go to Jerusalem.

*"And coming to us, he took Paul's belt and bound his own feet and hands, and said, 'This is what the Holy Spirit says: 'In this way the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.''" (Acts 21:11, NASB)*

In Acts 21:12, other believers tried to persuade Paul not to go. But in the end, Acts 21:14, "the will of the Lord be done."

*"When we had heard this, we as well as the local residents began begging him not to go up to Jerusalem." (Acts 21:12, NASB)*

*"And since he would not be persuaded, we fell silent, remarking, 'The will of the Lord be done!'" (Acts 21:14, NASB)*

### How Paul got out of the will of God

To Paul's self-consciousness, this was a fantastic offering. He was conscious of the offering which would undoubtedly break down some of the Jerusalem believers' resentment. In Paul's mentality, there was possibly a little pride as he was greatly used. How nice it would be to go back where as a young man he was highly successful and greatly praised. He had been a ruler of the Jews and an outstanding man. This was pure human viewpoint.

His volition decided that he could choose to go back to Jerusalem even if it wasn't the will of God. God would permit it. Paul's emotions took over because he loved and appreciated Jerusalem. Jerusalem had always held something special for him. He was always talking about Jerusalem and going back. Now he has a legitimate right to enjoy Jerusalem and to think of it in a wonderful way.





In Paul's conscience, he had two kinds of norms and standards - those acquired from Bible doctrine, divine norms and standards and also human norms and standards. Paul's human norms and standards said "Jerusalem is the finest place in the world."

So the old sin nature got into the picture with travel lust, wander lust, and Paul wanted to see loved ones again. All these warnings eventually prepared the Apostle of grace to do the worst thing he could do, walk into the Jewish temple and offer a vow and put himself under legalistic Jewish leadership. Acts 21:18-26.

Paul violated the viewpoint will of God in his mentality and decided that he was going to Jerusalem. Based on human viewpoint, he went into the temple and offered a vow. Paul violated the operational will of God by being out of fellowship. He decided to go into the temple to make a vow, put himself under Judaistic legalism, which he condemned previously in Galatians. He was not in the temple to preach the Gospel.

Paul violated the geographical will of God like David did when he delayed his departure from Jerusalem. Paul had a false expediency, a false compulsion, and a false motivation.