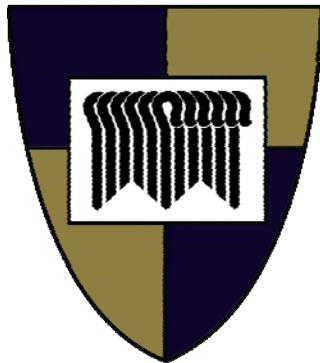


Personal Discerning of God's Will

THE MASTER'S
COLLEGE

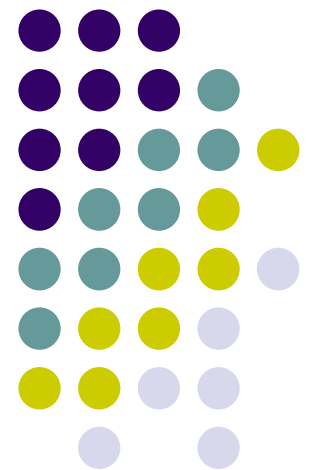


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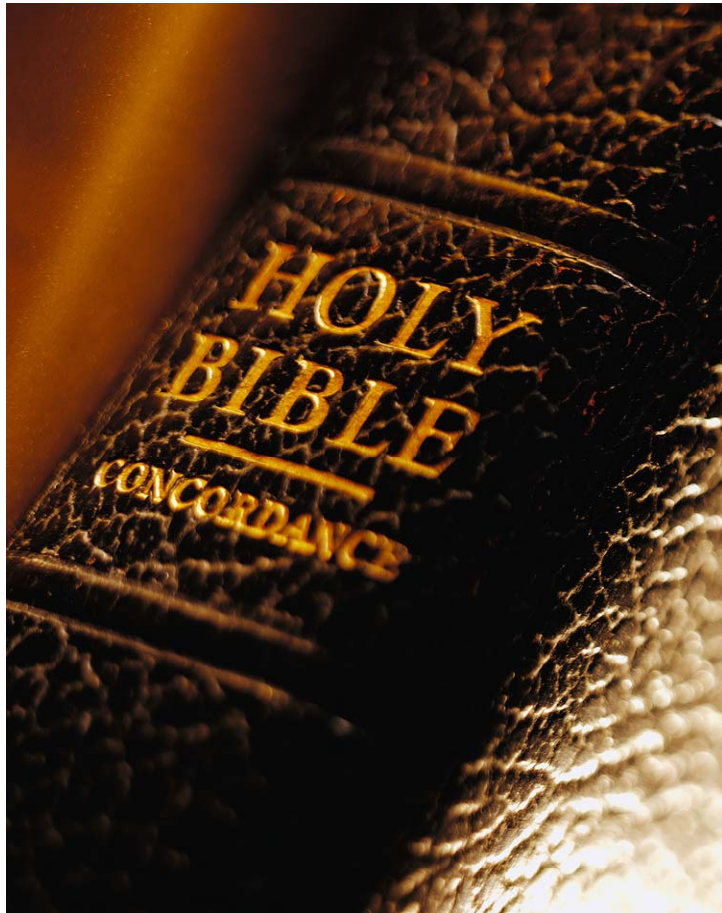
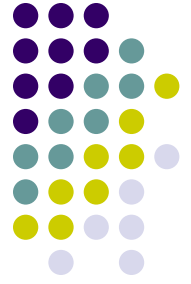
Grace Bible Church

Part Two

Dr. John D. Street
Chair, MABC Graduate Program



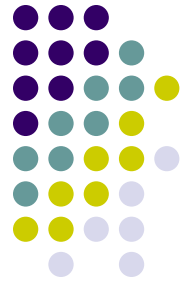
IV. Accurately Interpreting God's Revealed Will



Principles:

1. Literal principle
Interpreting the Bible in such a way that the historical events and miracles are taken seriously. Because of figures of speech and symbolic language it would be better to refer to the *literary meaning* than literal meaning.

IV. Accurately Interpreting God's Revealed Will

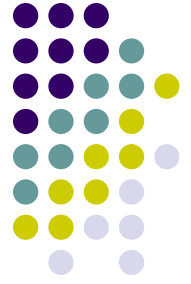


2. Historical principle

The best approach in properly understanding and applying the Scripture is to ask the question, “What did the original author intend these words to mean to the original audience?”

So interpreting the Word with the historical principle involves understanding the biblical writer, the biblical audience, and any historical-cultural elements touched by the passage itself.

IV. Accurately Interpreting God's Revealed Will

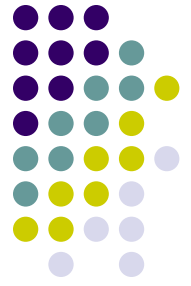


3. Grammatical principle

The elements of grammar are the critical clues as to the intention and meaning of the original author of the biblical text.

The grammatical principle means that faithful interpretation of the text involves a careful study and examination of the syntax, parts of speech, tenses, literary style and genre of the biblical passage in question.

IV. Accurately Interpreting God's Revealed Will

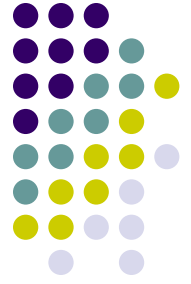


4. Synthesis principle

This principle in inductive Bible study teaches that all the previous approaches (literal, historical, grammatical) are carefully put together in order to arrive at a more full and complete understanding of the text.

The ultimate goal of synthesis is to understand how the theological truths intersect with the life of the present reader and calls upon their life to change.

IV. Accurately Interpreting God's Revealed Will

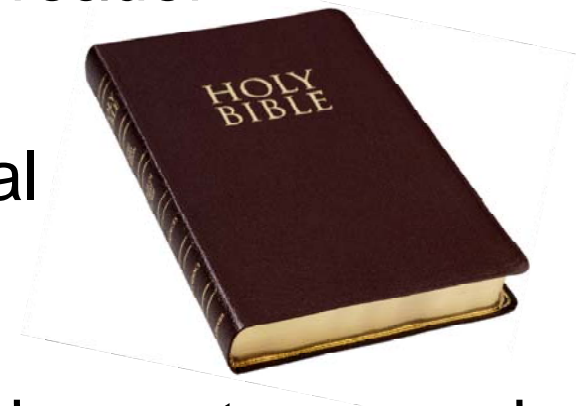


5. Practical principle

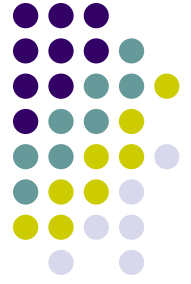
The crowning point of biblical interpretation is how the text must change the present reader.

What is the practical meaning?

This is much more than behavioral change; it involves change from the inside out. The heart must change. Real and lasting change has not occurred until the desires, cravings and intentions of the heart has change through repentance. Then behavior changes for all the right reasons.



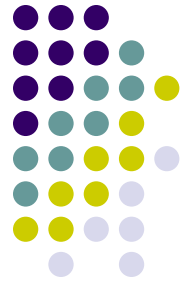
V. Methods & Motives to be Cautious of...



- A. Misusing the Bible
- B. Personal advice
- C. Circumstances/Results
- D. Setting up conditions
- E. Open and closed doors
- F. Ideas, inner feelings, desires and impressions
- G. An audible voice
- H. Misusing prayer
- I. Inner peace
- J. Devices
- K. Signs
- L. Dreams
- M. "Waiting on the Lord"
- N. Conscience
- O. Reason
- P. Faith
- Q. Fasting
- R. The "call"
- S. Small group ("where two or three are gathered together.")



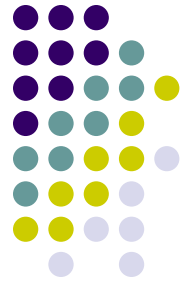
VI. The Biblical Principles and Suggested Model



A. Prerequisites for Biblical Decision-Making

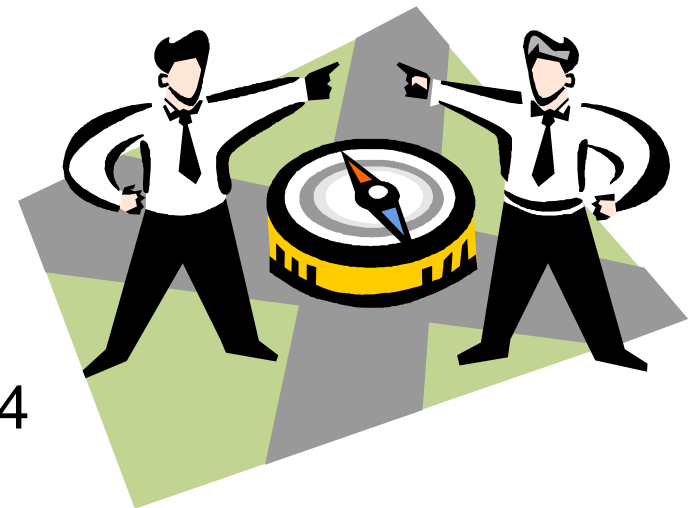
1. Be rightly related to Christ (2 Cor. 5:14-21)
2. Pursue a life of worshiping God (John 4:23-24; 2 Cor. 5:9; Phil. 1:21; 3:10-14)
3. Recognize God's sovereignty over all (Ps. 115:3,8; Eph. 1:11; Eph. 5:17; James 4:13-16; Prov. 16:9; Rom. 8:28-29)

VI. The Biblical Principles and Suggested Model

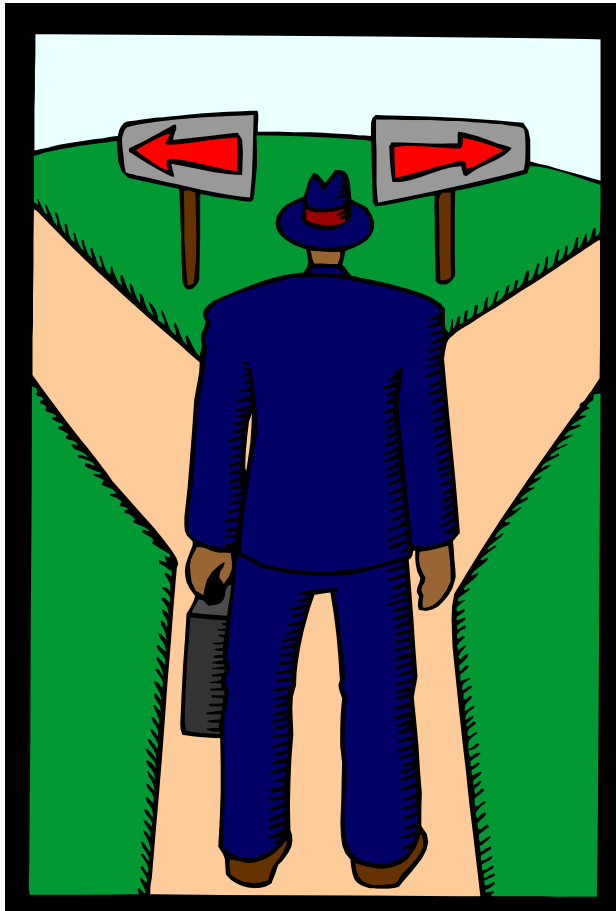
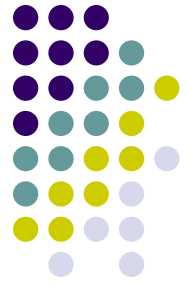


B. Principles

1. Scripture has bearing on all decisions, one way or another (e.g., direction, motives, behavior, etc.)
2. Wisdom
3. Purposeful freedom
 - a. Matthew 22:37-40
 - b. Philippians 2:1-5
 - c. 1 Corinthians 6:12; 10:23-24
 - d. Galatians 5:13



VI. The Biblical Principles and Suggested Model



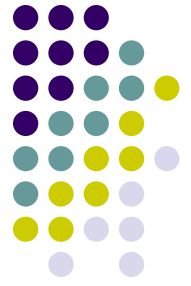
4. Desire

a. Psalm 37:4

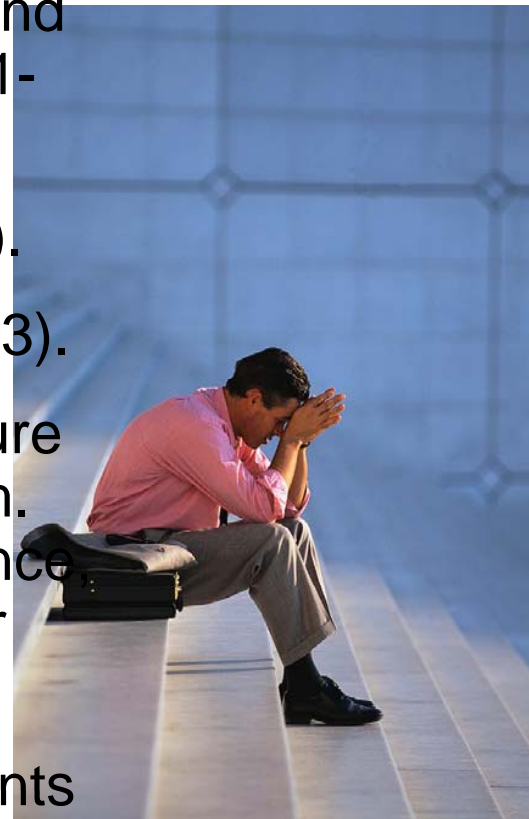
b. Philippians 2:12-13

c. "Wishes" (1 Corinthians 7:36, 39; 10:27)

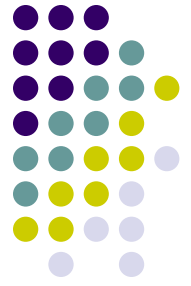
VI. The Biblical Principles and Suggested Model



- c. Process (these all interrelate)
1. Continually have a humble, yielded, and dependent will before God (Rom. 12:1-2).
 2. Continually pray for wisdom (Jas. 1:5).
 3. Gather all the factual data (Prov. 18:13).
 4. Study any direct commands in Scripture concerning this particular issue (2 Tim. 2:15). Make use of a Bible concordance, Topical Bible (with caution), and other Bible reference books.
 5. Study any indirect principles/ statements in Scripture concerning this issue (2 Tim. 2:15)?



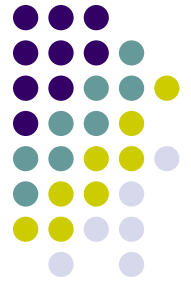
VI. The Biblical Principles and Suggested Model



6. Weigh the purposeful use of freedom (Gal. 5:13; 1 Cor. 8).
 - a. Is there anything wrong with this activity? Is it lawful (1 Cor. 10:23)
 - b. Is it self-serving at the expense of someone else's benefit? (Rom. 15:1-2; 1 Cor. 10:33; Gal. 5:13; Phil. 2:1-4)
 - c. Is this something I can thank God for? (Rom. 14:6; 1 Cor. 10:30; Col. 3:17)
 - d. Is this something that will glorify God? (1 Cor. 10:31; 2 Cor. 5:9)



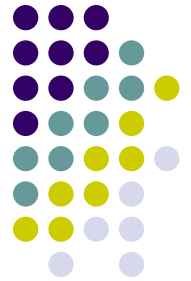
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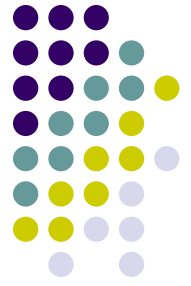
- e. Is this worth imitating? (1 Cor. 11:1; Phil. 4:9)
- f. Is this following the example of Christ? (Rom. 15:7-8; 1 Cor. 11:1; 1 John 2:6)
- g. Will my choice affect others around me? If so, in what way?
- h. Is it beneficial? Does it promote my spiritual life?
- i. Is it a practice that over time will tend to master me? Will it stimulate a desire that will be difficult to control?
- j. Is it constructive? Will it promote the spiritual well-being of other believers if they engage in this practice that is permissible for me?" —Jerry Bridges (*The Discipline of Grace*, 213)



VI. The Biblical Principles and Suggested Model



7. Affirm that your desires are God-honoring (Ps. 37:4).
 - a. What do I want to do? Will it bring glory to God? (1 Cor. 10:31)
 - b. Is this an occasion where my “flesh” (sinfulness) is seeking to indulge itself? (Gal. 5:13)
8. If you still can't decide:
 - a. Rom. 14:23; Heb. 11:25 (“holding principle” = if it involves the conscience)
 - b. Gather more data (Start over)



Summary of Guidelines

1. In situations where the Bible directly addresses your decision, it is to be obeyed.
2. In situations where there is no direct or indirect principle or command, you are free and responsible to choose your behavior.
3. In situations that have no bearing on biblical morality you are responsible to make wise decisions.
4. In all situations you are to humbly submit, in advanced, to God's sovereign will as it affects each of your decisions.