

THE WILL OF GOD

A PURPOSE ALREADY IN MOTION

*Understanding Intention, Responsibility,
and Decision-Making in Paul's Letters*

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The Will of God

A Purpose Already in Motion — Understanding Intention, Responsibility, and Decision-Making in Paul's Letters

by

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Preface

This work is an attempt to examine the will of God as described in the writings of the Apostle Paul. It is not written as a response to any particular theological system, nor is it intended to challenge for the sake of controversy. Instead, the goal is simple: to follow Paul's language carefully and allow his own framework to emerge as clearly as possible.

In many discussions, the will of God is approached through assumptions that feel intuitive, ideas about human independence, decision-making, and the role of choice. These assumptions are often so familiar that they go unexamined. As a result, the subject is frequently framed in terms of discovering a hidden path, making correct decisions, or avoiding mistakes that might place a person outside of God's plan.

However, when Paul's writings are read closely, a different emphasis begins to appear.

He speaks of God as one who is operating all things according to the counsel of His will. He describes God as working within individuals, not only in their actions, but in their very willing. He presents a purpose that cannot ultimately be withstood, and a will that is not merely desired, but actively carried out.

Taken together, these statements suggest a view of God's will that is more comprehensive and more active than it is often assumed to be.

This work proceeds from that observation.

It is important to clarify what this study is not attempting to do. It is not an argument against human experience, nor a denial that people think, choose, act, and grow. These realities are evident throughout Paul's letters and are taken seriously here. Nor is this work an effort to reduce life to a rigid or mechanical system. Paul's writings leave room for growth, maturity, understanding, and genuine participation.

At the same time, this study does not begin with the assumption that human will is independent. Instead, it examines how Paul describes the relationship between divine operation and human experience, and how that relationship shapes our understanding of responsibility, decision-making, and spiritual growth.

Because of this approach, some conclusions may feel unfamiliar. In particular, the idea that God operates both the willing and the working, and that His intention cannot be withstood, challenges common ways of thinking. The tension that results is not ignored or explained away. It is allowed to stand, just as Paul presents it.

This work is structured to follow that progression.

It begins by examining the nature of human will, not by denying its reality, but by questioning its independence. It then moves to consider the will of God in relation to His intention, paying close

attention to Paul's language. From there, it addresses the question of responsibility, and finally, the practical implications for decision-making.

The aim throughout is not to impose a system onto the text, but to draw one out from it.

For the reader, this means approaching the material with a willingness to reconsider familiar assumptions. Not every conclusion must be accepted, but each should be weighed against the text itself. Where the argument is strong, it should stand. Where it is not, it should be examined.

If this work succeeds, it will not provide a new system to adopt, but a clearer way of reading what is already present.

And perhaps more importantly, it will shift the question from:

“How do I find the will of God?”

to:

“How is the will of God already at work?”

Chapter 1

Rethinking Free Will. Is Human Will Truly Independent?

Introduction

This study focuses exclusively on the writings of the Apostle Paul, as his letters provide the clearest and most structured explanation of God's will, purpose, and operation. Instead of beginning with traditional assumptions about these concepts, this work will allow Paul's own language and reasoning to define the framework. The goal is not to impose a system onto his writings, but to draw one out from them.

What emerges is a view of God's will that is far more active, structured, and comprehensive than it is often assumed to be.

Few ideas are more deeply assumed in modern Christianity than "free will." It is often treated as foundational. So foundational, in fact, that many theological systems are built around it.

The common belief is simple:

Humans possess an independent choice apart from God. God presents us with options, and we exercise our choices to decide the outcome.

From this perspective, God's will is often seen as something that can be accepted, rejected, delayed, or even frustrated.

A flagship verse for this is Deu 30:19. Today I call the heavens and the earth *to* witness against you: Life and death I have put before you, the blessing and the malediction. Now choose life that you may live, you and your seed,

This creates a tension that, if left unresolved, can make the text appear internally inconsistent. But when we turn to the writings of Paul, a different picture begins to emerge. One that challenges not the existence of human will, but its **independence**.

1. The Assumption of Independent Will

In most modern discussions, "free will" means the ability to choose independently of outside determination. This can include moral decisions, spiritual responses, and whether a person accepts or rejects God. In many modern approaches they believe God is sovereign, but possessing a "free will" means that God may desire something, but humans ultimately decide whether it happens.

This assumption feels intuitive. It aligns with everyday experience. But the question is not what feels intuitive.

The question is:

Does Paul actually describe human will this way?

2. Paul's Radical Statement (Philippians 2:13)

Paul writes:

"For it is God Who is operating in you to will as well as to work for the sake of His delight." (Phil 2:13). This is one of the most direct statements in the New Testament about human willing.

Notice what Paul does **not** say. He does **not** say God *influences* the will. He does **not** say God *assists* the will. He does **not** say God *responds* to the will.

He says:

God operates the willing itself.

This shifts the foundation entirely.

3. The Implication: Will Without Independence

If God brings about both our willing and our working, then human agency is always dependent on divine action, not independent of it. This does not eliminate human will, it redefines it.

Human will is real, but it is derived, not independent.

4. Supporting Pattern in Paul's Writings

Philippians 2:13 is not isolated. It fits a broader pattern:

□ God operates all things according to His will (in Him in Whom our lot was cast also, being designated *beforehand* according to the purpose of the *One Who is* operating all *in accord with* the counsel of His will, Eph 1:11)

□ His intention cannot be withstood (you will be protesting to me, then, "Why, then, is He still blaming? for who has withstood His intention?" Rom 9:19)

□ Believers are designated according to His purpose (in love designating us *beforehand* for the place of a son for Him through Christ Jesus; *in accord with* the delight of His will, Eph 1:5)

Together, these statements reinforce a consistent idea:

God's activity is primary; human response exists within it.

It's easy to understand why there may be confusion here. Many other translations use the word will in both Eph 1:11 and Rom 9:19.

Rom 9:19:

Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? (KJV)

One of you will say to me: "Then why does God still blame us? For who is able to resist his will?" (NIV)

You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?" (NASB)

You will say to me then, "Why (then) does he still find fault? For who can oppose his will?" (NAB)

These are related but distinct Greek terms with different nuances. This distinction will be addressed in chapter 2.

5. Why This Feels Uncomfortable

This challenges a deeply held assumption:

"If my will is not independent, am I still responsible?"

That question is not new. Paul records it directly:

"Why, then, is He still blaming? For who has withstood His intention?" (Rom 9:19)

So the tension you feel is not a flaw in the system. It is part of the system.

6. What This Chapter Is (and Is Not) Saying

Let's be precise.

This chapter is NOT saying humans do not make choices. We make choices all day long. This chapter does NOT say that humans are passive or mechanical. No, we are not robots. This chapter does NOT say that actions and decisions are meaningless. Actions are meaningful, and decisions have consequences, whether good or bad.

This chapter IS saying human willing IS real, that human choices ARE real, but they are NOT independent of God's operation.

7. A Better Framework

Instead of thinking in terms of "free will vs no free will," Paul leads us to a better distinction:

Not:

Independent will vs no will

But:

Independent will vs dependent will

And Paul's answer is clear:

The human will is dependent, operated within the larger working of God.

8. Why This Matters for Everything That Follows

This is not a side issue.

If human will is independent that means that God's will can be resisted. Which in turn denies the sovereignty of God. Human will can render God's plan conditional which also denies the sovereignty of God. And that means responsibility is based on autonomy. If a person is forced, manipulated, or incapacitated, they cannot truly be held responsible for the consequences of their actions.

If human will is dependent then God's intention remains unthwartable, His will is constantly in operation, and responsibility must be defined differently.

Everything in the next chapters depends on this shift.

Conclusion

Paul does not deny that humans will, choose, and act.

What he denies implicitly but consistently, is that this willing originates independently of God.

Philippians 2:13 forces a redefinition:

The human will is not the starting point of action, it is one of the places where God's operation is revealed.

This reframing sets the stage for a deeper question. If God is operating both the will and the action, what does it mean to be responsible?

That is the question we will take up next.

Chapter 2

The Will of God and the Intention of God. What Cannot Be Withstood?

Introduction

At the close of Chapter 1, we were left with a necessary and unavoidable question:

If God is operating both the willing and the working, what does that mean for how His will actually functions?

Paul does not leave this question unanswered.

In Romans 9:19, he presents a statement that brings the issue into sharp focus:

“Why, then, is He still blaming? For who has withstood His intention?”

This is not a casual remark, it is a direct challenge to how we understand both God’s will and human experience.

If no one has withstood His intention, then we are dealing with something deeper than moral instruction or human decision-making.

We are dealing with a level of divine purpose that cannot ultimately be resisted.

1. Moving from Human Will to Divine Operation

Chapter 1 established that human willing is not independent.

Now we move one step further:

What is the nature of the will that God is operating?

Paul’s answer is consistent:

God operates all things according to the counsel of His will (Eph 1:11 in Him in Whom our lot was cast also, being designated *beforehand* according to the purpose of the *One Who is* operating all *in accord with* the counsel of His will,)

His will includes a purpose set beforehand (Eph 1:5 in love designating us *beforehand* for the place *of a* son for Him through Christ Jesus; *in accord with* the delight of His will,

His will involves a revealed plan now made known (Eph 1:9 making known to us the secret of His will (*in accord with* His delight, which He purposed in Him))

This is not a reactive system. It is a structured, intentional operation.

2. The Language of Intention

Romans 9:19 introduces a key idea:

“For who has withstood His intention?”

The word translated “intention” (**βουλήματι**, *boulēmati*) refers to a **resolved intention or deliberate purpose**. This form comes from the related Greek term **βούλημα** (*boulēma*), which expresses intention at the level of decision or resolve.

This is not merely desire, it is decided intent.

And Paul’s statement is absolute:

no one has withstood it.

3. Clarifying the Language: Intention and Will

At this point, a key distinction must be made. In many translations, both Ephesians 1:11 and Romans 9:19 use the word “will.” However, Paul uses related but distinct Greek terms:

- **βουλή** (*boulē*) - counsel, deliberate resolve
- **βούλημα** (*boulēma*, appearing in Romans 9:19 as *boulēmati*) - resolved intention or purpose
- **θέλημα** (*thelēma*, appearing in Ephesians 1:11 as *thelēmatos*) - will, as expressed and carried out

This distinction is not incidental, it is structural.

In Romans 9:19, Paul writes:

“For who has withstood His intention?”

Here, the term **βούλημα** emphasizes intention at the level of resolve, something not merely considered, but determined.

In Ephesians 1:11, Paul writes:

“according to the counsel (*boulēn*) of His will (*thelēmatos*)”

This reveals a layered relationship:

- God’s **counsel** (*boulē*) expresses His deliberate purpose
- God’s **will** (*thelēma*) is the expression and execution of that purpose

The use of **βούλημα** reinforces the certainty of that purpose. it is not only intended, but resolved.

In other words:

The will of God is the active outworking of a resolved intention that cannot ultimately be resisted.

4. The Scope of God’s Will

Paul expands the scope of God’s will beyond what is commonly assumed. God’s will is not limited to moral instruction, is not confined to human decisions, and is not dependent on human cooperation.

It is not just about the Bible telling us what is right and wrong. It includes God's control over everything that happens, the big picture of life and history, often working behind the scenes. It involves how God specifically shapes your life, talents, and path for His purposes.

Essentially, God's will is not only about **how we should behave** but also **what He is doing in the world**.

“He is operating all in accord with the counsel of His will” (Eph 1:11)

That phrase **all** cannot be reduced. It includes events, outcomes, processes, and even the internal willing described in Philippians 2:13 (“For it is God Who is operating in you to will as well as to work for the sake of His delight.”). All means exactly that, all things, without exception.

5. The Problem Revisited

If God's intention cannot be withstood, and He is operating both the willing and the working, then the question becomes unavoidable:

Why is there still blame?

This is not a side issue. It is the central tension created by Paul. If God's intention cannot be withstood, God's will is the active outworking of that intention, God is operating both willing and working, then the question from Romans 9:19 becomes unavoidable.

6. Rethinking “Resistance”

At this point, many assume people resist God's will. But that assumption must be examined carefully.

If God is:

operating all things (Eph 1:11),

operating the will itself (Phil 2:13),

and working according to an intention that cannot be withstood (Rom 9:19),

then resistance cannot mean overriding God's purpose, preventing God's outcome, or acting outside His operation.

What appears as resistance is better understood as experienced misalignment within a process that God Himself is actively operating. From the human perspective, there is struggle, there is delay, and there may even be failure.

From the divine perspective the will of God is continuously being carried out

7. A Unified Picture

When Paul's statements are held together, a consistent structure emerges:

God has an intention that cannot be overturned.

God expresses that intention through His will.

God actively operates that will in all things.

Human experience unfolds within that operation.
Nothing exists outside this framework.

8. Why This Distinction Matters

Without this distinction, the will of God becomes fragile, human action appears ultimate, and God's purpose seems conditional.

With this distinction, God's intention remains unbreakable, God's will remains active, and the human experience is real, but not ultimate.

Conclusion

Romans 9:19 does not introduce confusion, it clarifies the depth of Paul's teaching that no one ultimately withstands God's intention. Ephesians 1:11 explains how that intention functions in that God operates all things according to the counsel of His will. And Philippians 2:13 reveals where that operation reaches, even into the willing and working of the individual.

The result is a unified conclusion. God's will is not merely something He desires, it is the active expression of an intention that cannot ultimately be resisted.

This brings us directly to the next and most difficult question:

If this is true, what does responsibility actually mean?

That is where we turn next.

Chapter 3

The Potter and the Clay — God’s Willing in Action

Introduction

Up to this point, we have followed Paul’s language carefully.

God operates all according to the counsel of His will (Ephesians 1:11).
God operates the willing and the working within the individual (Philippians 2:13).
No one has withstood His intention (Romans 9:19).

These statements establish something foundational. The will of God is not presented as uncertain desire. It is not a possibility waiting on human response. It is described as active, deliberate, and effective in bringing about what God intends.

But Scripture does not leave this truth in abstract terms, it gives an image.

In Jeremiah 18:1–6, the prophet is sent to the potter’s house. There, what has been stated doctrinally is shown in action.

The Potter Forms the Vessel

Jeremiah observes the potter working at the wheel, forming a vessel from clay.

The emphasis is not incidental. The potter is not observing the clay. He is not reacting to it. He is working it. The vessel is being formed according to the intention of the one shaping it.

The clay does not determine its own outcome. The potter does. This is not a picture of cooperation between equal parties. It is a picture of authority and formation. The one who makes determines what is made.

The Marred Vessel Does Not Escape the Potter’s Hand

As the vessel is being formed, it becomes marred in the potter’s hand. This does not end the process. The potter does not abandon the clay. He does not lose control of the work. Instead, he reshapes it into another vessel, “just as it *seemed* upright in *the* eyes of the potter to make.” (Jer 18:4)

This detail is critical.

The marring of the vessel does not introduce a second controlling will. It does not transfer authority to the clay. The process continues under the direction of the potter. The vessel remains in his hand.

What appears to be disruption does not overturn intention. It becomes part of the process through which the intention is carried out.

As the Clay Is in the Potter's Hand

The interpretation is given plainly:

“like clay in *the* hand of the potter, so *are* you in My hand.” (Jer 18:6)

This is not symbolic language meant to soften the point. It is meant to clarify it.

God's relationship to what He has made is not distant. It is not passive. It is active, direct, and formative. He does not merely desire outcomes. He works them. He does not express intention and wait to see what will happen. He forms according to what seems right to Him.

This is willing in action.

Paul's Use of the Same Image

When Paul raises the question in Romans 9:19 “For who has withstood His intention?” he immediately turns to this same imagery:

“*That which is* molded will not protest to the molder, “Why *do* you make me thus?”

Or has not the potter *the* right *over* the clay, (Romans 9:20 – 21)

This is not a new argument. It is a continuation of the same principle. What Jeremiah shows in image, Paul states directly.

God's intention is not uncertain. God's operation is not passive. God's authority over what He forms is not shared with the thing being formed.

The potter forms.

The clay is formed.

The explanation for the outcome does not lie in the clay, but in the one who works it.

The Force of the Question

This is why the question of Romans 9:19 carries weight:

“Why does He still find fault?”

That question only arises if God's will is understood as effective.

If His intention could be ultimately resisted, the question would collapse. But Paul does not weaken God's will to answer the objection, He reinforces it.

“O man! who are you, to be sure, *who are* answering again to God?” (Rom 9:20)

The issue is not resolved by redefining God's will. It is resolved by recognizing the distinction between the one who forms and the thing formed.

Jeremiah 19 and the Seriousness of the Vessel

Read Jeremiah chapter 19. It intensifies the same imagery. The vessel, once formed, is shown in relation to judgment and outcome. The point is not to introduce a different principle, but to reinforce the seriousness of what is made and how it is used.

The authority of the potter extends not only to formation, but to purpose. What is formed is not incidental. It is intentional.

Conclusion

The picture is consistent.

God's will is not presented as passive desire. It is active formation. It operates. It shapes. It brings about what is intended.

The vessel is real. Its condition is real. Its use is real. But the controlling explanation does not originate within the vessel itself, It originates with the potter.

The clay does not step outside the hand that forms it and the potter does not lose authority over the clay at any stage of the process.

That is God's willing in action.

But this immediately raises a question.

If God forms, reshapes, and brings about what He intends, if the vessel remains in His hand throughout, then on what basis does Scripture still speak of responsibility?

Paul does not avoid this question. He raises it directly:

“Why, then, is He still blaming?” (Rom 9:19)

The answer will not be found by weakening what has been established about God, It must be found within it.

That is where we turn next.

Chapter 4

Responsibility Within God's Operation. What Does It Mean to Be Accountable?

Introduction

At the end of Chapter 2, we arrived at a conclusion that is both clear and difficult to ignore: God's intention cannot be withstood (Romans 9:19).

Jeremiah 18 does not soften that conclusion. It illustrates it. The potter forms the clay according to what seems right to him, and the clay does not step outside his hand.

What was stated in principle is now seen in action. This is not a peripheral question. It arises directly from what has been established.

God operates all according to the counsel of His will (Eph 1:11).
God operates the willing and the working within the individual (Phil 2:13).
God forms as the potter forms the clay (Jer 18:4).
And no one has withstood His intention (Rom 9:19).

If this is so, then on what basis does Scripture still speak of responsibility? This is not a tension created by misunderstanding. It is a tension created by taking the text seriously.

Paul does not avoid it. He does not soften the statements that led to it. He does not redefine God's will as uncertain or dependent. Instead, he answers within the same framework. Responsibility is not presented as existing outside of God's operation. It is presented within it.

To understand this, we must follow Paul's language just as carefully here as we have in everything that has come before.

1. The False Definition of Responsibility

Most discussions begin with an unspoken assumption, that responsibility requires independence from God. Under this view, a person must be able to act outside of God's influence and must be the ultimate source of their choices. Otherwise, accountability would seem unfair or meaningless.

But this definition does not come from Paul. In fact, it conflicts directly with Philippians 2:13, where God operates both the willing and the working. If that is true, then responsibility cannot mean independence from God.

2. Paul's Pattern: Command and Operation Together

Paul consistently places two realities side by side:

Human instruction:

- "Work out your own salvation..." (Phil 2:12)
- "Be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Rom 12:2)

- “Understand what the will of the Lord is” (Eph 5:17)

Divine operation:

- “For it is God Who is operating in you...” (Phil 2:13)
- “God is operating all...” (Eph 1:11)

These are not presented as opposites.

They are presented as a unified structure.

You are called to act, because God is actively operating.

3. Responsibility as Participation, Not Origination

If responsibility is not independence, then what is it? Paul’s writings point consistently to this.

Responsibility is participation in what God is doing, not origination of action apart from Him.

This reframes everything. You do not generate the process. You are involved in the process. Your participation is real, but not self-originating

This is why Paul can speak of effort without attributing ultimate causation to the individual.

4. The Reality of Human Experience

None of this removes the reality of lived experience. People think, choose, struggle, grow, fail, and mature.

Paul addresses all of these directly. He calls for understanding (**Col 1:9** – Therefore we also, from *the day on* which we hear, *do* not cease praying for you and requesting that you may be filled full *with* the realization of His will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, discernment (**Rom 12:2** – and *not* to be configured to this eon, but to be transformed *by* the renewing of your mind, for you to be testing what *is* the will of God, good and well pleasing and perfect.), and stability (**Col 4:12** – Greeting you is Epaphras, *who is one* of you, *a* slave of Christ Jesus, always struggling for you in prayers, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all *the* will of God.)

These are not illusions. They are the **means by which God’s will is worked out in experience.**

5. Accountability Without Independence

This brings us back to the central issue, why does Paul still speak of accountability?

Because responsibility is not about independence, it is about **alignment within God’s operation.**

A person is accountable for how they stand within what God is doing, whether they are aligned or misaligned in experience, and their growth toward maturity and understanding

This is why Paul emphasizes:

- Being filled with the knowledge of His will (Col 1:9)
- Standing mature and assured (Col 4:12)

Accountability is tied to **participation and alignment**, not ultimate control.

6. What Responsibility Is Not

To avoid confusion, we need to be explicit.

Responsibility is NOT:

- The ability to override God's intention
- The power to act outside His operation
- The cause of final outcomes

If it were, Romans 9:19 would not stand.

7. What Responsibility Actually Is

A more accurate definition, consistent with Paul, is this:

Responsibility is the lived experience of responding to God's active work, where a person's thoughts, choices, and actions are real and meaningful, even though they are not independent of God's operation.

This preserves both truths:

- God is fully sovereign
- Human experience is fully real

8. The Layered Reality

To understand this clearly, it helps to see the structure Paul presents:

The Divine Layer

- God operates all things (Eph 1:11)
- God's intention cannot be resisted (Rom 9:19)
- God produces willing and working (Phil 2:13)

The Human Layer

- People think, choose, and act
- People experience growth and failure
- People are instructed and corrected

These are not separate systems.

The human layer exists within the divine operation.

9. The Practical Shift

This changes how responsibility is understood in daily life.

Instead of "I must act independently to fulfill God's will."

The shift becomes "I am participating in what God is actively working."

This leads to awareness instead of anxiety, alignment instead of control, and growth instead of self-reliance.

10. The Tension Is Intentional

If this still feels unresolved, that is not a flaw. Paul does not remove the tension between God's sovereignty and human responsibility.

He maintains it, because both are necessary. If you remove sovereignty, everything depends on human effort. If you remove responsibility, nothing has meaning.

Conclusion

The question raised in Romans 9:19 is not dismissed, it is answered through a redefinition of responsibility.

Paul does not ground responsibility in independence. He grounds it in participation within God's operation. The result is a framework where God is continuously working, humans are actively involved, growth, effort, and alignment are real, but nothing exists outside God's intention.

This leads naturally to the next question, if God is operating both the will and the outcome, how should we actually make decisions?

That is where we turn next.

Chapter 5

Decision-Making - Living Within a Will Already in Motion

Introduction

At the end of Chapter 3, we arrived at a necessary question:

If God is operating both the will and the outcome, how should we actually make decisions?

This is where many discussions about God's will become unclear. After establishing God's sovereignty, people often return to familiar language:

- "Seek God's will for your life"
- "Find the right path"
- "Make the correct choice"

But if what Paul has described is true if:

- God is operating all things (Eph 1:11)
- God is operating the willing and the working (Phil 2:13)
- God's intention cannot be withstood (Rom 9:19)

Then decision-making cannot function the way it is commonly assumed.

It must be rethought.

1. The Common Approach to Decision-Making

Most people approach decisions as if there is a "right" choice and a "wrong" choice. They think God has a specific preference, and the individual needs to discover and select it.

This approach often produces anxiety, marked by uncertainty, pressure to interpret signs, and fear of making the wrong decision.

Under this model, God's will is treated as a hidden outcome that must be discovered and correctly chosen. But Paul never describes it this way.

2. The Shift: From Finding to Recognizing

Romans 12:2 reframes the issue:

"...be transformed by the renewing of your mind, for you to be testing what is the will of God..."

Notice the direction. You are not searching or guessing. You are recognizing and discerning.

This only makes sense if God's will is already in operation. You are not creating it, you are coming to understand it.

3. Decision-Making Within God's Operation

If God is already operating, then the situation you are in is not accidental. The options before you are not outside His will. The outcome is never uncertain from His perspective.

This leads to a different understanding. **You are not stepping into or out of God's will, you are making decisions within it.**

That removes the idea that one wrong choice places you "outside" of God's plan.

4. The Role of Thought, Wisdom, and Desire

Paul does not eliminate thinking or effort. Instead, he emphasizes:

- renewed thinking (and *not* to be configured to this eon, but to be transformed *by* the renewing of your mind, for you to be testing what *is* the will of God, good and well pleasing and perfect. Rom 12:2),
- Wisdom and understanding (that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may be giving you *a* spirit of wisdom and revelation in *the* realization of Him, Eph 1:17),
- and maturity (that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may be giving you *a* spirit of wisdom and revelation in *the* realization of Him, Col 4:12).
- And don't forget God operates the willing itself (Phil 2:13)

This means your desires are not irrelevant, your reasoning is not separate from God's work, and your growth affects how clearly you perceive.

Decision-making becomes **an expression of a mind being shaped, not a test of independent accuracy.**

5. What About “Wrong” Decisions?

This is where most people hesitate. If God is operating everything, then can a person make a wrong decision?

From a human perspective, yes, decisions can be unwise. Yes, consequences are real. But growth often comes through error.

But from the larger framework Paul presents that **No decision exists outside God's operating will.**

Even missteps become part of the process, contribute to growth, and fit within the larger intention of God. This does not make decisions meaningless.

It makes them **non-ultimate.**

6. The End of Decision Anxiety

This framework removes a major burden. You are not trying to unlock a hidden answer. You are not responsible for controlling outcomes, and you're not one mistake away from missing God's plan.

Instead, you are participating in what God is already doing. You're growing in awareness and alignment while acting within a will that is already in motion.

7. What Decision-Making Actually Looks Like

Practically, this leads to a different approach. Think clearly, use wisdom, act sincerely, and continue growing.

Not to control the outcome, but because this is how God's will is expressed through you. This aligns with:

- Doing the will of God from the soul (*not* with eye-slavery, as man-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from *the* soul, Eph 6:6),

- Living with gratitude (In *everything* be *giving* thanks, for this *is the* will of God in Christ Jesus for you. 1 Thess 5:18),
- Pursuing holiness (For this is *the* will of God: your holiness. You *are* to be abstaining from all prostitution; 1 Thess 4:3).

Act in accordance with what has been made clear, recognizing that even this understanding is shaped within God's ongoing work.

8. The Role of Prayer

This naturally raises another question, If God is already operating everything, what is the role of prayer? Within this framework, prayer is not informing God, persuading God, or changing an uncertain outcome.

Instead, prayer functions as alignment, awareness, and participation. It is part of how a person engages with what God is doing, grows in understanding, and is shaped internally.

9. Living Without Illusion

This perspective removes two common illusions:

Illusion 1:

"I must discover the exact will of God for each decision."

Illusion 2:

"My choices determine whether God's will succeeds."

Both are replaced with:

God's will is already in motion, and I am living within it.

10. A New Posture Toward Life

This produces a different way of living. It removes fear of failure, removes the pressure to control the outcome, and instills a greater confidence in God's operation. Not because decisions don't matter, but because they are no longer ultimate.

Conclusion

If Paul's teaching is taken seriously, decision-making is not about locating a hidden path or securing a perfect outcome.

It is about:

- Living within a will that is already active
- Participating in what God is doing
- Growing in awareness, understanding, and alignment

The result is a clear and stabilizing truth:

You are not trying to enter God's will, You are already within it.