

# CHOOSING YOUR CAREER

The Christian's Decision Manual  
MARTIN E. CLARK

- 1) DENTIST
- 2) DOCTOR
- ✓✓ 3) AUTO MECH.
- 4) NURSE
- ✓✓ 5) ACCOUNTANT
- ✓ 6) LAWYER
- 7) SALES REP.
- ✓ 8) TEACHER
- 9) COACH
- ✓ 10) ELECTRICIAN
- 11) BANKER
- 12) MUSICIAN
- ✓ 13) SCIENTIST
- 14) ARTIST



# *Contents*

<b>Preface</b> .....	vii
<b>1. Foundation Principles</b> .....	1
<b>2. The Christian Value of Work and Career</b> .....	13
<b>3. Elements of the Lord's Will</b> .....	20
<b>4. The Person God Has Made</b> .....	32
<b>5. Decision Making</b> .....	57
<b>6. Spiritual Gifts and Career Choice</b> .....	75
<b>7. Circumstances</b> .....	82
<b>8. The Call</b> .....	89
<b>9. Being a Whole Person</b> .....	99

# 1 *Foundation Principles*

Living a God-planned life requires thought. The wild, emotional abandon that many equate with spiritual fervor does not produce faithful living. Rather, a commitment to God resulting from an understanding of His Word produces both the basis and the motivation for a God-honoring life.

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

## THINKING ABOUT GOD

### God Is Personal

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

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

This personal God actively involves Himself in His creation, especially in

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

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

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

### God Is Orderly

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

We can understand God's orderliness best by contemplating His sovereignty. Our lives frequently lack order because either we encounter unexpected circumstances or we feel powerless to accomplish our objectives in a given situation. Further, we often misinterpret the past, do not understand

our present, and certainly cannot discern the future. But these constraints pertain to us since we are creatures, and they are irrelevant to the sovereign Creator.

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

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

Since God is orderly, we who have been created in His image and then recreated by His grace should reflect order in our lives. Since God works according to plan, His new creatures might be expected to work according to plan also. The fact that we are not sovereign and therefore cannot perfectly imitate God's orderliness should not keep us from acting responsibly in following the Lord as faithfully as possible. When we realize that we bear

the image of God, we will want to find and fulfill His plan for our lives in an orderly fashion. Living in a chaotic manner hardly testifies to the true nature of God. But planning, by itself, is not enough. Orderly living is pleasing to God only when the living conforms to God's order.

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

### THINKING ABOUT OURSELVES

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

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

#### Am I Saved?

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

The cloud which directed the people of Israel in their way brought nothing but confusion to the Egyptians (Exod. 14:19, 20). Before anyone can expect to be led through the wilderness of this world by the

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## The Christian's Decision Manual

High school and college students will find some good answers in this practical guide to career choices. Martin Clark combines innovative concepts and exercises with relevant Scriptural principles on knowing God's will.

There's an excellent chapter on how to make a decision. It follows an enlightening discussion on a personal inventory evaluation. In addition, Dr. Clark explores with usual insight and an abundance of common sense questions such as, Why should people work? Does God call us to specific careers? What is "the Lord's will"? How do we use circumstances in making career decisions? Does God's will for a Christian's vocation ever change?

Pastors, youth leaders, and counselors will find finger-tip accessibility to help in answering the recurring question many young people ask, "How can I discover which job is best for me?"

**Dr. Clark** received his A.B. and A.M. degrees from Bob Jones University. He earned a doctorate in education from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Since 1974 he has been Director of Counseling and Services at Cedarville College.

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