

## The Will of God- Part 2

We are studying the Will of God because we came across it in Romans 1:10. What started out as a “stand alone” doctrine has expanded from a single lesson to two. It could easily expand to many more lessons.

**Romans 1:9 For God, whom I serve in my spirit in the preaching of the gospel of His Son, is my witness as to how unceasingly I make mention of you,**

**Romans 1:10 always in my prayers making request, if perhaps now at last by the will of God I may succeed in coming to you.**

Herman Mattox said:

“There is the **Directive** Will of God;  
the **Permissive** Will of God;  
and the **Overruling** will of God.<sup>1</sup>”

From the book of Acts, the three Wills of God are evident in Paul’s missionary journeys.

**Directive Will of God – 1st Missionary Journey**

**Acts 13:2 While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.”**

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.springvalleybiblechurch.org/Audio/Ephesians/notes/2021-05-30Sunday\\_Morning.pdf](https://www.springvalleybiblechurch.org/Audio/Ephesians/notes/2021-05-30Sunday_Morning.pdf)

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We don't know exactly how the Holy Spirit communicated to them. We do know that direct communication as such is no longer needed. We have the directive Will of God in written form.

**Overruling Will of God – 2nd Missionary Journey**

**Acts 16:6 They passed through the Phrygian and Galatian region, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia;**

While I was in Saudi Arabia, many years ago, I went to a book store to acquire a copy, in Arabic, of a Nobel Prize winner's book. The author was an Egyptian, in other words and Arab, a Muslim. I had forgotten that this author was considered a traitor of sorts to the Arab cause. When I asked the clerk at the store for the book, a terrible look came over him. You would have thought I had just killed his mother or something. He had a one word reply, "Mamnua!!!" Which means Forbidden. He said it with strong conviction. I realized that if I had persisted in my request that the clerk would call the religious police and have me locked up as a subversive. I quietly left. I eventually acquired the book in another avenue.

That is the idea here in the Greek. Forbidden!

**Acts 16:7 and after they came to Mysia, they were trying to go into Bythynia, and the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them.**

We do not know how God prevented them from going into Bythynia. They tried to go there but were prevented. This is a case of the overruling will of God. Forbidden.

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Permissive Will of God – 3rd Missionary Journey

**Acts 19:21 Now after these things were finished, Paul purposed in the spirit to go to Jerusalem after he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, saying, “After I have been there, I must also see Rome.”**

We studied last week, the warning that Paul received about going to Jerusalem. He decided to go anyway. It was obvious that God would allow this. It was not forbidden. However if he went there was much suffering for Paul waiting for him. It was a case of “Don’t go or else.” Paul persisted and found out what the “or else” was.

As Herman has mentioned previously, we don’t want to establish doctrine based upon the book of Acts. However, these passages in the book of Acts are clear illustrations of the types of the will of God. He acted in history with the result that they were written down and are now available in Scripture. Available at your nearest bookstore or from Amazon. And currently, they are not forbidden.

Now, let us turn to other passages and personal stories for these three types of the will of God.

**I. Directive Will:**

**1 Thessalonians 4:1 Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us *instruction* as to how you ought to walk and please God (just as you actually do walk), that you excel still more.**

How you ought to walk and please God. Directive will of God. Instructions on how to walk are written down for us. Let me say that

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again. They are written down for us. The more we know of the Bible the more we study it, the more we will know and understand the directive will of God.

**1 Thessalonians 4:2 For you know what commandments we gave you by *the authority of the Lord Jesus.***

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

**1 Thessalonians 4:4 that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor,**

**1 Thessalonians 4:5 not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God;**

**1 Thessalonians 4:6 *and* that no man transgress and defraud his brother in the matter because the Lord is *the avenger* in all these things, just as we also told you before and solemnly warned *you.***

**1 Thessalonians 4:7 For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification.**

**1 Thessalonians 4:8 So, he who rejects *this* is not rejecting man but the God who gives His Holy Spirit to you.**

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**1 Thessalonians 5:16 Rejoice always;**

**1 Thessalonians 5:17 pray without ceasing;**

**1 Thessalonians 5:18 in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.**

How much more explicit can it be, “this is God’s will.”

In the New Testament there are many instructions given to the Christian in the imperative mood. These are commands. Yet, they cannot be obeyed apart from the empowerment of the Holy Spirit through faith dependence on Him. Here is one example from the book of Romans:

**Romans 12:1 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 12:2 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.**

Again, to emphasize the point: we cannot accomplish God’s will apart from the empowerment of the Holy Spirit as a result of faith dependence on the Holy Spirit.

**2 Corinthians 5:6 Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are**

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**at home in the body we are absent from the Lord—**

**2 Corinthians 5:7 for we walk by faith, not by sight—**

**2 Corinthians 5:8 we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.**

**2 Corinthians 5:9 Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him.**

The word for pleasing or favor in the Old Testament, is related to the Will of God. For now I am sticking to the New Testament passages.

**2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.**

Going outside the Will of God is sin and subject to divine discipline in order to convince us to get back to walking by faith. Living inside the Will of God results in eternal rewards.

Now, knowing Bible information, Bible doctrine, when you pray, when you concentrate on a problem, these verses and associated doctrines may all of a sudden flash into your mind.

David had at least one such incident. When faced with Goliath, David said, “The battle is the Lord’s.” I often used to think that this was

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something David came up with from his spiritual maturity. But then I found this phrase, or something similar in the Torah.

**Exodus 14:13 But Moses said to the people, “Do not fear! Stand by and see the salvation of the Lord which He will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you will never see them again forever.**

**Exodus 14:14 The Lord will fight for you while you keep silent.”**

In Exodus 14:14 A verb for fighting is used. In 1 Samuel 17:47 David uses a noun from this verb. Not only did David understand the verse in Exodus 14, he understood the principle of conflict. It is God’s battle. He may use individuals but their victory or defeat depends upon God’s will. In David’s case, he understood that the sons of Israel belonged to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. All God wanted was for them to trust Him and put the battle in His hands. King Saul’s army could have done that. But there was no one who was spiritually mature enough to be guided by the Word of God. Only David came forward.

Do not forget King Jehoshaphat. He prayed a wonderful prayer. It was answered through one of the priests.

**2 Chronicles 20:14 Then in the midst of the assembly the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, the Levite of the sons of Asaph;**

**2 Chronicles 20:15 and he said, “Listen, all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem and**

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**King Jehoshaphat: thus says the Lord to you,  
'Do not fear or be dismayed because of this  
great multitude, for the battle is not yours but  
God's.**

Apparently, Israel needed to be reminded of the doctrine found in the book of Exodus. The word for battle in 2 Chronicles 20:15 is the same word that David had used when facing Goliath.

The point is this. There are not just verses but doctrines or principles of God's divine protection of His people. It is His directive will. He says I will protect you. The fight in the Angelic Conflict is mine. You learn defense as Jesus did in the desert against Satan. He will empower your defense through the Word. He will take care of the offense.

These doctrines are positive as in "in all things give thanks..." Once we learn these doctrines, the Holy Spirit can remind us of them through memory of Bible verses. On the other hand, there are negative admonitions. Do not steal. Each one of us has a sin nature. There are areas of strength from which we produce human good as well as areas of weakness from which we sin. The negative admonitions are to help us not sin.

## **II. Permissive Will:**

The Angelic Conflict is nothing if man does not have free will. Some theologians say that there is no free will. God determines everything. Then it is no mystery why they blame God for evil in the world. They would have to conclude then that God is evil. But God is righteous. He allows evil as part of the Angelic Conflict. He can provide his righteousness to sinful man because of the work Jesus Christ did on the cross and God the Father's validation of that work through the resurrection.



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**Genesis 4:8 ... And it came about when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.**

God allowed this. But He didn't cause this or promote it. As a result of this first documented murder, Seth was born and became an ancestor of Jesus Christ. (Luke 3:38)

Sometimes there are things we do not have. Yet, it is possible that in God's plan, it is permissible

**James 4:2 You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask.**

**James 4:3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.**

There are things you could have yet don't have because you didn't ask God for them while empowered with the Holy Spirit. Just because you didn't ask doesn't mean you were not empowered by the Holy Spirit. Perhaps you were unaware of this verse in the book of James.

As I study this doctrine, it becomes apparent that it is intertwined with other concepts and principles. Like prayer. Like Faith-Rest.

### **III. Overriding Will of God.**

I can give an example of the overriding Will of God from my own life.

I became a believer at Florida State University (FSU) in 1970/1971. Soon after I found myself sharing information about the Bible with others. Before long, people came up to me and said I had the gift of pastor-

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teacher. At the time, Dallas Theological Seminary (DTS) had an excellent conservative faculty. So I purposed to go there when I graduated from FSU.

However, there was a military draft at the time. I had a very low number in the draft. Eventually I got a notice to show up for a draft physical. At that point, the door to DTS was closed to me. I ended up going into the Air Force. Overriding Will of God.

I enjoyed working with computers and had already had a brief job as a mainframe computer operator and a computer programmer. So I purposed to become a programmer in the US Air Force. When I got to basic training, I took a test for programming computers. But before I could take that path, I was given a test for language aptitude. I passed that test. I was told that the “needs of the Air Force” dictated I become a linguist. It was out of my hands. I was sent to language school, Defense Language Institute (DLI). Overriding Will of God.

When given a choice of languages, I picked Hebrew thinking that would be a plus for a pastor-teacher. But Hebrew was not available. The closest thing was Arabic. So I chose Arabic. It is a cognate language to Hebrew. In order to move forward as a pastor-teacher, it was evident I would have to learn both Arabic and Hebrew. Looked like I was going to have to eventually learn Hebrew on my own. Overriding Will of God.

Once my training was complete, it was time to be sent on my first assignment. I was sent to Crete in Greece. Imagine that. Learning a cognate language to Hebrew and being sent to Greece where I could learn Greek. God had a plan. Overriding Will of God.

While in the Air Force I did get to apply my computer skills. I also was called on to present information to high ranking officers. Colonels, generals and admirals. I was learning to not be afraid to present

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information before an audience. Initially I felt like the Scarecrow in the Wizard of Oz. Not me Lord. I can't speak before an audience. The Moses complex. Eventually I became used to it. No big deal. Just give the information you are an expert on. Pastors teach on the Bible. Need to be able to present the information to an audience. Overriding Will of God.

Once I retired from the Air Force, I was going to get a job in Virginia. But I got a call from a man I had met during Desert Shield/Storm from Greenville, Texas. He offered me a job. Providential Circumstances.

Oh, yea, near Dallas, near DTS. Or so I thought. At this job I learned how to put together a briefing in PowerPoint and use Microsoft Word to write various kinds of reports. Again, I had to give briefings in front of people, even various Vice Presidents of the company. Many of the things I eventually did at this company I was initially reluctant to engage in. Yet, each one helped expand my horizons. God was preparing me for the ministry while I got paid to do it. Imagine that. It was like getting paid to attend seminary and pick up some valuable life lessons along the way. The Overriding Will of God.

I never did attend DTS as a seminary student. But Herman Mattox took four years of his Sunday afternoons to teach me and two other gentlemen. At the end he ordained me as a pastor.

So, after what seems like a lifetime of kicking and screaming and saying no way, bumping into the overriding Will of God, here I am as a pastor teaching you. Sometimes I hear those words of Paul echo in my ears, "the least." Yet God blessed me in spite of myself. The only thing I had to do was stay in faith dependence on the Holy Spirit. God had a purpose.

There are things that God will not allow. He prevents them from happening. In some cases, allowing certain things would destroy someone or even a nation.

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1. Guidance through prayer

Prayer and the Will of God are intertwined. You may pray for the Will of God. There are stories from L.S. Chafer on funding for DTS in its early days. In at least one incident, DTS was near the end of its funding. L. S. Chafer and others were gathered around praying. Would they receive the funding they needed or would they have to close? What was the Will of God? During the prayers a check arrived that covered the immediate expenses. DTS remains opened today because of God's Will.

2. Guidance through objective thinking of Bible doctrine

There are behaviors identified in the Bible which are to be avoided and others which are to be sought.

**Romans 1:28 And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper,**

**Romans 1:29 being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips,**

**Romans 1:30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents,**

**Romans 1:31 without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful;**

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**Romans 1:32 and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.**

3. Guidance through providential circumstances, e.g. the people we meet
4. Guidance through fellowship and comparison of spiritual data