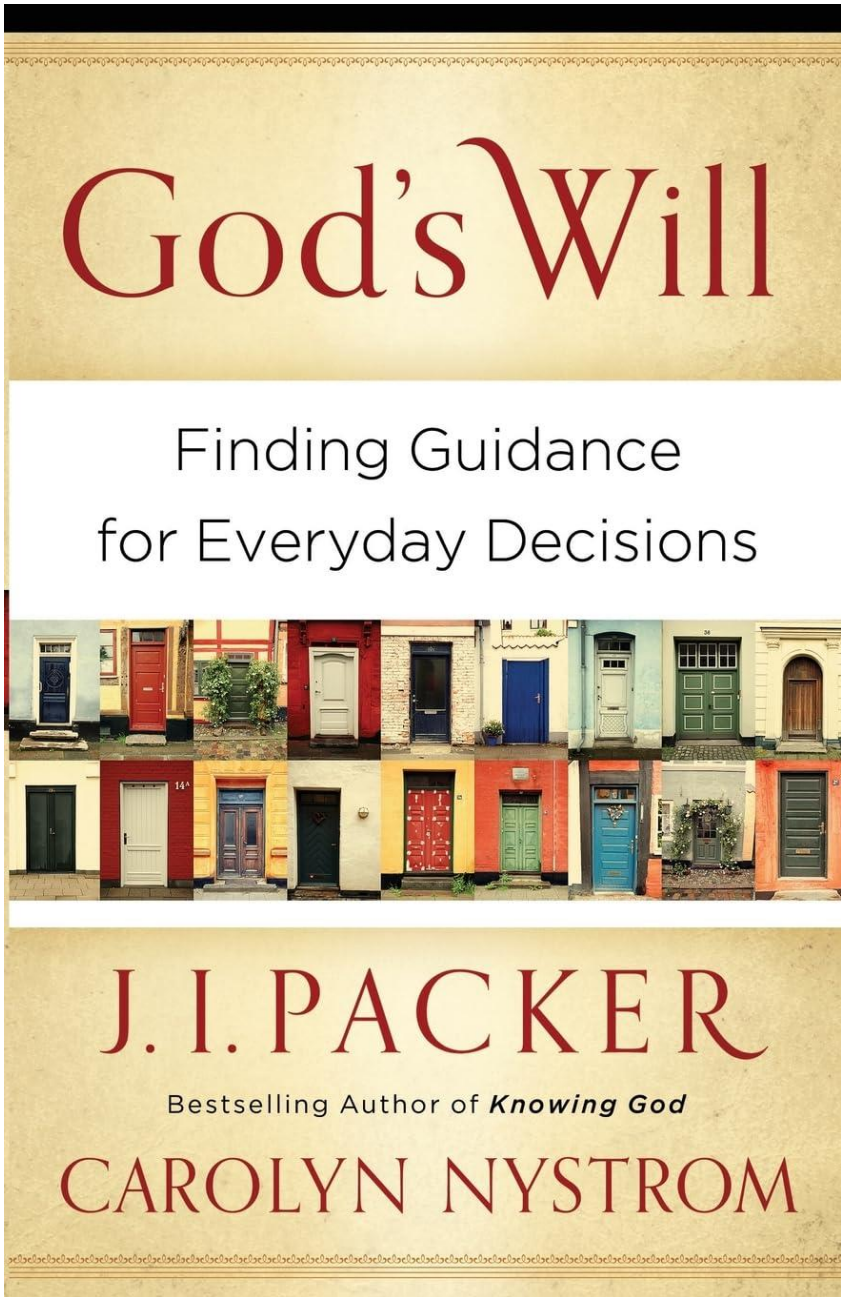
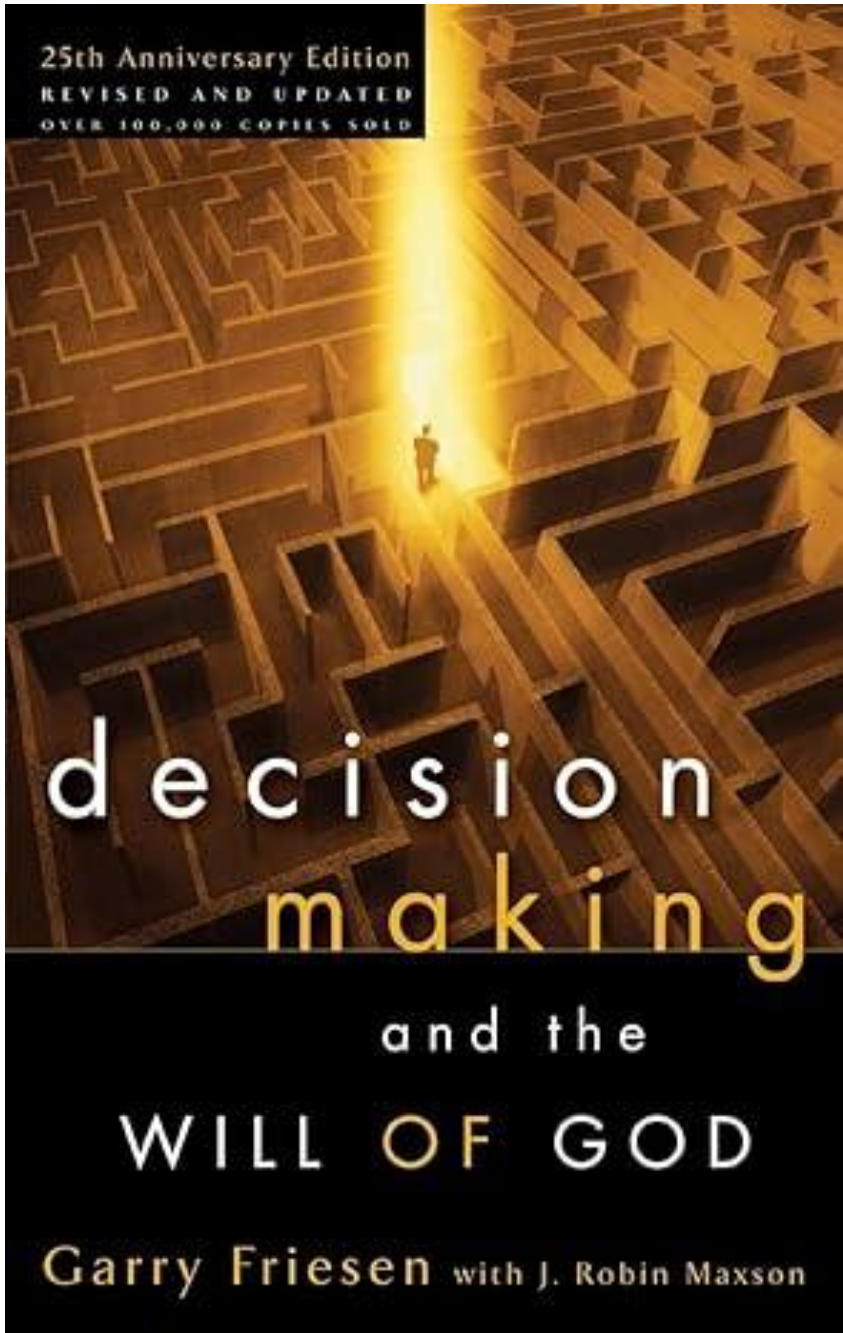


# God's Will is Not a Mystery

Practical Principles for Decision-Making



# Psalm 23: A Promise of Guidance

- The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing. <sup>2</sup>He makes me lie down in green pastures, he **leads** me beside quiet waters, <sup>3</sup>he refreshes my soul. He **guides** me along the right paths for his name's sake. <sup>4</sup>Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. <sup>5</sup>You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. <sup>6</sup>Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

# Introduction

- We seek God's leading in our lives, because we want to be in God's will
- But we must overcome a couple of misconceptions about finding God's will

# Misconceptions about Finding God's Will

- **Missing your flight:** Finding God's will is like missing a flight
- Once you miss it, you are in trouble; you have to settle for plan B
- We find God's will as we follow his commands
- We find God's will in his divine providence (secret will)
- God's plan for us is part of his overall plan of providence for the world and includes our responses and mistakes
- God can bring good even out of our mistakes (Rom 8:28-29)

# Misconceptions about Finding God's Will

- Finding God's will is like having a private hotline to God
- As a result, we look for signs, visions, and explicit answers
- It's like flying a plane through a storm and you need someone to help talk you down for a landing
- Learn to exercise wisdom by gathering information, problem solving, getting advice, being in touch with your heart (Prov 4:23)
- Ultimately, Scripture plays a central role in the process

# God Guides within a Relationship

- Psalm 23; Jn 10:11—Jesus is the good shepherd
- Realize that God does a lot more than just give us guidance
- We should seek God who is our shepherd
- The shepherd is to look after the sheep for all his or her needs, so we “lack nothing”
- He give us rest to our soul: “he leads me beside quiet waters”
- God guides “me along the right paths” or paths of righteousness
- God pledges to be our shepherd: “for his name’s sake”

# God Guides within a Relationship

- God provides protection: “your rod and your staff, they comfort me”
- God feeds us: “You prepare a table before me”
- God gives us abundance: “my cup overflows”
- God keeps us to the very end: “Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever”
- **Point:** Don’t isolate guidance from everything else
- We seek a total relationship with God and his care

# God Guides within a Relationship

- Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. <sup>2</sup> Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what **God's will** is—his good, pleasing and perfect will (Rom 12:1-2)
- God wants us to be able to discern his perfect will

# God Guides within a Relationship

- Perception of God's will springs from a consecrated heart that is committed to be God's sheep or follower
- My son, pay attention to what I say; turn your ear to my words.  
<sup>21</sup> Do not let them out of your sight, keep them within your heart;  
<sup>22</sup> for they are life to those who find them and health to one's whole body. <sup>23</sup> Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it (Prov 4:20-23)

# Principles of Guidance

- Holy Scripture is the central place where we find guidance
- “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness” (2 Tim 3:16)
- Consider the moral instructions of the Ten Commandments
- Consider Paul’s instruction on freedom: “I have the right to do anything,” you say—but not everything is beneficial. “I have the right to do anything”—but not everything is constructive” (1 Cor 10:23)
- “I have the right to do anything,” you say—but not everything is beneficial. “I have the right to do anything”—but I will not be mastered by anything” (1 Cor 6:12)

# Principles of Guidance

- Follow the example of Jesus Christ
- “To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps” (1 Pt 2:21)
- This includes his humility, love, patience, and sacrifice
- Avoid actions that are arrogant, unloving, divisive, and disruptive

# Principles of Guidance

- Discern the voice of Jesus in his word
- “The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. <sup>4</sup>When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. <sup>5</sup>But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger’s voice” (Jn 10:3-5)

# Principles of Guidance

- **Be Spirit-filled and allow the Holy Spirit to move us**
- The Spirit of God will move us especially when it comes to addressing needs, challenges, and concerns
- Consider the example of Nehemiah when he acted to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem out of sheer need

# Principles of Guidance

- God uses circumstance or “open doors” to confirm his will
- Nehemiah had a desire to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, but God confirmed it when the King released him to do so

# Principles of Guidance

- In the month of Nisan in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was brought for him, I took the wine and gave it to the king. I had not been sad in his presence before, <sup>2</sup> so the king asked me, “Why does your face look so sad when you are not ill? This can be nothing but sadness of heart.” I was very much afraid, <sup>3</sup> but I said to the king, “May the king live forever! Why should my face not look sad when the city where my ancestors are buried lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire?” <sup>4</sup> The king said to me, “What is it you want?” Then I prayed to the God of heaven, <sup>5</sup> and I answered the king, “If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favor in his sight, let him send me to the city in Judah where my ancestors are buried so that I can rebuild it.” <sup>6</sup> Then the king, with the queen sitting beside him, asked me, “How long will your journey take, and when will you get back?” It pleased the king to send me; so I set a time (Neh 2:1-6)

# Principles of Guidance

- Abiding peace of heart from walking in his will
- “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup> Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. <sup>9</sup> Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you (Phil 4:6-9)

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