Home Assignment/ Emmaus EFC/ SBC Open House/CIC Dr. Rick Griffith

May-July 2001/ 28 Oct 2012/ 17 Jan 2013/31 July 2016 Single Message

New International Version 23 Minutes

**Whose Will?**

Title

***1 Kings 22:1-40***

**Topic:** God’s Will

**Subject:** Seek the Lord sincerely

**Complement:** because ignoring God’s clear will has serious results.

**Purpose:** The listeners will commit themselves to doing God’s will rather than their own in a certain area of indecision in their lives (master, mate, mission).

**Meditation:** Jer. 29:13

**Reading:** 1 Kings 22:1-40 (long) or 1 Kings 22:1-17 (short)

# Introduction

Family 1991

### Interest: Today we’re talking about God’s will, so let me tell you briefly what His plan has been for my family since we moved to Singapore with two small boys in 1991. Our youngest was born here in 1992.

Sons 2015

Sons 1995

#### Now, 25 years later, God blessed my wife Susan and me with three sons, ages 29, 26 and 23. We even have two wonderful daughters-in-law now!

Family 2016

#### His plan for us since 1991 has been as missionaries to train Asian leaders in Singapore just below the 10-40 Window “on the window sill.” You may know that this “window” is the poorest area of the world where 97% of the unreached peoples live! God has truly given us an open door!

God’s Will

Map

SBC

### Need: Do you wonder what “door” before you is God’s will?

Doors

#### Your job has lost its challenge.

• Job

#### Your ministry may be coming to an end.

• Marriage

• Ministry

• ?

#### Your desire for a life partner still hasn’t been fulfilled.

#### Some other area of your life causes you to seek what God may have in store.

### Subject: How can you do *God’s* will rather than your own? How can you make sure that your own will isn’t getting in the way?

Issue

### Background: Two kings who struggled with knowing God’s will answer this question.

Two Kings

### Preview: As we study them, we will see three principles to help us discern God’s will.

### Transition: One warning these two kings teach us in seeking God’s will is…

# I. Don’t say you want God’s will when you’ve already made up your mind.

MP

# [Don’t claim that you want what *God* wants when you want what *you* want.]

## [Wicked Ahab already decided for war before he sought godly Jehoshaphat’s help (1-4).]

### The situation in today’s text centers around the response of two kings to an enemy king:

Aram Map

#### Aram or Syria was the controlling country headed up by Ben-Hadad, their king. (Think “B” for Bad.)

• Aram

#### Israel was directly south with its angry, wicked king Ahab. (Think “A” for angry.)

• Israel

#### Farther south was Judah, whose king Jehoshaphat was mostly righteous [22:43]. (Think “J” for the Judah king Jehoshaphat who loved Jehovah.)

• Judah

• Team

#### Ahab and Jehoshaphat united to fight Ben-Hadad over the city of Ramoth Gilead.

### Text: This struggle with God’s will begins in 1 Kings 22:1-4.

### At issue was the strategic city of Ramoth Gilead.

Route Map

#### Israel already controlled the north-south trade international route called “the way of the Sea” at Megiddo, but Israel also wanted control over the east-west spice and caravan trade to gain the monopoly on international trade. Ramoth Gilead lay on this strategic east-west international trade route.

#### Ben-Hadad had already promised to return Ramoth Gilead along with the other cities seized from Israel (20:34) but he still hadn’t yet done it after three years.

### So Ahab wanted to take back Ramoth Gilead from the Arameans and he enlisted Jehoshaphat’s help (2-4).

### Yet notice that Ahab hasn’t even considered asking the Lord’s will in this matter. He just feels there’s an injustice and he’s going to take it into his own hands to rectify it.

(How about you?)

## Are *you* asking for God’s will but your decision is already made?

Already?

### Sometimes we simply want Him to rubber-stamp our own plans. An old preacher once prayed, “Lord use me as You will—especially as an advisor!”

Quote

#### You’ve *already decided* that you’re going to change jobs—or you’re not going to.

God’s Will?

#### You’re *not willing* to move—or you are insistent that you *must* move.

#### You’ve committed to marry that person even before finding out what God says.

#### We do this all the time—make up our minds and then, as an afterthought, we ask God. Do you pray, “Approve my plan, God!”

### Or are you willing to follow George Mueller’s advice?

Mueller

#### Maybe you’ve heard of George Mueller, the German missionary to England in the 1800s. He founded many orphanages and saw God answer over 50,000 prayers in his lifetime. He kept a meticulous journal of his requests and God’s answers. I know of no one else who seized the will of God more than Mueller.

#### Here is his first step in discerning God’s will that he followed in his lifetime of over 92 years (1805-1898): “I seek at the beginning to get my heart into such a state that it has no will of its own in regard to a given matter [repeat].”

How Long?

• Quote

### People often ask, “How long do you plan to stay in Singapore?” as if this is my decision! We haven’t got marching orders from the Commander-in-Chief to go elsewhere yet!

### The US Congress adopted “In God We Trust” as the national motto on 30 July 1956. This was the high point of US history, a time of the greatest wealth, morality, security, and just about every measure you can think of. Sadly, the country soon abandoned such a commitment and by 1962 threw prayer out of the schools. It has been mostly downhill since because the USA claims to trust God but does not do so.

God…Trust

# (So don’t just *say* that you want God’s will if you’ve already made up your mind. But should you get counsel from others? Of course, but here is a caution in the next movement of the story…)

I. Don’t say

Counsel?

# II. Don‘t seek counsel only from those “on your side.”

MP

# [Avoid getting your security in friends or family if they aren’t seeking God…]

## [Ahab’s decision to attack was rubber-stamped by his pagan advisors even though he knew God prohibited it (5-28).]

5-28

### Jehoshaphat requests a prophet to tell them whether the battle is God’s will (5).

### But Ahab prefers to have his pagan prophets rubber-stamp his plan (6).

#### Now don’t get fooled by the word “prophets” here. These are not really men who knew the future, but only court advisors paid by the king (see 18:19). Kings then typically requested counsel from their own and got encouragement in numbers.

#### Will they counsel *against* a king who’s already made up his mind? Hardly!

#### Sometimes even unbelievers pretend to speak for the Lord (6, 11-12). My non-Christian parents tried to convince me to become a businessman after I graduated from business school. They said this is how I could serve God.

### Still Jehoshaphat insists that God’s true prophet must be consulted (7).

### [Ahab reluctantly hears Micaiah’s message of judgment but rejects it (8-28).]

#### After Micaiah’s sarcastic prediction of success, he tells them plainly that Ahab will die in the battle (17).

#### In fact, a demonic plan was already in operation to accomplish God’s will!

### So Ahab foolishly sought to get his decision rubber-stamped by his pagan advisors even though he knew God prohibited it.

(This brings up an important question for you and me…)

## Are you seeking godly advice in your pursuit of God’s will? When we want advice, sometimes we ask only those whom we know will give us a favorable answer (6).

Handshake

### How much better to go to those who really know the situation!

### Back in 1998 after my second trip to Mongolia with my wife Susan I was asked to lead the small, fledging Bible school there. So we began to pray that God would really show us His will in the matter. I even cautioned my departmental dean at SBC that I might be transferring to Mongolia. But then, with hesitation, I asked my mission director. Why with hesitation? Because John knew me better than I knew myself, in certain ways. I was afraid he might say it wasn’t that great of an idea. He said frankly, “I don’t think that’s a good fit for you and Susan.” As it turned out, I didn’t go after all, but I learned to get advice from those not “one my side.”

Mongolia

# (I was glad I sought godly advice. But what’s the result from stubbornly pursuing our will rather than God’s?)

# III. Ignoring God’s clear will is disastrous.

MP

[We should fear the consequences when we *know* what God wants but refuse it.  
Sometimes God closes one door and opens another one that seems risky.

To refuse that uncertain opportunity is to guarantee decline.]

## [Ahab’s stubborn disregard for God’s will led to his death at Ramoth Gilead (29-40).]

29-40

### Ahab’s disguising himself in battle looked like it would save him from death (29-33).

### [But a random arrow killed Ahab to fulfill Micaiah’s prediction of his death (34-38).]

#### The soldier shot his arrow without even aiming, yet he had no idea that God had a GPS (God’s Positioning System) device on it right towards Ahab! Ahab should have known that no disguise could thwart God’s will.

#### Ironic, isn’t it? “Jehoshaphat went into battle in his royal robes and the Lord protected him; but Ahab in his disguise was slain.” Wiersbe, *Exp. OT,* 176

## What may result from you seeking *your* will rather than God’s?

Result your?

### Maybe it won’t be death—but something worse! But what could be worse?

### How about leanness in your soul?

### Or wouldn’t living for yourself rather than for Christ be worse than death?

(On the other hand…)

## What results from really seeking God’s plan in your life?

Result God’s?

### It’s great from then on, right? What did Micaiah get for his faithful ministry? Bread and water in prison!

### But he lived! And his conscience was clear, knowing that he was truly God’s servant!

# Conclusion

Subject

### So what did we learn from 1 Kings 22?

#### Don’t pretend to seek God’s will when you’ve already made up your mind.

MP I

#### Get the right kind of counsel by going only to godly counselors.

MP II

#### Remember that ignoring God’s clear will is disastrous.

MP III

### Seek the Lord sincerely because ignoring God’s clear will has serious results (MI).

Main Idea

#### You may face 400 to 1 odds like Micaiah—but you still must obey God.

#### Frankly, there’s only one vote that counts—the Lord’s.

God’s will?

### So what decision do you need to make?

#### Are you making a tough choice of mate, job, location, schooling or ethics?

Take time out  
(3 slides)

#### Will you take time out to ask the Lord about it? Take a day’s fasting retreat!

#### Here’s the clincher though—like George Mueller, will you tell God right now that you’ll do his will even before you know it? This makes complete sense, for, as Charles Spurgeon noted, “When your will is God’s will, you will have your will.”

Open hand

### Prayer

Home Assignment Message/ Emmaus EFC Dr. Rick Griffith

May-July 2001/ 28 Oct 2012 Single Message

New Living Translation 30 Minutes

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**Meditation:** Jer. 29:13

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# Introduction

### Interest: Today we’re talking about God’s will, so let me review for you briefly what His plan has been for my family.

Family 1991

#### God has blessed my wife Susan and me with three sons, ages 25, 23 and 20.

Family 2011

#### His plan for us the past 21 years has been as missionaries to train Asian leaders in Singapore here just below the 10-40 Window “on the window sill.”

Map

#### How have we done this?

Ministries

##### My primary ministry has been as a professor at Singapore Bible College to teach Bible and theology to Christian leaders from the 10-40 Window.

##### But BEE has become another opportunity for me to travel to lesser-developed countries such as Nepal and Vietnam.

##### I helped begin Crossroads International Church in Singapore, where I now serve as pastor-teacher.

##### Susan and I also helped start International Community School, where she served for years as art and music teacher.

##### So the Lord’s plan for me has been in certain places to change locations each day in order to train pastors in secret…

Another day

##### Whereas for Susan she has stayed put in Singapore, serving as librarian at International Community School for 8 years. Our sons graduated from ICS.

Librarian

### This also reminds me of Pastor Puje from Mongolia. Since there were only 6 Christians in Mongolia in 1990, Puje and his wife had the first Christian marriage in Mongolia since the 4th century AD!

Puje

#### I invited him to Singapore on my first trip to Mongolia and now he’s become quite a linguist and Bible scholar—his knowledge of Mongolian, Korean, Russian, and English has greatly aided his grasp of Greek and Hebrew. So Puje has a lot to offer the Mongolian church.

#### Upon returning, he was asked to return to head up some social programs. I told him, “You are one of two Mongolians in the world with a masters degree in Bible and theology—let someone else take that admin job and you start training the pastors without the need of a translator.” He’s wondering what God’s will is…

### Need: I wonder if you’re at crossroads in your life where you’re asking for God’s will.

Black

#### Your job has lost its challenge?

#### Your ministry may be coming to an end for some reason.

#### Your desire for a life partner still hasn’t been fulfilled.

#### Some other area of your life causes you to seek what God may have in store.

### Subject: How can you do *God’s* will rather than your own? How can you make sure that your own will isn’t getting in the way?

Issue

### Background: Two kings who struggled with knowing God’s will answer this question.

### Transition: One warning these kings teach us in seeking God’s will is…

# I. Don’t say you want God’s will when you’ve already made up your mind.

MP

# [Don’t claim that you want what God wants when you want what you want.]

## [Wicked Ahab already decided for war before he sought godly Jehoshaphat’s help (1-4).]

Black

### Text: This struggle with God’s begins in 1 Kings 22:1-4.

### The situation here centers around three countries:

Aram Map

#### Aram or Syria was the controlling country headed up by Ben-Hadad, their king.

#### Israel was directly to the south with its wicked king Ahab.

#### Farther south was Judah, whose king Jehoshaphat was mostly righteous [22:43].

### At issue was the strategic city of Ramoth Gilead.

Route Map

#### Israel already controlled the north-south trade international route called “the way of the Sea” at Megiddo, but Israel also wanted control over the east-west spice and caravan trade to gain the monopoly on international trade. Ramoth Gilead lay on this strategic east-west international trade route.

#### Ben-Hadad had already promised to return Ramoth Gilead along with the other cities seized from Israel (20:34) but he still hadn’t yet done it after three years.

### So Ahab wanted to take back Ramoth Gilead from the Arameans and he enlisted Jehoshaphat’s help (2-4).

### Yet notice that Ahab hasn’t even considered asking the Lord’s will in this matter. He just feels there’s an injustice and he’s going to take it into his own hands to rectify it.

(How about you?)

## Are *you* asking for God’s will but your decision is already made?

### Sometimes we simply want Him to rubber-stamp our own plans. An old preacher once prayed, “Lord use me as you will—if only in an advisory capacity!”

Quote

#### You’ve already decided that you’re going to change jobs—or you’re not going to.

#### You’re mind is made up that you are *not willing* to move—or you are insistent that you *must* move.

#### You’ve committed to marry that person even before finding out what God says.

#### We do this all the time—make up our minds and then, as an afterthought, we ask God. Do you pray, “Approve my plan, God!”

### Or are you willing to follow George Mueller’s advice?

#### Maybe you’ve heard of George Mueller, the German missionary to England in the 1800s. He founded many orphanages and saw God answer over 50,000 prayers in his lifetime (he kept a meticulous journal of his requests and God’s answers). I know of no one else who seized the will of God more than Mueller.

#### Here is his first step in discerning God’s will that he followed in his lifetime of over 92 years (1805-1898): “I seek at the beginning to get my heart into such a state that it has no will of its own in regard to a given matter [repeat].”

Quote

### People often ask, “How long will you stay in Singapore?” as if this is my decision! We haven’t got marching orders from the Commander-in-Chief to go elsewhere yet!

### Of course my students struggle with asking God to rubber-stamp their plans too. One Chinese friend at my church named Desmond was doing fantastic in selling insurance. By age 28 he had paid off his house and was preparing for retirement. He was training other agents too when he sensed God telling him to quit and come to the Bible college. Praise the Lord, though. He didn’t just *say* he wanted God’s will—rather than asking God to approve his plan, Desmond asked God for his own will, came to SBC, and now is dedicated to a lifetime of service in missions in Indonesia.

Des & Wendy

# (So don’t just *say* that you want God’s will if you’ve already made up your mind. Also…)

II. Don’t seek

# II. Don‘t seek counsel only from those on “your side.”

# [When we’re following our path rather than God’s path we can seek security in numbers…]

## [Ahab’s decision to attack was rubber-stamped by his pagan advisors even though he knew God prohibited it (5-28).]

### Jehoshaphat requests a prophet to tell them whether the battle is God’s will (5).

### But Ahab prefers to have his pagan prophets rubber-stamp his plan (6).

#### A few years earlier Elijah killed the 450 prophets of Baal at Mt. Carmel, but evidently the 400 prophets of Asherah escaped (18:40) and reappear here.

#### Now don’t get fooled by the word “prophets” here. These are not really men who knew the future, but only court advisors paid by the king (see 18:19). Kings then typically requested help from the gods before battle, but they often simply wanted encouragement in numbers.

#### Will they counsel against a king who’s already made up his mind? Hardly!

#### Sometimes even unbelievers pretend to speak for the Lord (6, 12). My non-Christian parents tried to convince me to become a businessman after I graduated from Cal State Hayward. They said this is how I could serve God.

### Still Jehoshaphat insists that God’s true prophet must be consulted (7).

### [Ahab reluctantly hears Micaiah’s message of judgment but rejects it (8-28).]

#### After Micaiah’s sarcastic prediction of success, he tells them plainly that Ahab will die in the battle (17).

#### In fact, a demonic plan was already in operation to accomplish God’s will!

### So Ahab’s decision to attack was rubber-stamped by his pagan advisors even though he knew God prohibited it.

(This brings up an important question for you and me…)

## Are we seeking godly advice in our pursuit of God’s will? When we want advice, sometimes we ask only those whom we know will give us a favorable answer (6).

### How much better to go to those who really know the situation!

### Back in 1998 after my second trip to Mongolia with my wife Susan I was asked to lead the small, fledging Bible school there. So we began to pray that God would really show us His will in the matter. I even cautioned my departmental dean at SBC that I might be transferring to Mongolia. But then, with hesitation, I asked my mission director. Why with hesitation? Because John knew me better than I knew myself, in certain ways. I was afraid he might say it wasn’t that great of an idea. He said frankly, “I don’t think that’s a good fit for you and Susan.” As it turned out, I didn’t go after all, but my influence led to three of my students going instead—two Filipinos and one Singaporean (Ariel & Connie, Poh Kuan).

# (I was glad I sought godly advice. But what’s the result from stubbornly pursuing our will rather than God’s?)

# III. Ignoring God’s clear will is disastrous.

MP

[We should fear the consequences when we *know* what God wants but refuse it.]

## [Ahab’s stubborn disregard for God’s will led to his death at Ramoth Gilead (29-40).]

### Ahab’s disguising himself in battle looks like it will save him from death (29-33).

### [But a random arrow kills Ahab to fulfill Micaiah’s prediction of his death (34-38).]

#### “The soldier shot the arrow without even aiming, yet the Lord directed it to its proper target! When the judgment of the Lord is about to fall, no devices or disguises a man uses will protect him.” Wiersbe, *Exp. Outlines of OT,* 176

#### Ironic, isn’t it? “Jehoshaphat went into battle in his royal robes and the Lord protected him; but Ahab in his disguise was slain.” Wiersbe, *Exp. OT,* 176

## What may result from you seeking your will rather than God’s?

### Maybe it won’t be death—but something worse! But what could be worse?

### How about leanness in your soul?

### Or wouldn’t living for yourself rather than for Christ be worse than death?

(On the other hand…)

## What results from really seeking God’s plan in your life?

### It’s great from then on, right? What did Micaiah get for his faithful ministry? Bread and water in prison!

### But he lived! And his conscience was clear, knowing that he was truly God’s servant!

# Conclusion

### So what did we learn from 1 Kings 22?

#### Don’t pretend to seek God’s will when you’ve already made up your mind.

#### Get the right kind of counsel by going only to godly counselors.

#### Remember that ignoring God’s clear will is disastrous.

### In a word: Seek the Lord sincerely because ignoring God’s clear will has serious results (MI).

Main Idea

#### You may be outnumbered 400 to 1 like Micaiah was—but that doesn’t mean you can disobey God.

#### Frankly, there’s only one vote that counts—the Lord’s.

### So what decision do you need to make?

#### Are you making a tough choice of mate, job, location, or ethical dilemma?

#### Maybe it’s best to think of the three most important decisions in our lives. Perhaps you’ve heard before that each one begins with “M”:

• Master

3 Ms

##### Your most important decision is your ***master***.

##### Your second most important life decision concerns your ***mate***. Is he or she a godly believer?

• Mate

##### Only after you have decided these first two can you move to the third key decision regarding your ***mission***.

• Mission

#### Who can provide you godly counsel in this decision?

#### Here’s the clincher though—like George Mueller, will you tell God right now that you’ll do his will even before you know it (sign the blank sheet)?

### Prayer

Preliminary Questions

**Verses Questions**

# Context: What did the author record just prior to this passage?

### King Ahab was the most wicked of all the kings of Israel (21:25).

### Ahab had just sealed his fate by stealing from and killing a poor, noble farmer named Naboth (1 Kings 21:1-16).

### God’s judgment was that dogs would lick up his blood in the same spot where he killed Naboth (21:19) and all his descendants would be cut off (21:21-22).

# Purpose: Why is this passage in the Bible?

# Background: What historical context helps us understand this passage?

### Who were these kings?

#### Ahab was more evil than any king before him in the northern kingdom (16:30). Enticed by his godless wife Jezebel, he brought Baal worship into the temple he built for Baal at Samaria (16:31-33).

#### Jehoshaphat, on the other hand, was righteous in almost every respect (22:43).

### The kings of Israel and Judah had a love-hate relationship.

#### Sometimes there was war between them, but at this particular point Jehoshaphat of Judah was an ally to Ahab of Israel. This is strange especially since Ahab was the most ungodly northern king and Jehoshaphat was one of the most godly kings in the south. Jehoshaphat had three joint ventures with Ahab that all ended unsuccessfully but every time he trusted in the Lord he succeeded (Rasmussen, 128).

#### The reason for their friendship is twofold:

##### First, they were brothers-in-law (NIVBC)???

##### Second, they had common enemies.

###### Ahab and Ben-Hadad had already fought in a coalition of 12 kings against Shalmanesar, king of the Assyrians earlier in the same year (853 BC; NIVBC; Beitzel, 133)—an event not noted in the OT.

###### But probably due to Ahab’s heavy losses in the battle, Ben-Hadad of Syria to the north now threatens his former ally Ahab—and if Ahab then probably Jehoshaphat as well. By the way, Ahab had the chance to defeat this Aramean king three years earlier but foolishly made a treaty with him and let him go (ch. 20). Now it has been three years since Ahab had defeated Ben-Hadad and yet this Syrian king still hadn’t fulfilled his promise to relinquish the Israelite cities held captive (22:1).

### Where: One of those unrelinquished cities was Ramoth Gilead.

#### This place was a city of refuge (Deut. 4:43) where those who committed supposed crimes could wait until the death of the high priest (Josh. 20:4-6). It was also a Levitical city.

#### More significantly, Ramoth Gilead lay on the strategic east-west international trade route. Israel already controlled the north-south trade international route at Megiddo, but Israel also wanted control over the east-west spice and caravan trade to gain the monopoly on international trade.

#### Ben-Hadad had already promised to return Ramoth Gilead along with the other cities seized from Israel (20:34) but still hadn’t yet done it even though it had been three years.

### When: The year is 853 BC—just after Aram and Israel had been allies against Assyria (Battle of Qarqar).

# Questions

### Where are Aram and Israel (1)?

### What’s another name for Aram?

### When did this story take place?

### What happened during the last war between Aram and Israel (1)?

### Why are the kings of Israel and Judah chummy-chummy with each other (2)?

### Who were these kings?

#### Ahab was more evil than any king before him in the Northern Kingdom (16:30). Enticed by his godless wife Jezebel, he brought Baal worship into the temple he built for Baal at Samaria (16:31-33).

#### Jehoshaphat, on the other hand, was righteous in almost every respect (22:43).

### The kings of Israel and Judah had a love-hate relationship.

#### Sometimes they fought each other, but at this particular point Jehoshaphat of Judah was an ally to Ahab of Israel. This is strange since Ahab was the most ungodly northern king and Jehoshaphat was one of the most godly kings in the south.

#### The reason for their friendship is twofold:

##### First, their children had married one another.

##### Second, they had a common enemy— Ben-Hadad of Syria to the north.

###### Chapter 20 says that Ahab had the chance to defeat this enemy king three years earlier but foolishly made a treaty with him and let him go.

###### Now it’s been three years since Ahab had defeated Ben-Hadad and yet this Syrian king still hadn’t fulfilled his promise to relinquish the Israelite cities held captive (22:1).

### One of those key unrelinquished cities was Ramoth Gilead.

#### Ramoth Gilead lay on the strategic east-west international trade route. Israel already controlled the north-south trade international route at Megiddo, but Israel also wanted control over the east-west spice and caravan trade to gain the monopoly on international trade.

#### Ben-Hadad had already promised to return Ramoth Gilead along with the other cities seized from Israel (20:34) but he still hadn’t yet done it after three years.

### Why was Ramoth Gilead so important (3)?

### Why did Ahab ask for Jehoshaphat’s help against Ben-Hadad of Syria (4)?

### Why did Jehoshaphat agree to fight with wicked Ahab (5)?

### Was Jehoshaphat sincere in wanting to ask for God’s will in the matter (5b)?

#### If so, why then didn’t he first ask the Lord before agreeing to go into battle?

#### “First, we should first pray with Paul that we ‘may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding’ (Col. 1:9; Dilday, 243).

#### “Both kings had flawed concepts of prophecy. Ahab thought of prophets as agents of magic who, with the use of dramatic symbolism, could give moral support to the king and the people when called upon. Their magic, he believed, could influence God by auto-suggestion. On the other hand, Jehoshaphat correctly saw prophets as agents of divine revelation, but he erred in his mistaken belief that the revelation was primarily intended to confirm decisions he had already made and that prophetic warnings could be ignored without danger” (Dilday, 243).

### Why did Ahab ask the pagan prophets right after Jehoshaphat asked him to ask for the Lord’s will (6)?

### Would the prophet’s of Baal ever give an answer that wasn’t favorable to the king (6)?

### Why didn’t Ahab request for one of the Lord’s prophets to come before him (7)? He feared the answer of Micaiah and hoped that 400 pagan prophets would solve the matter!

### Why are the pagan prophets pretending to speak for the Lord (12)?

### What’s the significance of Zedekiah’s dramatic depiction of the goring of Aram (11)? He’s quoting Deuteronomy 33:17 where Moses prophesied that Israel will gore the nations—false prophets often even use Scripture!

### Do angels and demons really appear before the Lord like this (19-22)? Yes, the Bible has many accounts of heavenly assemblage (Patterson and Austel, EBC, 4:165, n. 19b): Job 1:6; 2:1; Pss. 82:1; 89:6-7; 103:19-20; 148:1-2; Zech. 6:5-8; cf. 1 Tim. 5:21; Heb. 1:6; 12:22; Rev. 5:11-12; 7:11-12; 14:10).

### Was this a demon or an angel (TLB) that appeared before God (20)?

### Wasn’t it a bit stupid for Jehoshaphat to willingly be the only one to dress up in kingly robes for the battle (30)?

# Tentative Subject/Complement Statements

Emphasize the seeking:

Ask for God’s will only if you intend on keeping it.

Seek God’s counsel only if you’re serious.

Emphasize the results:

It’s a bad scene to pretend to seek God’s will.

Seeking God’s will reluctantly has serious results.

Emphasize the disobedience:

Ignoring God’s clear will is disastrous.

Ignoring God’s clear will has serious results

“How can one determine who is right when two prophets, both claiming to speak for God, give conflicting reports? Zedekiah and Micaiah both called themselves prophets of Yahweh… religious authority must be both objective and subjective, grounded in the witness both of the Word and Spirit” (Dilday, 247).

### Of course my students struggle with asking God to rubber-stamp their plans too. One Chinese friend at my church named Desmond was doing fantastic in selling insurance. By age 28 he had paid off his house and was preparing for retirement. He was training other agents too when he sensed God telling him to quit and come to the Bible college. Praise the Lord, though. He didn’t just *say* he wanted God’s will—rather than asking God to approve his plan, Desmond asked God for his own will, came to SBC, and now is dedicated to a lifetime of service in missions in Indonesia.

Des & Wendy

# Possible Illustrations

### When we want advice, sometimes we ask only those whom we know will give us a favorable answer (6).

#### How much better to go to those who really know the situation!

#### How often do we judge a speaker based on how favorable his message is to us—rather than how truthful he is to God’s Word?

### We almost moved to Mongolia except that I asked my director who knew me better than I knew myself.

### Sometimes even unbelievers pretend to speak for the Lord (12). My parents tried to convince me to become a businessman after I graduated from Cal State Hayward. They said this is how I could serve God.

### People often ask me, “How long do you plan to stay in Singapore?” as if this is my decision! We haven’t got marching orders from the Commander-in-Chief to go elsewhere yet!

### Students to highlight

#### Puje

#### Maidar

#### Ariel & Connie, Poh Kuan

#### Desmond & Bobby

#### Ronny & Suzen

### When trying to decide God’s will, remember that the majority opinion isn’t always right (13).

### Interest: It’s been 10 years now that my family has served in Singapore to train Asian pastors and leaders at Singapore Bible College. Imagine! Ten years! And when you hit a milestone you often ask “Lord, what next?”

#### I don’t have any announcements in this area! We plan to stay in Singapore year by year. In fact I have plans to travel to 9 or 10 countries this year alone.

#### But two of our three boys will be teenagers in the coming year and this brings questions about God’s will—education, adjustments, peers, etc.

#### I admit that I’m tempted just to continue with the status quo rather than asking for *God’s* plan for my family.

### We’re changing churches in Singapore this summer primarily because the leaders at our church want to justify their actions rather than humbly seek God’s will.

### What is really our attitude when we seek God’s will?

#### Do we simply want Him to rubber-stamp our own plans?

#### Are we willing to follow George Mueller’s advice?

Maybe you’ve heard of George Mueller, the German missionary to England in the mid-1800s. He founded several orphanages for the Lord and saw God answer over 50,000 recorded prayers in his lifetime (he kept a meticulous journal of his requests and God’s answers). I know of no one else who seized the will of God more than Mueller. Here are his steps how the Spirit led him during his lifetime of over 92 years (1805-1898).

1. I SEEK AT THE BEGINNING to get my heart into such a state that it has no will of its own in regard to a given matter. Nine-tenths of the trouble with people is just here. Nine-tenths of the difficulties are overcome when our hearts are ready to do the Lord's will, whatever it may be. When one is truly in this state, it is usually but a little way to the knowledge of what His will is.

2. HAVING DONE THIS, I do not leave the result to feeling or simple impression. If I do so, I make myself liable to great delusions.

3. I SEEK THE WILL of the Spirit of God through, or in connection with, the Word of God. The Spirit and the Word must be combined. If I look to the Spirit alone without the Word I lay myself open to great delusions also. If the Holy Ghost guides us at all, He will do it according to the Scriptures and never contrary to them.

4. NEXT I TAKE into account providential circumstances. These often plainly indicate God's will in connection with His Word and Spirit.

5. I ASK GOD in prayer to reveal His will to me aright.

6. THUS, THROUGH PRAYER to God, the study of the Word, and reflection, I come to a deliberate judgment according to the best of my ability and knowledge, and if my mind is thus at peace, and continues so after two or three more petitions, I proceed accordingly.

In trivial matters, and in transactions involving most important issues, I have found this method always effective.

*Source: George Mueller, “How I Ascertain the Will of God,” from “An Hour with George Mueller: The Man of Faith to Whom God Gave Millions” ed. A. Sims (Warren Myers, P.O. Box 125: Singapore), ca. 1981.*

\_\_\_\_\_\_

We tend to want to jump right to step 5, don't we?

Step 1 is the hardest but the most important!

**Who’s Will?**

***1 Kings 22:1-40***

**Exegetical Outline**

***Exegetical Idea:* The result of Ahab’s stubborn disregard for God’s will by pursuing his own pre-determined will to attack Ramoth Gilead is death.**

# I. Setting/Choice: The mind of wicked Ahab is already made up to reconquer Ramoth Gilead but he seeks the godly Jehoshaphat to go with him (1-4)

## Aram and Israel had no battles since Ahab’s victory over Ben-Hadad three years earlier (1; cf. ch. 20).

## Ahab wants to take back Ramoth Gilead from the Arameans so he enlists Jehoshaphat’s help (2-4).

# II. Formalities: The decision of Ahab to attack Ramoth Gilead is rubber-stamped by his pagan advisors even though he knows God prohibits it (5-28).

## Jehoshaphat requests a prophet to tell them whether the battle is God’s will (5).

## Ahab prefers to have his pagan prophets rubber-stamp his plan (6).

## Jehoshaphat insists that God’s true prophet must be consulted (7).

## Ahab reluctantly hears Micaiah’s message of judgment but rejects it (8-28).

# III. Conclusion: The result of Ahab’s stubborn disregard for God’s will is death at Ramoth Gilead (29-40).

## Ahab’s plan to disguise himself in battle looks like it will work and save him from death (29-33).

## But a random arrow kills Ahab to fulfill Micaiah’s prediction of his death (34-38).

## The epilogue of Ahab’s prosperity shows that he was wealthy yet ungodly (39-40).

**Homiletical Outline** (Cyclical inductive form)

# Introduction

### Interest: Milestones cause us to ask for God’s will (10 yrs. in Singapore, Puje asked to lead social work).

### Need: Some of us are at crossroads in our lives where we’re asking for God’s will (job, ministry, life partner, etc.)

### Subject: How can you make sure you’re doing *God’s* will rather than your own?

### Background: Ahab and Jehoshaphat struggled with knowing God’s will.

### Text: This struggle took place in 1 Kings 22.

### Transition: The first principle in seeking God’s will is actually a warning…

# I. Don’t make up your mind before seeking God’s will.

## Wicked Ahab already had decided to go to battle when he sought the godly Jehoshaphat’s help (1-4)

## Are you asking for God’s will but your decision is already made?

# (When we’ve decided to follow our path, how do we make up for the security this brings?)

# II. Don’t seek counsel only from those on “your side.”

## Ahab’s decision to attack was rubber-stamped by his pagan advisors even though he knew God prohibited it (5-28).

## Are you seeking godly advice in your pursuit of God’s will? Or do you simply go through formalities to *look* like you’re being objective?

# (What’s the result from stubbornly pursuing our will rather than God’s?)

# III. Ignoring God’s clear will is disastrous.

## Ahab’s stubborn disregard for God’s will led to his death at Ramoth Gilead (29-40).

## What may result from you seeking your will rather than God’s?

# Conclusion

### So what did we learn from 1 Kings 22?

#### Don’t pretend to seek God’s will when you’ve already made up your mind.

#### Get the right kind of advice by going only to godly counselors.

#### Remember that it’s a bad scene to pretend to seek God’s will.

### Seek the Lord sincerely because ignoring God’s clear will has serious results (MI).

### What decision do you need to make?

#### Are you making a tough choice of mate, job, location, ethical dilemma?

#### Can you tell God right now that you’ll do his will even before you know it (sign the blank sheet)?

#### Who can provide you godly counsel in this decision?

### Prayer

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SERVICE PLANNING:

Greetings in Christ. I thought you might want an outline of my message for when I speak at the church. Here’s the basic info, followed by two outlines. One is complete to give you the idea where I’m heading. The other has blanks if you choose to put the outline in the bulletin. You can shorten the second one if you wish by simply putting the three main points and leaving out the sub-point “A” and “B” levels.

**Title**: Whose Will?

**Text**: 1 Kings 22:1-40

**Topic:** God’s Will

**Subject:** Seek the Lord sincerely

**Complement:** because ignoring God’s clear will has serious results.

**Purpose:** The listeners will commit themselves to doing God’s will rather than their own in a certain area of indecision in their lives (master, mate, mission).

**Meditation:** Jer. 29:13

**Reading:** 1 Kings 22:1-40 (long) or 1 Kings 22:1-17 (short)

**Preaching from:** New Living Translation

**Time**: 30 Minutes

**Susan's Solo**: "Where He Leads Me" (with backup cassette) if you want her to sing

**[Without tabs…]**

**Introduction**

Issue: How can you do *God’s* will rather than your own?

**I. Don’t make up your mind before seeking God’s will.**

A. Wicked Ahab already had decided to go to battle when he sought the godly Jehoshaphat’s help (1-4)

B. Are you asking for God’s will but your decision is already made?

**II. Don’t seek counsel only from those on "your side."**

A. Ahab’s decision to attack was rubber-stamped by his pagan advisors even though he knew God prohibited it (5-28).

B. Are you seeking godly advice in your pursuit of God’s will?

**III. Ignoring God’s clear will is disastrous.**

A. Ahab’s stubborn disregard for God’s will led to his death at Ramoth Gilead (29-40).

B. What may result from you seeking your will rather than God’s?

**Conclusion**

1. Seek the Lord sincerely because ignoring God’s clear will has serious results (Main Idea).

2. What decision do you need to make?

\_\_\_\_\_ With blanks for bulletin (leave out the sub-points if it’s too detailed):

**Introduction**

Issue: How can you do \_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ rather than your own?

I. Don’t make up your mind before \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ God’s will.

A. Wicked Ahab already had decided to go to battle when he sought the godly Jehoshaphat’s help (1-4)

B. Are you asking for God’s will but your decision is already made?

**II. Don’t seek \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ only from those on "your side."**

A. Ahab’s decision to attack was rubber-stamped by his pagan advisors even though he knew God prohibited it (5-28).

B. Are you seeking godly advice in your pursuit of God’s will?

**III. Ignoring God’s clear will is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.**

A. Ahab’s stubborn disregard for God’s will led to his death at Ramoth Gilead (29-40).

B. What may result from you seeking your will rather than God’s?

**Conclusion**

1. Seek the Lord \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ because ignoring God’s clear will has serious results (Main Idea).

2. What decision do you need to make?

**[With tabs…]**

**Introduction**

Issue: How can you do *God’s* will rather than your own?

**I. Don’t say you want God’s will when you’ve already made up your mind.**

A. Wicked Ahab already had decided to go to battle when he sought the godly Jehoshaphat’s help (1-4)

B. Are you asking for God’s will but your decision is already made?

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A. Ahab’s decision to attack was rubber-stamped by his pagan advisors even though he knew God prohibited it (5-28).

B. Are you seeking godly advice in your pursuit of God’s will?

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A. Ahab’s stubborn disregard for God’s will led to his death at Ramoth Gilead (29-40).

B. What may result from you seeking your will rather than God’s?

Conclusion

1. Seek the Lord sincerely because ignoring God’s clear will has serious results (Main Idea).

1. What decision do you need to make?

\_\_\_\_\_ With blanks for bulletin (leave out the sub-points if it’s too detailed):

# Introduction

### What key decision do you need to make right now at this stage in your life?

### How can you do \_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ rather than your own?

# I. Don’t *\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_* you want God’s will when you’ve already made up your mind.

## Wicked Ahab already had decided to go to battle when he sought the godly Jehoshaphat’s help (1-4)

## Are you asking for God’s will but your decision is already made?

# II. Don’t seek \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ only from those on “your side.”

## Ahab’s decision to attack was rubber-stamped by his pagan advisors even though he knew God prohibited it (5-28).

## Are you seeking godly advice in your pursuit of God’s will?

# III. Ignoring God’s clear will is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ .

## Ahab’s stubborn disregard for God’s will led to his death at Ramoth Gilead (29-40).

## What may result from you seeking your will rather than God’s?

# Conclusion

### Seek the Lord \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ because ignoring God’s clear will has serious results (Main Idea).

### So what decision do you need to make?

#### Are you making a tough choice of mate, job, location, schooling or ethics?

#### Will you take time out to ask the Lord about it? Take a day’s fasting retreat!

#### Will you tell God like George Mueller that you’ll do his will before you know it?

### Thought Questions

### Prayer



**Rick Griffith**

31 July 2016

Message of 1 of 3

**Whose Will?**

***1 Kings 22***

# Introduction

### What key decision do you need to make right now at this stage in your life?

### How can you do \_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ rather than your own?

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## Are you seeking godly advice in your pursuit of God’s will?

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## Ahab’s stubborn disregard for God’s will led to his death at Ramoth Gilead (29-40).

## What may result from you seeking your will rather than God’s?

# Conclusion

### Seek the Lord \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ because ignoring God’s clear will has serious results (Main Idea).

### So what decision do you need to make?

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#### Will you take time out to ask the Lord about it? Take a day’s fasting retreat!

#### Will you tell God like George Mueller that you’ll do his will before you know it?

**Thought Questions**

1. Read 1 Kings 22 aloud. Contrast how the two kings made their decisions:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Ahab** | **Jehoshaphat** |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |

1. What decision do you need to make?

Text

1. Have you already made up your mind before seeking God’s will?

Text

1. Are you seeking counsel only from those who will agree with you?

Text

1. Are you reading God’s Word on this matter?

Text

1. What does God want you to do?

Text