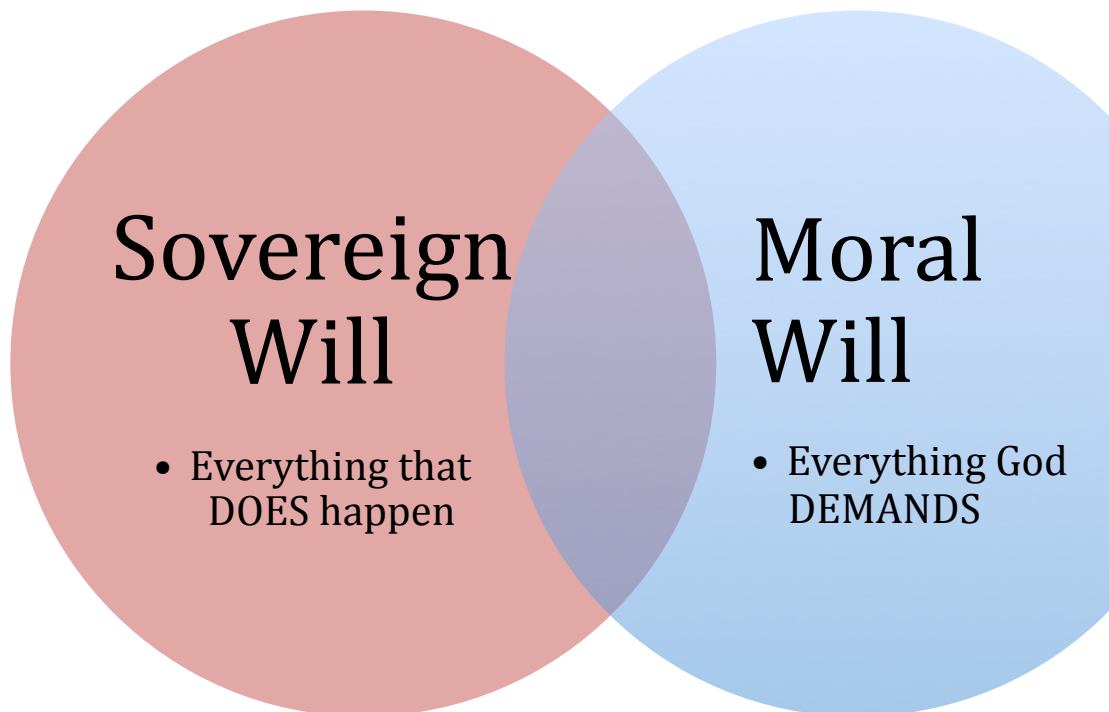


Determining the Will of God

Every Christian must struggle through the question of what they believe God's will for their life involves. We all feel this struggle in different ways. Sometimes it is as simple as, should I buy this computer or a cheaper one? Other times, it is more complex. Some of us want to know what type of job we will finally land. Others, want to know who they should marry, or if they should have children.

More often than not the stresses, fears, and anxieties come from wondering about future events, or future choices. Most of our anxiousness would dissolve if we would think Biblically about the "Will of God." The following paradigm was presented to me in seminary and has been a great blessing. I hope it will be for you.



Sovereign Will – God's absolute control and pre-planning over all of life from kingdoms to the minutia of conversations and motives.

Moral Will – God's revealed desires and demands in Scripture.

There are three types of “happenings” that we could describe using these two categories and their overlap.

1. Sin that happens – falls under the **sovereign will** of God. (Psalm 2, 22, Is. 55, Acts 4)
 - a. This could potentially bring up some theological questions that will not be answered in this discussion.
 - b. I will say that God is not a sinner though he clearly is sovereign over ALL things.
2. Righteousness that happens – falls under the shaded overlap section. It is both God’s **moral and sovereign will** (Matt. 3:15, Rom.1:17)
3. Righteousness that does not happen – falls under the light blue section of the **moral will** of God
 - * (we could potentially talk about sin that does not happen, but it does not have a place in the diagram) – it could be placed around the diagram.
 - a. Satan desires to sift Peter but it does not happen
 - b. Not all sinful plans happen – no one can be God except God.

I think it is important to note that rarely has God shown people what His sovereign will is going to be outside of Scripture. There were obviously prophets in Scripture to whom God revealed His sovereign will – things that would happen in the future. Some of these prophecies have yet to be fulfilled and so we could say we know SOME future events and happenings, but only those revealed in the Bible.

God’s moral will however, we do know! He has completely revealed to us all of His moral will. It is His will that we, “Abstain from fornication”, “visit fatherless and widows”, “esteem others better than ourselves”, “do justice and walk humbly”, and “love the Lord our God with all our heart.” We could go on and on about what we know concerning the moral will of God.

I want us to place our fears and anxieties in this grid. How do we do that? Well, think through your biggest fears. Now once you have them in your mind, determine whether or not your fears are unknowns about what is to happen in the future, or if they are about what you know God wants you to do right now. (Example #1: I fear whether my girl Evangeline will be a submissive child. – This falls under sovereign will. Example #2: Should I discipline her in the way I know God wants me to right now or get angry or ignore it? – This falls under moral will.)

Where do your fears fall? If you are like me, the majority if not all of our fears have to do with the future! This is because we do not think correctly about the present.

I want to say two things about the moral will of God that are absolutely necessary for someone who wants to be “in the will of God.”

First, It is completely impossible for anyone to do this in any type of consistent manner or a manner that would count for anything before God. Romans chapters 1-3 clearly show that we are unable to do the moral will of God. All of us fall short of God’s demands. So, if you desire to be in the “Will of God” by just trying to do the demands of God, you will NEVER land in that center-shaded area – the area we all want to be in and strive to do.

This brings me to the second and final element of the moral will of God. If you were to take the moral will of God circle and move it over so that it completely overlapped with the sovereign will of God circle – now only one circle visible – you would have in a diagram form, the person and work of Jesus Christ. He is the only one who has ever completely obeyed all of Gods demands and desires. To note on the flip side, everything Jesus did WAS God’s demands and desires. He fulfilled all righteousness.

So, we are unable to be in God’s will unless we could somehow be put into the life of Jesus Christ, or have His life put into us. This is the good news of the Gospel; that we are put INTO Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection (Rom. 6). All His righteousness is placed on our accounts!

At this point you might think I have gone way off track. Stay with me for a bit longer. I am going to briefly discuss what I will call the “**Sinner-Saint**” factor that plays a roll in our making daily choices.

First, we are **sinners**, so we are easily deceived; we have a flesh that likes to deceive us. We have patterns of thought that we have inherited from our parents that are sinful. If this is all we are, once again there would be no hope for ever doing the will of God.

However, if we have Jesus, we are **saints**. God, on the basis of Jesus’ complete righteousness, already accepts us. We have a new life inside of us given by the Spirit. So, we have new desires, and new thought processes that are guided by God’s Word. (Eph. 4, I Pet 4:2)

With this backdrop of the “Sinner-Saint” factor we need to consider what the Bible says about how to obey the moral will of God. I would like to take you to a passage of Scripture that declares to us this

very struggle. It is Galatians chapter 5:17, It says “For the flesh sets its desires against the spirit and the spirit [sets its desires] against the flesh, and these are opposed to one another so that you cannot do the things that you would.”

This passage teaches us that every moment in the believer’s life there is a battle going on. This battle keeps you and me from being able to “do the things we would.” Yet this principle is not supposed to cause us to question and doubt every decision throughout the day. This principle follows right behind Paul’s emphatic statement “If you walk in the spirit, you WILL NOT fulfill the lusts of your flesh!”

The reality is this; if you are a believer then the works of your flesh are self-evident. I don’t meet believers who wonder if they should yell at their siblings or forgive them. I don’t meet believers who wonder if they should lust or stay pure. We rarely wonder what the “Will of God” is in our moment-by-moment life. We either obey God’s Word through the Spirit of God in us, or we disobey because of unbelief. So then why, do we believers fret and worry over the “bigger decisions” of life, or the “unknowns?”

I am convinced that if you and I will just focus on walking in the Spirit day-by-day and moment-by-moment, we have nothing to worry about in our lives. We can only do this through the life that is ours in Jesus. He already lived God’s will perfectly for us, so we don’t have to live in fear of future. Romans chapter 8 reminds us that in Jesus we have everything!

So, I could have said at the beginning of this conversation, “To be in the will of God, just obey Him!” However, that would not have tapped in to the truth of the grace-enabled obedience only available in Jesus!

A moment-by-moment walk with Jesus will always land you right in the center of God’s will because you are in Him, and He in you! We don’t need to fear about tomorrow, just believe and obey today.

This does not mean we don’t pray, and seek counsel, or take the time to make wise choices. But God never intended us to worry or fret about future, instead he asks us to walk by faith in His righteousness day by day. He will take care of all our needs and often our wants too.