

The logo consists of the letters 'UC' in a bold, blocky font, followed by a vertical bar, and then the letters 'RIO' in a tall, thin, serif font. All elements are white and centered on a black rectangular background.

**UC|RIO**

**UC University**  
**Core Seminars**

**Student Handout**



## **Guidance Schedule**

**Class 1:** Anxious or Restful?

**Class 2:** God's Providence

**Class 3:** God's Will

**Class 4:** Faithfulness

**Class 5:** Tools of the Trade Part 1: God's Word, Prayer, Counsel

**Class 6:** Tools of the Trade Part 2: Circumstances and Feelings

## *Guidance*

### **Class 1: Anxious or Restful?**

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#### **1. Introduction**

Why would God be displeased with anxious decision-making?

#### **2. How Does God Guide Us?**

Three ways to think about Christian decision-making:

- 1) Guidance = Discerning God's Plan
- 2) Guidance = Listening to God
- 3) Guidance = Wisdom (normally)

#### **3. Our Enemy: Indwelling Sin**

Sin blinds us and keeps us from making wise decisions.

#### **4. God Guides Us!**

#### **5. A Framework for Decision-Making**

##### **I. Consecration**

Consecration means we need to understand ourselves,

God, and how \_\_\_\_\_ relates to his providence.

Romans 12:1-2

Matthew 6:33

## **II. Information**

Start with the question, “Is this \_\_\_\_\_ by God?”

Gather information about:

- 1) Yourself
- 2) Your situation

Romans 12:3

## **III. Supplication**

Prayer - Despite the fact that we know God is sovereign – in fact, precisely because we know He is in control – we are to ask God for guidance in the way we should go.

- Ps. 25:5, Luke 11:13

Be persistent in prayer:

- Luke 18:1-5

## **IV. Consultation**

Ask believing, mature Christians who know you and love you for counsel.

- Proverbs 12:15, 13:10, 15:22

## **V. Meditation**

Biblical meditation is the process of thoughtfully and deliberately applying God’s word to our lives.

- Joshua 1:8-9
- Pitfalls

## **VI. Decision**

There is a time to decide. (Ecclesiastes 3:1)

“Just Do Something”

- Luke 19:11-27
- Boldness and risk-taking in decision-making because of a sovereign God

## **VII. Expectation**

Biblical decision-making is obsessed with our responsibility to be faithful stewards, and it is confident that God cannot be thwarted in his work of always doing what is best.

- Romans 8:28

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Good resources:

- *Just Do Something* by Kevin DeYoung
- *Guidance and the Voice of God* by Tony Payne & Philip Jensen
- *Step By Step* by James Petty

## ***Guidance***

### **Class 2: God's Sovereignty**

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*If God were not sovereign, how would that change the way that Christians make decisions?*

#### **I. God is Sovereign**

*God's sovereignty is the biblical teaching that all things are under God's rule and control, and that nothing happens without His direction or permission. God works not just some things but all things according to the counsel of His own will.*

A. Over our circumstances (Gen. 50:20)

B. Over our past and our future (Isa. 46:10)

C. Over our decisions (Ps. 33:10-11)

D. Over our hearts (Prov. 21:1)

#### **II. God's Goal of Glorifying Himself**

*God's sovereign superintendence of all of creation has as its end that He show off His glory to the world. Everything He does is aimed at bringing himself glory.*

He made us to glorify him (Isaiah 43:7)

History is aimed at God's glory (Habbakuk 2:14)

Examples through Scripture

- The Exodus (Exodus 9:16)
- Return from Exile (Ezekiel 36:22)
- The coming of Jesus (John 1:14)
- Our Salvation

*“In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works out all things according to the counsel of his will, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory.” – Eph. 1:11*

- The Second Coming of Christ (2 Thes. 1:10)

### **III. Man’s Responsibility**

*Scripture teaches that God ordains all things that come to pass (Ephesians 1:11), and yet man is accountable for his actions (Ez. 18:20).*

### **IV. Implication: Motivated by Faithfulness**

Results vs. faithfulness

### **V. Implication: Motivated by Meaning**

God’s sovereignty gives our decisions meaning in two ways:

1. Meaning in what we do
2. Meaning in how we do it

- **God gives meaning to the mundane (Matt. 10:29-31)**

- **God gives meaning to our relationships (Acts 17:26-27)**

- **God gives meaning to our work (Eph. 6:5-7)**

## **VI. Implication: Restful Decision-Making**



## *Guidance*

### **Class 3: The Will of God**

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#### **Introduction**

#### **I. What is the *will* of God?**

##### **A. God's Will of Decree**

(Deuteronomy 29:29; Isaiah 46:8-10)

##### **B. God's Will of Command**

(Deuteronomy 29:29; 1 Thess. 4:3)

*If we ask, "How can I know the will of God?" we may be asking the wrong question. The Scriptures do not command us to find God's will for most of life's choices nor do we have any passage instructing on how it can be determined... Yet we persist in searching for God's will because decisions require thought and sap energy. We seek relief from the responsibility of decision-making and we feel less threatened by being passive rather than active when making important choices. – Haddon Robinson*

#### **II. What God's Will is *Not***

- A "Choose Your Own Adventure" book
- A fairytale of comfort and happiness

- A target you can miss

### **III. God's Will for His People**

#### **A. For Us to Obey (John 14:21)**

- God will never lead you to contradict his word
  
- Obedience is the path to wisdom  
Job 28:28, Romans 12:2

#### **B. For Us to Be Holy (1 Thes. 4:3)**

Why does God reveal this and not the “big” decisions in life?

*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.*  
– Rom 8:28-29

#### **C. For Christ to Be Exalted (Eph 1:5-10)**

*In love, he predestined us to be adopted as sons through Jesus Christ according to his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.* – Eph 1:5-10

### **IV. How To Do God's Will**

#### **Do Not Be Anxious**

(Matthew 6:25-32)

**Seek First His Kingdom**  
(Matthew 6:33)

**Conclusion**

## *Guidance*

### **Class 4: Faithfulness**

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#### **Introduction**

*What goal do you have for the decisions you make?*

#### **I. What is faithfulness?**

*What does the Bible say is God's will for your life?*

God shows off his work through your work

“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.” – Phil 2:12-13

Two ways your work shows off who God is

- The substance of your work
- The manner of your work

In the Bible, God's main goal in everything is to show off his glory. As a result, he's more interested in what he's doing *in* you than what you actually accomplish in a temporal sense. So your work matters mainly because of how it shows off his work in you.

The parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30)

<sup>24</sup> He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, ‘Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed, <sup>25</sup> so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.’ <sup>26</sup> But his master answered him, ‘You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed? <sup>27</sup> Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. <sup>28</sup> So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. <sup>29</sup> For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. <sup>30</sup> And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

*Why is the faithless servant thrown into hell?*

Faithful = *stewarding all that God has given us to show off his goodness*

Faithfulness-focused decision-making

- Focus: the Last Day (Col. 3:2)
- Goal: God’s Glory (1 Cor. 10:31)
- Extent: All of Life (Rom. 12:1)

## II. Faithfulness Brings Freedom

Two types of decision-making

	<b>Outcome-focused</b>	<b>Faithfulness-focused</b>
<b>Who do we trust?</b>	Ourselves	God
<b>Who gets credit?</b>	Ourselves	God
<b>Success is...</b>	Clearly visible	Often invisible

Three freedoms from Faithfulness-Focused Decision-Making

#1: Freedom from perfectionism

#2: Freedom from unnecessary regret

#3: Freedom from pride

### **III. Faithfulness Brings Responsibility**

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.” – 2 Cor. 5:10

### **Conclusion**

## *Guidance*

### **Class 5: Tools of the Trade Part 1**

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#### **Introduction**

*Are dreams, visions, audible voices, etc. the ordinary means that God guides Christians today?*

#### **I. Using God's Word**

##### **A. Wrong ways to use God's word in decision-making**

1.

2.

##### **B. The right way to use God's Word**

###### **Four categories of Scripture**

1. Specific commands: obey them.

2. Biblical principles: let these guide your decision. Example: Ephesians 5:5-7; Romans 1:32

3. Biblical goals and motives: let the Bible sit in judgment on your own goals and motives

4. Wisdom: over the years, let the Bible reshape how you think (Psalm 1, meditate day and night on God's Word)

#### **II. Using Prayer**

A. How we shouldn't pray

1.

2.

B. How we should pray

*<sup>9</sup> Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. <sup>10</sup> Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. <sup>11</sup> Give us this day our daily bread, <sup>12</sup> and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. <sup>13</sup> And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. – Matthew 6:9-13*

What does Matthew 6:9-13 teach us about how we should pray?

1. Pray to God as Father

2. Pray for His Will and not ours

3. Pray daily for guidance

Pray through Scripture related to the decisions we're making.

**III. Using Counsel**

A. Foolish ways to seek counsel



1.

2.

B. How to seek counsel (Prov. 12:15, 13:10, 15:22, 19:20)

1. Who to talk to?

- Someone who is Godly and wise
- Someone who knows the Bible
- Someone who knows you
- Someone who knows your situation

2. Know (and love) your advisors before you need them.

3. Be honest and transparent

4. Talk things through (if you're that kind of person)

5. Get your advisors talking together

Lunch for your "personal board of directors?"

**Conclusion**

## *Guidance*

### **Class 6: Tools of the Trade Part 2**

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#### **Introduction**

*What goes wrong when we assume that God normally guides in mystical ways?*

#### **Using Circumstances to Guide Us**

*Wrong Ways to “Read” Circumstances*

- “Open” and “Shut” Doors
- Bad results mean I missed God’s will
- Giving into impossible circumstances = weak faith

*Right Ways to Use Circumstances*

We can trust God’s good plan

- Circumstances tell you what’s possible
- Circumstances tell you about yourself

Whatever God ordains is right

Does this lead to laziness or complacency?

- Paul saw slavery as evil (1 Tim. 1:10)
- 1 Corinthians 7:21 and Paul's advice to slaves

### **Using Feelings to Make Decisions**

<http://t4g.org/2008/02/the-bondage-of-guidance/>

#### *Wrong Ways to Use Feelings*

- 1) Assume that an inner prompting is definitely from the Spirit
- 2) Don't act until you have an inner "peace"

#### *Right Ways to Use Feelings*

- 1) Intuition
- 2) Leadings prompted by the Spirit (with appropriate skepticism as to the accuracy of our subjective sense)
- 3) Desires (Psalm 37:4)
  - God gives us great freedom within what is right
  - We can often serve him better doing what we want
  - Desires reveal idolatry
  - God can sanctify our desires so they guide us well

How to use your feelings when making a decision

- 1) Recognize your feelings can be wrong
- 2) Discuss your motives with those who know you well
- 3) Use appropriate vocabulary to describe your feelings
- 4) Correct for your natural biases

## Wisdom

*Wisdom is knowing God's ways and truth, and acting in the light of what God has said to be true.*

In the Bible, wisdom is linked closely to God's will (Eph. 5:15-17)

We must pursue wisdom (Proverbs 2)

- <sup>1</sup> My son, if you receive my words  
and treasure up my commandments with you,
  - <sup>2</sup> making your ear attentive to wisdom  
and inclining your heart to understanding;
  - <sup>3</sup> yes, if you call out for insight  
and raise your voice for understanding,
  - <sup>4</sup> if you seek it like silver  
and search for it as for hidden treasures,
  - <sup>5</sup> then you will understand the fear of the Lord  
and find the knowledge of God.
- <sup>9</sup> Then you will understand righteousness and justice  
and equity, every good path;

How do we pursue it?

- 1) Fear God (Proverbs 9:10)
- 2) Use the means of grace
- 3) Obey (Job 28:28)

## ***Guidance***

### **Class 7: Q&A**

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#### **What Makes for a Good Question?**

1. It's a real question. Hypothetical or "devil's advocate" questions aren't really useful.
2. It's a question you think other people might also have.
3. It's a question that will be edifying for the class.

#### **Class Summary**

##### *Class #1: Is Your Decision-Making Anxious or Restful?*

- Because God is sovereign and good, we can make restful decisions. We are commanded not to worry.
- God normally guides us through the wisdom he gives us.
- A model decision-making process: Consecration, Information, Supplication, Consultation, Meditation, Decision, Expectation

##### *Class #2: God's Providence*

- God is sovereign over absolutely everything—including our decisions.
- God's goal in everything is to show of the excellence of his glory.
- We are responsible to be faithful in our decisions.

##### *Class #3: God's Will*

- God's will of decree versus God's will of command.
- The Bible does not tell us to find God's will for most of life's choices.
- God's will is: that we obey, that we be sanctified, that Christ be exalted.

##### *Class #4: Faithfulness*

- Your goal as a Christian is not achievement, but faithfulness.
- God values your work mainly because it shows off his work.
- Faithfulness-oriented decision-making brings freedom from perfectionism, from unnecessary regret, from pride, and from laziness.

##### *Class #5: Tools of the Trade 1 (Scripture, Prayer, Counsel)*

- God's Word
  - Not: random verses, out of context.
  - But: clarifying obedience, shaping our judgment over time.
- Prayer
  - Not: asking for signs God hasn't promised.
  - But: pray through Scripture, pray for wisdom.

- Counsel
  - Not: selective counsel, putting too much faith in the counsel of a wise person who doesn't know you.
  - But: talk to those who know you, know your situation, are godly, and know the Scriptures.

*Class #6: Tools of the Trade 2 (Circumstances, Feelings)*

- Circumstances
  - Not: assigning mystical significance to changes in circumstances.
  - But: humbly accepting your situation as God's good plan for you.
- Feelings, Leadings, Hunches, etc.
  - Not: assuming that a strong feeling is God's leading; acting only where you feel peace.
  - But: recognizing that God can guide through our desires and feelings—with appropriate skepticism of ourselves.
- Wisdom
  - Begins with the fear of the Lord
  - Comes as we pursue the means of grace
  - Follows obedience



\*Course material adapted from <https://www.capitolhillbaptist.org/resources/core-seminars/>