

**Popular but problematic approaches**

- ✓ **Pass the buck** - Get someone else to tell us what we should do.
- ✓ **Paint by the numbers** - Find a verse.
- ✓ **Pray for revelation** - Look for some sign that will guide us.
- ✓ **Perfect plan model** - Expect God to micromanage every detail.

**These approaches do not help us grow in wisdom.**

## Guidance under - law of Christ

“But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.” *James 1:5*

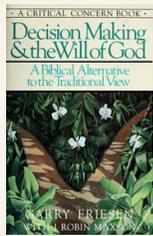
**Leading of the Spirit through the principles of Scripture**

**Mosaic law**

**Biblical rule & Divine signs**

**Natural law**

**Conscience and social contract**



*Matthew 25*

“14 For it (**the Kingdom of Heaven**) is just like a man about to go on a journey, who called his own slaves, and entrusted his possessions to them. 15 And to one he gave five talents, to another, two, and to another, one, each according to his own ability; and he went on his journey. 16 Immediately the one who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and gained five more talents. 17 In the same manner the one who had received the two talents gained two more. 18 But he who received the one talent went away and dug in the ground, and hid his master’s money. 19 Now after a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. 20 And the one who had received the five talents came up and brought five more talents, saying, ‘Master, you entrusted five talents to me; see, I have gained five more talents.’ 21 His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things, enter into the joy of your master.’ 22 The one also who had received the two talents came up and said, ‘Master, you entrusted to me two talents; see, I have gained two more talents.’ 23 His master said to him, Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.”

“24 And the one also who had received the one talent came up and said, Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed. 25 And I was afraid, and went away and hid your talent in the ground; see, you have what is yours.’ 26 But his master answered and said to him, ‘You wicked, lazy slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I scattered no seed. 27 Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my money back with interest. 28 Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents.’ 29 For to everyone who has shall more be given, and he shall have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away.”

Making ethical decisions calls for **responsiveness** without passivity.

## Help for making mature ethical decisions.

### 1. Ethical decisions are a RESPONSE to life.

- We love because God first loves us. *1 Jn.4:19*
- Even Jesus did nothing other than what was a response to his heavenly Father. *Jn.5:19*
- Our “initiation” to act is but a response to our calling and God’s image within us.
- Sin is “approaching life on our own” - Eve, Israel, etc.

## The church responds to Christ



**Bride / Groom**  
(Ephesians 5:22-32)



**Building / Cornerstone**  
(1 Peter 2:4-7)



**Body / Head**  
(1 Corinthians 12:27)



**Branch / Vine**  
(John 15:1-16)

*1 Corinthians 13:4-7*

“Love is patient, love is kind, and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”

### Love is a response to:

- |   |                            |
|---|----------------------------|
| patient                                     | trials                     |
| kind  | insults                    |
| not jealous                                 | success of others          |
| does not brag                               | success of self            |
| is not arrogant                             | power and authority        |
| does not act unbecomingly                   | freedom                    |
| does not seek its own                       | competition                |
| is not provoked                             | challenging confrontation  |
| does not take into account a wrong suffered | mistreated & misunderstood |
| does not rejoice in unrighteousness         | failure of others          |
| rejoices with the truth                     | gossip and slander         |
| bears all things                            | loss                       |
| believes all things                         | doubts                     |
| hopes all things                            | discouragement             |
| endures all things                          | delayed expectations       |

*1 Cor. 13:4-7*

### 2. God’s will is a COMPASS more than a road map.

- God’s will has to do with the direction we are going more than every detailed decision.  
*1 Cor.7:39*



### 2. God’s will is a COMPASS more than a road map.

- Start with the end in mind.

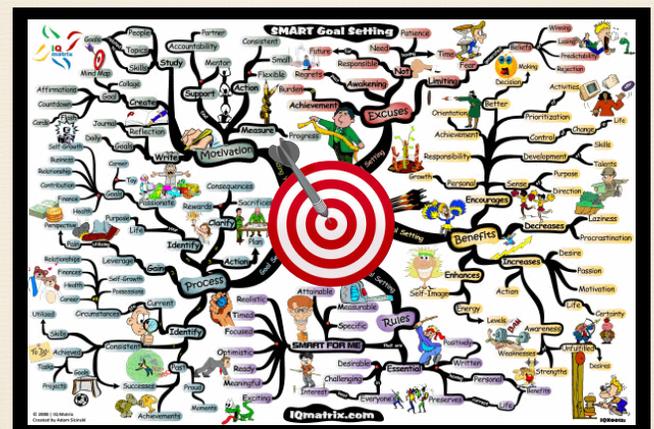


What is the “fruit” that God seeks?

- **Character** before career, and comfort.
- **Worshippers** before workers.
- **Community** before conquests.

### 2. God’s will is a COMPASS more than a road map.

- There may be different paths to the goal.



**3. Facing in the right DIRECTION makes it easier to find the path.**

- Strategic (macro) decisions set the stage for good tactical (micro) decisions.
- We must take our baptism seriously.



Elisabeth Elliot

“The will of God is not something you add to your life. It’s a course you choose. You either line yourself up with the Son of God...or you capitulate to the principle which governs the rest of the world.”

**4. Staying in OUR LANE keeps us in the race.**

- We must not take responsibility for things we can’t control or are none of our business.

It is amazing how knowing & minding our own business  
**reduces stress**  
for everyone.

If we are not a part of the problem or the solution, we should back off.

**4. Staying in OUR LANE keeps us in the race.**

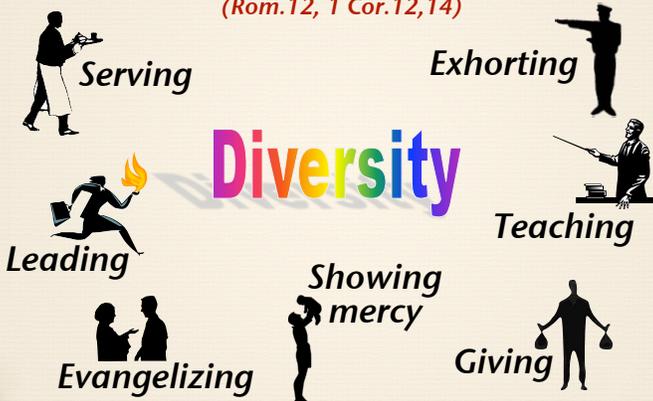
- We must not take responsibility for things we can’t control or are none of our business.
- We are not the composer, or director. We have an instrument & a specific part.



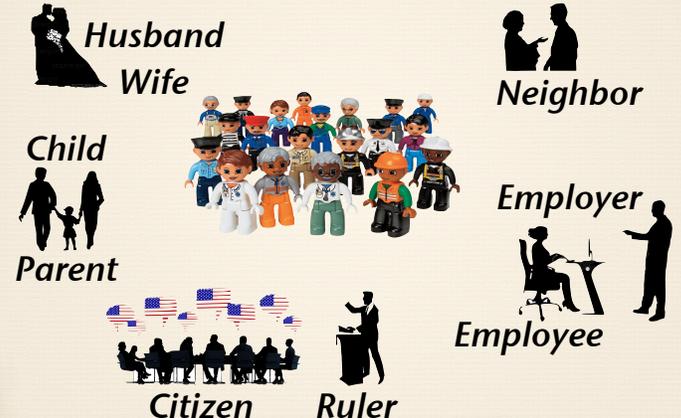
- That instrument is not the organ, where we are the only one needed.

**The boundaries of our responsibilities are defined by our gifts in ministry.**

(Rom.12, 1 Cor.12,14)



**The boundaries of our responsibilities are defined by our roles in community.**



### *Rules of engagement for Christians*

1. Take responsibility only for things we can control, like our response to circumstances.
2. Work and pray for that which will not perish - godly character and gracious community.

The main thing  
is to keep the main thing,  
the main thing.

We should pray for God's  
will and plan not ours.

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3. Greet all circumstances with gratitude as an opportunity to develop / demonstrate character.

The peace we seek is found by  
giving more attention to changing  
our responses than to changing  
our circumstances.

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3. Greet all circumstances with gratitude as an opportunity to develop / demonstrate character.
4. In facing life's circumstances fear not - love deeply, proceed wisely, and walk by faith.

Seek peace and make peace.

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2. Work and pray for that which will not perish - godly character and gracious community.
3. Greet all circumstances with gratitude as an opportunity to develop / demonstrate character.
4. In facing life's circumstances fear not - love deeply, proceed wisely, and walk by faith.
5. Take your baptism seriously knowing that God expects you to be dead to the flesh and ready to bear his cross as a light to the world.

**St. Thomas Aquinas defined three aspects of moral decision making:**

1. **Scriptural principles**  
objective instruction.
2. **Personal motives**  
subjective intent.
3. **Life Circumstances**  
situational information.

We do this as we cultivate  
an intimate connection  
with Christ.

