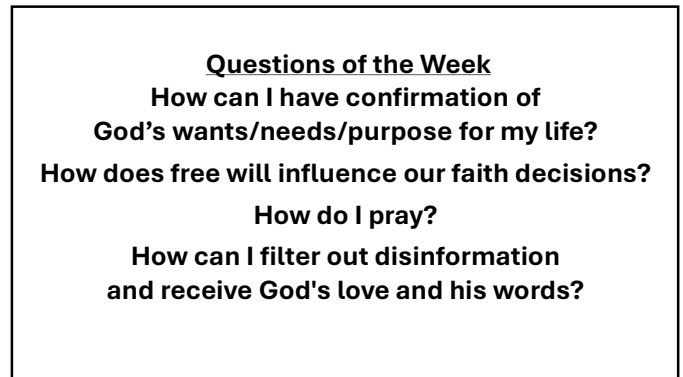
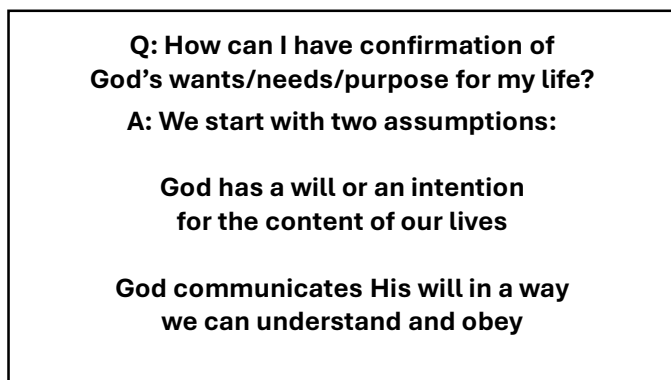


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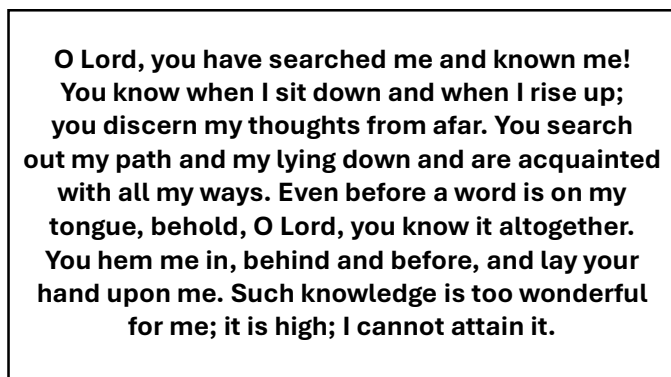
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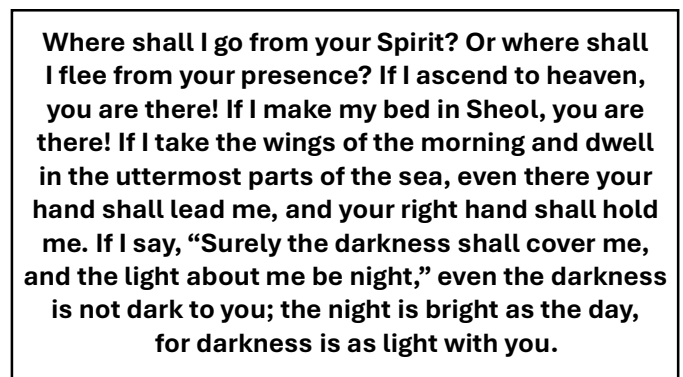
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4



5



6

For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.
(Psalm 139:1-16 ESV)

7

A: God gives us three tools to discern the content and the consequences of His will for us:

The clear commands of Scripture
The principles we learn from the decisions people make in Scripture
The Holy Spirit alive in us

8

A: The clear commands of Scripture include:
Repent from sin (Matthew 4:17)
Believe in Jesus (John 14:1)
Seek Biblical justice (Micah 6:8)
Care for the needy (James 1:27)
Be thankful (Philippians 4:4)
Share the Gospel (Matthew 28:18-20)
Love God & Love people (Mark 12:30-31)
Flee from idolatry (1 Corinthians 10:1-14)

9

A: We learn from the experiences of people in Scripture who obey God's commands, and we learn from the experiences of those who do not.

The lessons we learn from their experiences help us to narrow down our focus on what God's will is.

For example:
Abraham, Joseph, Moses, David, Solomon, Mary, Peter, Paul, John

10

A: Scripture teaches that the Holy Spirit reminds us of what Jesus taught, convicts us of sin, counsels us on how to respond to the world, and helps us to have the motivation to respond to God's will.
(John 14-15)

11

A: We often ask God for specific answers to big decisions because we want comfort/peace/confidence while we're in this world.
However, the content of the Christian life is plainly described, and following it must be understood regardless of surrounding circumstances, including location, marital status, vocation, family size, ethnicity, or financial status.

12

**And whatever you do, in word or deed,
do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus,
giving thanks to God the Father through him.
(Colossians 3:1-17 ESV)**

13

**I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies
of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice,
holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual
worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be
transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by
testing you may discern what is the will of God,
what is good and acceptable and perfect.
(Romans 12:1-2 ESV)**

14

**A: Consider these questions when you
are stuck on making a big decision.**

**Does the Bible approve of this action and/or
is the principle behind the action Biblical?**

Is this action helpful?

Is this action possible?

15

**Q: How does free will influence
our decisions in faith?**

A: Let's start with a definition of "free will"

**free and independent choice; voluntary decision;
the philosophical doctrine that the conduct of
human beings expresses personal choice and is not
simply determined by physical or divine forces.**

16

**A: There are three logical positions to
consider when it comes to free will:**

**I have complete freedom all the time
to do whatever I choose**

**I have no freedom at any time
to do whatever I choose**

**I sometimes have the freedom
to do whatever I choose**

17

**A: Our choices are affected by several factors,
and we change our minds often, even when
confronted with similar circumstances.**

**The belief that God is omniscient
(all-knowing) can lead us to the conclusion
that God knows what our choices will be
and what their outcomes will be. He guides
and warns us about those choices, but He does
not force choices or communicate specific
outcomes before they happen.**

18

I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live, loving the Lord your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him, for he is your life and length of days, that you may dwell in the land that the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.”
(Deuteronomy 30:19-20 ESV)

19

“Now therefore fear the Lord and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness. Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”
(Joshua 24:14-15 ESV)

20

And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel’s will save it.
(Mark 8:34-36 ESV)

21

A: As a follower of Jesus, my “free will” should change over time as my heart changes over time.
If I am becoming more like Jesus (Romans 8),
if I am a new creation (2 Corinthians 5),
if I am no longer a slave to sin (Romans 6),
then my choices will change.
For you were called to freedom, brothers.
Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.
(Galatians 5:13 ESV)

22

Q: How do I pray?
A: The Bible is full of tools that we can use to strengthen our prayer life.
The first step is to decide that you want to pray, and not just for guidance for your decisions. Do you want to build your relationship with the living God using one of the most important tools He gave us?
If so, then there are several helpful questions to ask yourself and practices to try.

23

A: Consider the content of your prayers:
Pray the prayers of Scripture
Pray the commands of Scripture
Pray the “ambitions” of Scripture
Pray the promises of Scripture
The models of prayer that we see in Scripture can provide all of the content we need for our prayers today.

24

A: Here are some noteworthy passages to start with:

Speak, Lord – 1 Samuel 3:1-13
Search me, O God – Psalm 139:23-24
I Surrender my life – Luke 22:41-44
Confession and Restoration – Psalm 51
Alignment with God's will – John 17
Jesus' model prayer – Matthew 6:7-15
Ongoing growth – Ephesians 3:14-21

25

A: Jesus made dedicated time to pray by himself (Luke 5:16) and publicly (Luke 3:21-22, John 17:1-26)

Jesus prayed about specific spiritual realities with intention (Luke 6:12, Luke 10:21, John 11:41-42)

Jesus aligned His will with the Father's (Matthew 26:36-46)

When we struggle with prayer, one way to approach it is to model our prayer life after Jesus'. Doing so also helps to ensure that our decisions reflect God's will and not our sinful desires.

26

A: Our experience in prayer is often corrupted by several possible hindrances that we have control over, including:

Timing – what are your best times to pray?
Environment – how can you limit distractions?
Intention – do you pray with expectancy?
Alignment – do you want to conform to God's will?

27

Q: How can I filter out disinformation and receive God's love and his words?

A: Let's start with a definition:

deliberately misleading or biased information; manipulated narrative or facts; propaganda

28

A: We would probably all agree that, based on this definition, there is a lot of disinformation out there. Our goal should be to focus on what is true, even though it is becoming harder to determine the difference between truth and falsehood in the world.

However, the truth of God has not changed despite many efforts to change it into something false.

29

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you. (Philippians 4:8-9 ESV)

30

Then Pilate said to him, “So you are a king?”
 Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king.
 For this purpose I was born and for this purpose
 I have come into the world—to bear witness to
 the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens
 to my voice.” Pilate said to him, “What is truth?”
 (John 18:37-38 ESV)

31

“I have manifested your name to the people
 whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they
 were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept
 your word. Now they know that everything that you
 have given me is from you. For I have given them
 the words that you gave me, and they have received
 them and have come to know in truth that I came
 from you; and they have believed that you sent me.
 I am praying for them.

32

I am not praying for the world but for those whom
 you have given me, for they are yours. All mine are
 yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in
 them. And I am no longer in the world, but they are
 in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father,
 keep them in your name, which you have given me,
 that they may be one, even as we are one. While I
 was with them, I kept them in your name,
 which you have given me.

33

I have guarded them, and not one of them has been
 lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture
 might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to you, and
 these things I speak in the world, that they may have
 my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them
 your word, and the world has hated them because
 they are not of the world, just as I am not of the
 world. I do not ask that you take them out of the
 world, but that you keep them from the evil one.

34

They are not of the world, just as I am not of the
 world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.
 As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them
 into the world. And for their sake I consecrate
 myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.
 I do not ask for these only, but also for those who
 will believe in me through their word, that they may
 all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you,
 that they also may be in us, so that the world may
 believe that you have sent me.
 (John 17:6-21 ESV)

35

A: Our battle against disinformation is a daily one.
 We need to develop a list of trustworthy sources of
 information and review it regularly to ensure that
 disinformation isn't creeping in.
 One of the values of committing to a Bible-centered
 church is that information can be understood
 through the lenses of Scripture regularly. You will
 still meet people who think differently than you do,
 but you will have the foundation of the Bible
 as your guide.

36