Discerning the Will of God
(Compiled by Paul R. Blake from EO Sources)

Introduction:
A. "What is God's will for my life?"
   1. What Christian has not asked this question?
      a. Mate, job, home, etc.
   2. We want to live in harmony with God's will - Rom. 1:9-10
B. How can we discern God's will for us in critical decisions or even day to day matters?
   1. We must be diligent to practice God's will as revealed in His Word
   2. We must be careful to permit ourselves only those things in which God has granted liberty
   3. We must avoid being dogmatic in matters of God's Providence.
C. Stop saying of evil "It was God's will."
   1. "It was God's will that my wife got cancer."
      a. Really? How do you know for a fact that it was not as Solomon said in his inspired wisdom: "time and chance happen to them all" (Ecc. 9:11)?
   2. "It was God's will that drunk driver killed an innocent child."
      a. Really?! God does not will man's evil.

I. SCRIPTURAL MANIFESTATIONS OF GOD'S WILL
A. God's proclaimed will - 1Thes. 5:18; 1Peter 2:15
      a. John 16:12-14; 1Cor. 14:36-37
   2. Clearly expected by the Divine - Matt. 7:21; 2Tim. 3:16-17
   3. Clear enough to make all men accountable to it in the Judgment
      a. Acts 17:30-31
   4. Clearly God can fulfill His will regardless of the intent or efforts of men
      a. Isa. 10:5-7
B. God's permissive will
   1. There are some matters about which God is indifferent with regard to our choice; He has granted liberty in such things - Rom. 14:4-6
C. God's providential will
   1. God acts providentially in our lives - Rom. 15:30-32
   2. If our plans cooperate with His will, He will bless us - Prov. 3:5-6
   3. We should pray to God about our plans - James 4:13-15
   4. Our requests are answered according to their harmony with God's will
      a. 1John 5:14-15

II. DISCERNING GOD'S PROVIDENTIAL WILL
A. Begin with determining the proclaimed will of God, if He has spoken on it
   1. If one does not accept and practice the revealed will of God, what purpose does it serve to determine areas of God's unrevealed will?
B. Consider the wisdom and experience of others
   1. Discuss alternatives with older, mature Christians - Prov. 11:14; 12:15
   2. Consult the wisdom of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Bible heroes
C. Pray for wisdom - James 1:5-8
   1. Wisdom is insight developed by long term exposure to spiritual matters
      that enables us to evaluate situations clearly, and use the options and
      abilities we have
   2. Use wisdom to eliminate less acceptable desires
D. Be committed to the Lord - Psalm 37:5-6, 23-26
   1. Ask God to close the door on your choice if that is His will - Matt. 26:39
   2. If He closes the door on your choice, accept it and look for alternatives
E. Remember that God is Deity, not human
   1. God sees the end of a thing from the beginning
   2. God operates on an eternal timescale
   3. God will always choose our spiritual benefit over our physical comfort
   4. God can use us and our choices in multiple ways and accomplish His
      purposes fully in spite of our strength or weakness
F. Remember that you are human, not Deity
   1. Not all of our choices will be between good and bad, but occasionally
      between good and better
   2. If you have trouble deciding, pray, talk to the wise, and wait for wisdom
      to come to you
   3. If you discover you have made wrong choice, stop and change
      direction; do not make a mistake into persistent folly
   4. When you have made a good choice, perform it with all of your will,
      strength, and resources

Conclusion:
   A. Col. 4:12; Matt. 6:10, 26:39-42
   B. You will never begin to successfully discern the will of God in all other matters,
      until you both discern and obey the will of God in salvation