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CHOOSING YOUR CAREER
The Christian's Decision Manual

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Preface

"I've never wanted to plan my life. All I've wanted to do since my salvation is to let the Lord lead me each day. Now look at the mess I'm in."

The young lady sitting in my office was about to be graduated from a major state university, and she had no idea what God's plan was for her profession. While her motive of following Christ daily was undoubtedly commendable, she had not recognized a number of things that God had done in her life, on a daily basis, that pointed toward His plan for her vocationally. She had shown plenty of evidence of a genuine commitment to Jesus Christ, but she had overlooked the necessity to make plans in a God-honoring manner.

This book was written to assist Christians who want to know what is involved in a career decision, and who want to make that decision in a way that pleases God and edifies themselves and others. The procedures outlined in its later chapters are not meant to replace the Lord's leadership; rather, they are a vehicle for recognizing His lordship and implementing His direction.

Too frequently, like the young lady already mentioned, Christians fail to set goals for themselves. They think that doing so would somehow make them insensitive to God's leading. Goal-setting, of course, can be an act of rebellion. But it is not necessarily so. The real issue is this: How does the Lord direct? By a feeling? a special set of circumstances? a religious hunch? Often, what some call the "Lord's leadership day-by-day" is no more than an excuse for living a directionless life. Instead of an evidence of piety, it is a clear symptom of poor stewardship.

The Bible gives numerous examples of direction and goal-setting in the lives of the faithful. From the Old Testament comes the example of Abraham, whose life at first appears to be a series of aimless wanderings. Was this hero of faith without a goal in life? Not at all. All his pilgrimages were explained in the summary, "he was looking for a city which had foundations, whose architect and builder is God" (Heb. 11:10). He had a goal, and his efforts revealed his attempts to reach that goal.

In the New Testament, the apostle Paul is a good example of one who set goals and made plans. His Epistles show his goals: "I press on toward the
goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:14); “I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified” (I Cor. 2:2); “I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome” (Rom. 1:15).

But the supreme example of one who lived a goal-oriented life is the Lord Jesus Christ. He often stated His goal, once expressing it as seeking and saving the lost, once as granting abundant life. His entire incarnate experience was ordered to contribute to the accomplishment of His plan. When His disciples urged Him to assert Himself in a manner that would not contribute to His goal, He responded, “My hour is not yet come.” Then, on the eve of the crucifixion, He prayed to His Father, “Father, the hour has come; glorify Thy Son, that the Son may glorify Thee” (John 17:1). Jesus Christ had a definite goal; He did not merely drift aimlessly through His experiences, merely responding to His environment.

It should be clear, then, that a planned and orderly life pleases God, so long as the plan is God’s plan. The emphases on self-discipline and exercise in godly practices found throughout Scripture assume that the believer has goals for which such exercise is appropriate.

The choices facing any young person demand thoughtful consideration and planning. Whether deciding about his education, career, life-style, or marriage, the serious Christian frequently asks, “How can I find God’s will for my life?” Too often, the only answer given is, “Just let the Lord lead you.” This answer, though well meaning, is no answer at all; it is merely a restatement of the question. The sincere inquirer is not questioning whether the Lord should lead him. He has settled that issue already. What he needs is help in identifying the Lord’s leading. This book advances practical suggestions, based on biblical principles, for the Christian who has committed himself to following God so he can recognize God’s leadership.

Secular education leaders have articulated the need for career education, and an emphasis on careers has become the major movement in public education during this decade. This thrust is understandable, for when educators were faced with multitudes of graduates who had no skills qualifying them for jobs, a natural response was to attempt to meet the challenge. The career education movement in public education correctly acknowledges that the educational process must relate to all of life and must make a practical contribution to life. But this movement raises problems for the Christian. Secular education approaches life in a humanistic manner, and secular career development theories are totally human-centered. Career choices, as well as other life decisions, are approached with the assumption that man is the highest authority and that human satisfaction is the highest good. The
Christian, however, knows that God exalts only those who are subservient to Him. The Christian also knows that God has a plan for his life. But that fact would startle a secular career educator, for it violates every tenet of his humanistic philosophy.

Christian students who are being continually exposed to secular, humanistic career education need to see that their life goals must reflect their Christian faith. This book provides a re-orientation to goal-setting and career decisions from a biblical perspective. Its aim is to assist believers in making career decisions that glorify God in both process and outcome, thereby contributing to abundant Christian living.

I acknowledge with gratitude the contributions of Dr. Jay Adams and Mr. James Grier in reviewing portions of this manuscript and making valuable suggestions. Their insight has expanded and challenged my thinking on several of the topics presented in the following pages.
Living a God-planned life requires thought. The wild, emotional abandon that many equate with spiritual fervor does not produce faithful living. Rather, a commitment to God resulting from an understanding of His Word produces both the basis and the motivation for a God-honoring life.

Since this God-planned living requires thought, it is imperative that we examine our presuppositions about God and about ourselves. These considerations are foundational. Without them, the whole idea of God’s will for our lives is absurd.

**THINKING ABOUT GOD**

God Is Personal

The God who really exists has disclosed Himself in Scripture as a personal Being. He is not merely a force, an idea, or a grand source of cosmic energy. Within the Godhead, the persons of the Trinity manifested their nature as personal Beings by both loving and communicating prior to their creation of the universe (cf. Gen. 1:26 and John 17:24). By using the plural pronouns to refer to God I am not denying the essential unity of the Godhead, but I am asserting the parallel truth within the trinitarian mystery—that somehow the distinct persons of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit exist within that unity. And both in unity and in diversity, the Creator of all that exists is personal.

Whatever else may be meant by man’s creation “in the image of God,” the “image” is most assuredly shown in the fact that we too are personal beings. Our personal nature is comprised of intellect, emotion, and will. This “image of God” in man allows communication between God and mankind, and indeed, Scripture records that this communication has occurred throughout man’s existence. The very fact that God has revealed Himself in an inspired Scripture assures us that He is concerned about communication with us. We should therefore not fear that He would obscure His plan for our lives, or otherwise erect hindrances to our discovering His will.

This personal God actively involves Himself in His creation, especially in
the lives of those He has redeemed. Although this is the clear teaching of Scripture and has always been believed by the true church, it is ridiculed by modern secularists as an antiquated, superstitious crutch. They view man as his own authority, wholly autonomous in making decisions, accountable to no one except himself and/or his peers (society, the state, etc.). The idea that God would "lead" or "call" someone is totally outside of the thought systems of those who have rejected the concept of a personal God. "If a god exists," the secularist thinking goes, "then 'it' is a cosmic force, a first principle, or a nebulous rationale for existence." Obviously, nothing like this could "lead" or "call" anyone to do anything.

But those who have accepted Scripture know that the true God is the personal Creator who still is active in His creation. Psalm 32:8 is more than empty rhetoric when it records God's promise, "I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go; I will counsel you with My eye upon you." The three verbs in this verse (instruct, teach, counsel) all point to a personal guiding activity by the Creator for the creature.

Numerous Scripture passages assure us of God's concern for every facet of our lives, from the momentous to the trivial. For instance, He numbers our hairs (Matt. 10:30) and records our tears (Ps. 56:8). He knows our sorrows (Exod. 3:7) as well as our movements, thoughts, and life patterns (Ps. 139:2-6). Since nothing in our lives escapes His notice and concern, we should expect Him to be personally involved in the overall direction of our lives. His concern over details makes no sense at all unless He uses those details to accomplish specific goals. And what joy this truth sparks in believers—the eternal God knows us personally and has a plan for our lives!

God Is Orderly

This basic assertion is so simple that it may seem simplistic; but it is undeniably true and extremely important. The God who really exists is neither confused, nor the author of confusion. He works according to His predetermined plan, without variation. His plan includes specific schedules, as illustrated by the fact that He sent His Son in "the fulness of time" (Gal. 4:4). He works all things according to His good pleasure, which is neither capricious nor changeable. If God were not orderly, His revelation regarding future events would become either meaningless or absurd; but since He is orderly, He can be seen to work all things toward this predetermined end.

We can understand God's orderliness best by contemplating His sovereignty. Our lives frequently lack order because either we encounter unexpected circumstances or we feel powerless to accomplish our objectives in a given situation. Further, we often misinterpret the past, do not understand
our present, and certainly cannot discern the future. But these constraints pertain to us since we are creatures, and they are irrelevant to the sovereign Creator.

God’s sovereignty clearly marks Him as Creator, distinguishing Him from all His creatures. The term “sovereignty” refers to God’s perfection by which He does what He wishes to do. He encounters no surprises, nor is He ever frustrated by a lack of power to accomplish His will. He not only knows the past, present, and future—He is the Alpha and Omega. As sovereign, He does not leave His will to be accomplished by “accidents of nature,” by random circumstances, or by whims of depraved men. On the contrary, He is the One “who works all things after the counsel of His will” (Eph. 1:11).

God’s sovereignty, and the resulting order, is easily seen in His control of the stars and the other celestial bodies of the universe. Indeed, “the heavens are telling of the glory of God, and the firmament is declaring the work of His hands” (Ps. 19:1). God has ordained the pattern of these bodies so surely that astronomers can know what the sky looked like into which Abraham gazed. The psalmist was astonished by God’s control when he wrote, “When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars which Thou hast ordained, what is man that Thou dost take thought of him?” (Ps. 8:3-4). Among the many weighty truths in this passage is the one in the implied question, “Does God think about man, who seems comparatively insignificant, in the same manner He thinks about the stars when He ordains their courses?” The term “ordained” is the key to the answer. The inspired writer uses the same word in Psalm 37:23 to assure us that “the steps of a man are established [ordained] by the Lord, and He delights in his way.” God’s work in our lives is no more left to chance than is the pattern of the universe. In fact, the apostle Paul was writing on a very personal level about faithfulness in Christian living when he stated, “it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure” (Phil. 2:13). Because God exercises His sovereignty throughout His creation, we are not surprised when we read the promise, “God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose” (Rom. 8:28).

Since God is orderly, we who have been created in His image and then recreated by His grace should reflect order in our lives. Since God works according to plan, His new creatures might be expected to work according to plan also. The fact that we are not sovereign and therefore cannot perfectly imitate God’s orderliness should not keep us from acting responsibly in following the Lord as faithfully as possible. When we realize that we bear
the image of God, we will want to find and fulfill His plan for our lives in an orderly fashion. Living in a chaotic manner hardly testifies to the true nature of God. But planning, by itself, is not enough. Orderly living is pleasing to God only when the living conforms to God’s order.

Living a God-planned life is thrilling, and it is possible because God is both personal and orderly. He has a meaningful plan for our lives, and He communicates with us so that we can know His plan.

**THINKING ABOUT OURSELVES**

Susan had grown up in a fine church, had gone forward in a church service invitation as a young girl, and had served her church as a youth group officer and choir member. Now a bright university student, she had come to my office because she was confused about fulfilling God’s plan for her life. “I pray,” she related, “but, Pastor, it seems as if God is very remote from me. I don’t know what the problem is, but we’re just not communicating, and the more I think about His will, the more confused I become.”

As we talked about her experience, it became increasingly clear to both of us that Susan had never really been saved. Instead of trusting Jesus Christ as Savior, she was trusting something she had done, her act of walking forward in a church service. The more she thought about it, the more she became convinced that her early “salvation” was no more than an emotional act which she went through only because her girlfriends were doing it. Unquestionably, God’s will for Susan’s life at that point was for her to be saved. Happily, she saw her need, repented of her sinful self-righteousness, and trusted in Jesus Christ for salvation.

**Am I Saved?**

The biblical promises about God’s leadership are given to God’s people, not to those rebelling against Him. This is not to say that God has no will or plan for unbelievers, for Scripture plainly teaches that an eternity of torment awaits those who persist in their unbelief. In addition, God uses wicked individuals to fulfill His plan in spite of their sin (Rom. 9:22-23), as illustrated by such persons as Pharaoh (Rom. 9:17) and Nebuchadnezzar (Jer. 25:9, 12). But God’s use of these and other unbelievers certainly differs from His personal leadership of those who confess Him as Lord. S. Maxwell Coder has expressed this truth well:

> The cloud which directed the people of Israel in their way brought nothing but confusion to the Egyptians (Exod. 14:19, 20). Before anyone can expect to be led through the wilderness of this world by the
modern counterpart of the pillar of fire, he must be sure he is numbered among those to whom the promise is addressed. "What man is he that feareth the Lord? Him shall he teach in the way he shall choose" (Ps. 25:12).

David’s tumultuous life no doubt drove him many times to fall completely upon the guidance of God, and on one occasion, he prayed,

Let me hear Thy lovingkindness in the morning;
For I trust in Thee;
Teach me the way in which I should walk;
For to Thee I lift up my soul (Ps. 143:8).

David acknowledged in his prayer that trusting God was prerequisite to receiving guidance.

Any doubt about salvation needs to be removed before any progress can be made in knowing or doing God’s will. Questions such as the following may be helpful in determining your salvation status:

Have I ever repented of my sin and claimed Christ’s forgiveness?
Did I accept Christ, or did I merely go through a religious ritual because it was expected of me?
Do I now trust in Jesus Christ, or in something I have done?
Does my life show any spiritual development or evidence of salvation?

You are saved if you have repented of your sins and have claimed in faith Jesus Christ as your Savior. You must trust in His perfect righteousness for your standing before God, not in your own faulty self-righteousness. You must accept salvation as God’s gift, and thereby renounce any thought of earning God’s acceptance by your own effort.

It would be both futile and absurd to ask God for leadership while still rebelling against His will regarding salvation. The saved person, however, knows his relationship with God is correct, and he may confidently claim God’s promises for guidance.

Am I Obedient to God’s Word?

God has disclosed His will in Scripture. Although the Scripture does not explain everything about God’s will (Deut. 29:29), it does tell us what God wants us to know and is the standard to which we are accountable. Consequently, when we ask to know more about God’s will, we are assuming a responsibility to learn from and subject ourselves to His Word, the Bible. To do less would be presumptuous indeed, for we would be asking God to

reveal His will while at the same time we ignore what He has already revealed.

It is true that the Bible does not contain a specific answer to each specific question we may face, but we are mistaken if we use that truth as an excuse to neglect the Scripture. Consistent, systematic Bible study will develop our knowledge about God, about ourselves, and about basic principles which may be applicable to our question. If a specific verse does not answer our question, often a biblical principle gleaned from many passages will give appropriate guidance. Also, reading Scripture has an effect on our minds when it enlarges our understanding of God, and it is through such knowledge that God has granted all we need to live a godly life (II Pet. 1:2-4). Consequently, the psalmist exclaimed, "Thy Word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path" (Ps. 119:105).

Once again, attitudes toward God and His Word are of paramount importance, and these attitudes are revealed by our priorities. A typical example may highlight the attitude of distorted priorities. A student may be praying for God's guidance in a decision concerning his college major. At the same time, he may know from his Bible study that God's will for him as a new Christian is to be baptized and join a Bible-centered church, but he may be neglecting these imperatives or inventing excuses for avoiding them. So he has placed himself in quite a bind, his priorities showing a faulty attitude. While refusing to follow what God has already revealed through Scripture to be His will in one area of life, the student piously asks God to disclose His plan for another area of life. A faithful attitude, on the other hand, is one that orders priorities so that we are doing what we already know to be God's will before asking Him to reveal more.

Am I Delighting in the Lord?

Delight yourself in the Lord;
And He will give you the desires of your heart (Ps. 37:4).

How do we know if we are delighting in the Lord? Obviously, God does not give us every desire of our hearts (fortunately!), and so the condition upon which this promise is based is very important.

The word "delight" means "to find pleasure" or "to find happiness." We are therefore instructed to find our happiness in God Himself—in His Being, perfections, person. The essential point seems to be that we are not to seek greatest satisfaction primarily from created things, but rather, from the Creator Himself. Rather than making the desires of our hearts our primary
focus in life, we are to concentrate on the Lord Himself, and He will then assume the responsibility of granting all we need for life and godliness. Jesus Christ spoke in the same vein when He challenged His disciples, "Seek first His kingdom, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you" (Matt. 6:33). The "things" Christ referred to are listed earlier in the passage: food, drink, clothing—the primary objects of desire for the Gentiles (6:25, 31, 32). But when we personally identify with the Lord and seek to honor Him, He "adds" these things to our lives. The word "adds" is instructive, for it shows that one who focuses his life on the Lord has his identity determined thereby, and the "things" of this life do not determine identity but are merely added to an already fulfilling life.

When we "delight" in the Lord, we should expect God to grant the desires of our hearts. That expectation arises, not because we have placed God under obligation to us, but because our "delight" has so influenced our desires that they are in agreement with His will for us. The psalmist is here challenging us to order our priorities so that the eternal God Himself is of greatest importance to us, resulting in a reordering of lower "desires" to conform to that top priority. When this process begins to occur, we can pray with greater confidence regarding our "desire." Reordered spiritual priorities assure us that we are not asking amiss, merely to consume it on our lusts (James 4:3).

The application of the truths of Psalm 37:4 to the career decision is clear. Making the career decision itself our highest priority, the consuming passion of our lives, means that we are not delighting in the Lord and are exempting ourselves from the promise of this verse. When we make Him and our relationship to Him the highest priority, then we should expect Him to so work in our desires that they begin conforming to His will. To allow confusion over a career choice to interrupt Bible reading, prayer, or fellowship with the Lord is a grave mistake, for this rupture of relationship will surely distort our desires and lead only to frustration. Knowing God's will comes from knowing God well. As a husband and wife grow in their relationship until they often can accurately predict each other's desires without any new verbal communication, so we too can develop an anticipation of what God wants by seeking to understand Him better. Our desire for God's will can never replace our desire for God.

Frequently, students have told me, "I know what I want to be. But I do not want my will, I want God's will." This apparent difference between man's will and God's will arises from a basic mistrust of our own desires, and that mistrust is proper in its place. Jeremiah warned, "The heart is more deceitful
than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it?'' (17:9). But Jeremiah was addressing people who were consciously rebelling against God, not those attempting to delight in Him or those in whom God’s Spirit had begun mind-renewal (Rom. 12:1-2). Also, we recall Christ’s prayer in Gethsemane, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as Thou wilt” (Matt. 6:39). At first glance, this seems to record a difference between the wills of the Father and the Son, with the Son surrendering His will to the Father. Upon reflection, however, we see that such an interpretation is unthinkable, since it suggests disagreement among the persons of the Godhead. Christ was probably affirming His unity with the Father’s will, in spite of the great cost. Certainly, it is not the picture of the Son surrendering a rebellious will to His Father. Consequently, this passage does not establish the surrender of a rebellious will as the ideal, but rather, gives an example of consistent oneness of purpose with the Father.

Prior to salvation, our desires should be mistrusted, but in an unsaved state, we haven’t the spiritual insight sufficient to question them. After salvation, we need to examine our desires to check their conformity to God’s revealed will in Scripture; but at the same time, we need not assume that every personal desire violates God’s will. We should expect that part of God’s direction in our lives would be a transformation of our desires so that He acts in perfect accord with His will when He grants them.

Have I Committed Myself to Do God’s Will?

When we learn to delight ourselves in the Lord, the next challenge found in Psalm 37 becomes easier to meet.

Commit your way to the Lord,
Trust also in Him, and He will do it (Ps. 37:5).

We “commit” our way to the Lord when we, literally translated, “roll our way over onto” Him. The psalmist described this commitment by using the synonym “trust” in the same verse. When we roll the burden of our “way” onto the shoulders of our Burden-bearer, we are confessing our own inability and trusting Him to take the leadership. We trust both His ability and His interest to accomplish what is best for our lives.

This commitment is to the Lord Himself, not to some specific plan for the future. The difference between the two may be illustrated by the student who says, “But what if I don’t like God’s plan for my life?” Such a statement reveals that this student will commit himself to a specific course of action, if he approves of it, but has not yet committed himself to the Lord. He has established himself as a censor of God’s plans, to follow those he likes and to
reject all the rest. God does not make His will known so we can negotiate with Him about it. He makes it known so that those who have committed themselves to Him will be able to obey confidently and eagerly. A commitment to God Himself presupposes the knowledge that God’s will is perfectly good and completely wise. It is a commitment that acknowledges that God will not lead astray, that He will provide the necessary resources, and that He is entirely qualified to direct our lives.

Some speak of this commitment as “surrender,” and that might be an appropriate designation if the individual has been consciously rebelling against God’s known will. “Surrender,” however, may not accurately describe the commitment of a person who is following Psalm 37:5, for a sincere inquirer is not ending a rebellion against God. He is, rather, seeking to know God’s will so that he may align his own desires accordingly. Such is not a surrender, which implies defeat, but is an affirmation, which implies victory.

Isaiah provided the classic example of genuine commitment to the person of God in the inspired record of his own call as a prophet (Isa. 6:1-13). Following his vision of the infinitely exalted and holy God, Isaiah became aware of his own sinfulness. Aware that he could not approach God, let alone serve Him, in that state, he must have been encouraged when he received cleansing through the ministry of the altar, where innocent animals were offered as substitutes for the people’s sins. Then he heard God’s voice saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” To this inquiry, Isaiah responded, “Here am I. Send me.” He was yet unaware of the mission, but he was committed to the person of God to such an extent that he trusted God implicitly. In the same manner, we who have been graciously cleansed through Christ’s atonement must trust Him in such a way that we say, “Wherever He leads, I want to go.”

Trust in God Himself minimizes fear of the future, for it acknowledges that God is sovereign. Sometimes we fear because we are uncertain what God’s plan will involve, and so we may fear failure. We fear because we know our frailties; we know only too well that we make mistakes. But the thirty-seventh psalm deals with this fear effectively:

The steps of a [good] man are established by the Lord;
And He delights in his way.
When he falls, he shall not be hurled headlong;
Because the Lord is the One who holds his hand (37:23-24).

We may err when trying to follow God’s leading, but when that occurs, God deals with us as mistaken children rather than as hardened rebels. He assures
that our fall will not be fatal. He holds our hands so that even the fall is within His control, and He uses our errors to challenge and strengthen us. This process may be likened to parents teaching children to walk. Knowing that a child will fall many times while learning to walk, the parent does not abandon the youngster or chastise him if he falls while trying. The parents will usually do all they can to make sure the inevitable stumbles do not hurt the child, often teaching the child on the softest rug available. Every effort is made to make each try both safe and profitable. S. Maxwell Coder likens learning to walk with the truth of Psalm 37:23-24 in this way:

God is our heavenly Father. He watches our steps with great interest and tender compassion. When we fall, in our weakness, He gently restores us to our place, so that we are not utterly cast down. Stern measures may sometimes be required, if we repeatedly demand our own way; but if our delight is in Him (v. 4), then His delight is in us (v. 23). Thus, our weakness and God's strength are found linked together in what the Bible teaches about His program for our lives. Our tendency to fall is met with His desire to lead us by the hand.2

When we are conscientiously trying to do God's will, He will not allow us to go too far astray.

What Do I Understand?

Solomon's wisdom focused on God's guidance in the following proverb:

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 (Prov. 3:5-6).

Having trusted in the Lord and committed ourselves to do His will, we yet need a knowledge of what His will is. Solomon warns against trusting our own understanding. His warning, however, cannot contradict other passages which challenge us to develop a spiritual understanding (Prov. 2:3; 4:7), and so he is not advocating abandoning reason to act on impulse or emotion. What concerned Solomon was the result of relying solely on human, unenlightened understanding. Consequently, early in his reign, he had asked God for special wisdom.

How do we know whose understanding we are leaning on? Fortunately, the two understandings do not have to be completely separate. Although we cannot completely think God's thoughts, He has revealed Himself in Scripture and that revelation can shape and develop our understanding. When we

2. Ibid., pp. 39-40.
immerse our minds in His Word, we can be assured that our understanding is no longer entirely our own. Instead, we should expect to be able to exercise an increasing amount of godly insight as His revelation renews our minds.

An enlightened understanding is demonstrated by acknowledging Him in all our ways. This acknowledgment is more than a theoretical affirmation that God rules. It is a faith at work, a living demonstration that God’s Word has molded our minds to effect right behavior. To these faithful ones comes God’s promise that He directs to the correct end, removing hindrances from the way.

Conclusion

Learning God’s will and living it are neither simple nor easy. A checklist approach simply will not suffice, and neither this chapter nor the following ones are meant to deal with the topic in that manner. Rather, we must acknowledge that God-planned living grows out of a relationship between God and ourselves, and that this relationship must retain top priority. Knowing God, and learning to obey the will He has already revealed in Scripture will expand our understanding so that we can discern those things about His plan which He has not revealed as directly. Following God’s leadership requires intelligent commitment to search daily for the evidences God places in our lives to show us His way. And in the entire process, our ultimate goal is to glorify God, realizing that His guidance is for our good only because it is first of all for His own glory.

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL INVENTORY

1. In order to trust our desires, we need to be delighting in the Lord (Ps. 37:4). List three behaviors that would demonstrate that you are delighting in Him.

1. 

2. 

3. 

11
2. Sometimes we hesitate to commit ourselves unreservedly to Christ for fear He will require us to do something we don’t want to do. List the three careers that you most frequently fear God might require you to enter.
1. 
2. 
3. 

3. For each answer to question 2, list the specific factors of each career you dread the most.
   career 1: 
   career 2: 
   career 3: 

Now, review the chapter and apply what you know about God to these dreaded activities. Can you count on God to change your desires and fears?