

Decision Making and the Will of God, Teacher's Guide

Lesson 2: Is It Biblical? When God Has Already Spoken

Deuteronomy 29:29 (with 2 Timothy 3:16–17)

Teaching Aim (Teacher Orientation)

This lesson establishes the first and most basic question of wise decision making: has God already spoken? Doctrinally, what is at stake is the authority and sufficiency of Scripture. Deuteronomy 29:29 draws the foundational line between the secret things, which God keeps to Himself, and the revealed things, which He has given to His people to obey. Second Timothy 3:16–17 then makes the sweeping claim that all Scripture is God-breathed and able to equip the believer completely for every good work. Together these texts teach that God has not been silent or stingy. He has spoken clearly, and a vast portion of any decision is settled the moment we ask what He has revealed. The teacher should be prepared to help students see that much of what we call seeking God's will is really hesitation to obey God's revealed will.

This lesson also requires care at a doctrinal boundary that runs through the whole study. We must reject, kindly but firmly, the popular notion that God continues to guide His people through new revelations, private promptings, inner voices, or ongoing inspiration beyond the completed Scriptures. The faith was once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3). The New Testament is now our sufficient and final authority. God guides His people today not by whispering fresh messages but through His completed Word, applied by sanctified wisdom, in the providential ordering of our circumstances. Teaching students to expect private revelations sets them up for confusion, manipulation, and disappointment; teaching them to trust the sufficiency of Scripture sets them free.

Beyond the doctrine, this lesson is aimed at forming honest, obedient hearts. The deeper issue exposed here is not ignorance but evasion: the human tendency to keep a clear command at arm's length by recasting it as an open question. The teacher's pastoral aim is to help students love the revealed will of God, to go to the Scriptures first rather than last, and to grow into people whose instinct in any decision is not to wait for a sign but to ask, simply and humbly, what their Lord has already said. Send them home both more confident in the sufficiency of the Bible and more ready to obey it.

Question 1

Student Question:

Moses says, "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever" (Deut. 29:29). What is the difference between the secret things and the revealed things, and why is it so important to keep them straight when we are trying to make a decision?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Begin by setting the verse in its place. Moses is near the end of his life, renewing the covenant with Israel, and he draws a line that has guided God's people ever since. There are two categories. The secret things belong to the Lord: His hidden purposes, the unseen future, the reasons behind His providence, the outcomes of our choices. These He keeps to Himself. The revealed things belong to us: His commands, His promises, His instruction, everything He has actually spoken. These He has handed over to His people as their possession.

Help students feel why this distinction is the foundation of the whole study. Most decision-making anxiety comes from confusing the two categories, from treating the secret things as though they were ours to discover, and the revealed things as though they were optional. The sign-seeker spends his energy trying to pry into the secret will, demanding that God disclose the future or the one hidden right answer. Meanwhile the very things God has clearly revealed, the commands meant to shape the decision, often go neglected. Getting the categories straight reorders everything.

Press the positive force of the phrase "belong to us." The revealed will of God is not a burden grudgingly imposed; it is an inheritance graciously given. God did not have to speak. He owed us no explanation of how to live. Yet He has revealed Himself and His will, generously and clearly, so that His children would not have to stumble in the dark. The right response to revelation is not resentment or endless second-guessing but glad reception and obedience.

Bring it down to the decision at hand. When a believer faces a choice, the first and wisest move is to sort the question into the right category. Is this a matter God has revealed, where the answer is already given and my task is obedience? Or is this a matter He has left to the secret counsel of His will, an outcome I cannot see and am not meant to predict? An enormous number of our choices fall, at least in large part, into the first category. Recognizing that is the beginning of peace.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The two categories: God's secret will (hidden purposes, outcomes) and His revealed will (His spoken word)
- Most decision-making anxiety comes from confusing the two categories
- The revealed will of God as a gracious inheritance, not a grudging burden
- Sorting a decision into the right category as the beginning of clarity and peace
- The grace of God in choosing to speak at all (Deuteronomy 29:29)

Discussion Prompts

- Which do you spend more energy on: trying to read the secret things, or obeying the revealed things?
- Why is it good news that the revealed will of God belongs to us?

- How would naming the right category change a decision you are facing now?

Question 2

Student Question:

Can you think of a time when you treated something God had clearly commanded as if it were still an open question, waiting for a sign before you obeyed? Be honest about what was really going on in your heart during that delay.

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This first self-examining question invites honesty about a very human pattern. We rarely defy God's commands outright. More often we soften them into questions. Instead of obeying, we deliberate. Instead of acting, we wait for a sign or a feeling that we already know we do not need. The teacher should create a safe space here, because the goal is not to provoke shame but to expose the gentle self-deception we are all prone to.

Help students name what is usually underneath the delay. Sometimes it is fear of the cost of obedience. Sometimes it is a quiet hope that if we wait long enough, the command will feel less binding, or circumstances will change and excuse us. Sometimes it is simply that obedience is hard and waiting feels more spiritual than refusing. Naming the real motive is far more useful than pretending the issue was a lack of guidance.

Then turn toward freedom. Once we see that the matter was never an open question, the path forward is clear and even relieving. We do not have to generate certainty or wait for a feeling; we only have to obey the next clear thing. Encourage students to identify one such matter and take a concrete step of obedience this week, trusting that the God who commanded will also help them follow.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The tendency to soften clear commands into open questions rather than defy them outright
- Fear, cost, and the hope of escape as common roots of delayed obedience
- Waiting for a sign as a way of postponing known obedience
- The relief of obeying the next clear thing rather than manufacturing certainty

Discussion Prompts

- When have you waited for a sign about something God had already commanded?
- What was really going on in your heart during that delay?
- What is one clear act of obedience you could take this week without waiting for anything more?

Question 3

Student Question:

The verse ends with a purpose: the revealed things belong to us “that we may do all the words of this law.” Why does God reveal His will to us, according to this verse? How does that purpose reshape the way we should approach the Bible when we are facing a choice?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Draw students’ attention to the purpose clause, because it is easy to skip. God reveals His will “that we may do all the words of this law.” Revelation is given for obedience, not merely for information, and certainly not for idle speculation about hidden things. The whole point of God speaking is that His people would do what He says. This single phrase guards against two distortions: treating the Bible as a curiosity to be studied without obeying, and treating it as a code to be cracked for secret predictions.

Apply this to the way we open Scripture in a decision. If revelation is given for obedience, then the right question to bring to the Bible is not “What clever insight can I extract?” or “What hidden sign can I find about my future?” but “What does God want me to do?” The Scriptures are profitable precisely because they tell us how to live, and they are meant to be approached as a servant approaches his master’s instructions, ready to act.

Note the word “all.” We are to do all the words, not the convenient subset. The human heart is endlessly creative at obeying the commands that suit us and quietly setting aside the ones that cost us. A heart truly submitted to the revealed will of God does not pick and choose. This is especially important in decision making, where we are tempted to honor God’s word in the areas that are easy and improvise in the areas that are hard.

Help students see the warmth in this, not just the demand. A God who reveals His will for our obedience is a God who cares enough to direct us well. His commands are not arbitrary hoops; they are the wise instructions of a Father who knows what is good for His children. To do all the words of His law is not slavery but the path of life and blessing, as the rest of Deuteronomy makes abundantly clear.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Revelation given for obedience, not mere information or speculation
- Approaching Scripture in a decision by asking what God wants us to do
- Doing “all” the words, against the temptation to obey selectively
- God’s commands as the wise, loving direction of a Father, not arbitrary hoops

Discussion Prompts

- How does it change your Bible reading to remember it is given for obedience, not curiosity?
- Where are you most tempted to obey selectively, honoring the easy commands and improvising on the hard ones?

- How have you found God's commands to be for your good and not against it?

Question 4

Student Question:

Is there a plain command of Scripture that you have quietly downgraded into a personal preference or an open question, perhaps about honesty, forgiveness, purity, generosity, or how you treat someone? What would obedience actually look like there this week?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question presses the truth inward and asks for specifics. The previous question established that we are to do all the words; this one asks each student to find the word he has been quietly setting aside. Most believers, if honest, can locate at least one clear command they have softened into a matter of taste: a grudge they have decided they are entitled to, a habit of shading the truth, a pattern of spending that ignores generosity, a relationship handled by the world's rules rather than Christ's.

Guide the room gently but concretely. Abstractions let us off the hook; specifics call us to obedience. It is one thing to agree that we should forgive; it is another to name the person we have refused to forgive. It is one thing to affirm honesty; it is another to admit the particular place we have been shading the truth. The aim is loving honesty, not browbeating, so that conviction leads to repentance rather than mere discomfort.

Then move toward action. Obedience this week should be concrete and doable: a conversation initiated, an apology offered, a habit confessed and forsaken, a generous gift given. Encourage students that the God who commands also empowers, and that taking the first clear step of obedience often brings more clarity and peace than months of waiting ever did.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Downgrading clear commands into personal preferences or open questions
- The value of naming a specific command rather than agreeing in the abstract
- Conviction meant to lead to repentance and obedience, not mere discomfort
- God who commands also empowers obedience

Discussion Prompts

- What is one clear command you have quietly treated as optional?
- Why is it easier to agree with a command in general than to obey it in the specific?
- What would concrete obedience look like there this week?

Question 5

Student Question:

Paul writes that “all Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness” (2 Tim. 3:16). What does it mean that Scripture is “breathed out by God,” and how do those four uses, teaching, reproof, correction, and training, equip us to make God-honoring decisions?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Start with the astonishing claim packed into “breathed out by God.” The word means that Scripture originates in the very breath of God; it is His own speech given through human authors carried along by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21). This is the doctrine of inspiration, and it is the ground of Scripture’s authority. Because the Bible is God-breathed, its words carry the weight of God’s own voice. When Scripture speaks, God speaks. That is why “Is it biblical?” is the first and weightiest question in any decision.

Walk through the four uses, because together they describe how the Bible actually forms a decision maker. Teaching tells us what is true and right, laying down the positive content of God’s will. Reproof exposes where we are wrong, confronting the rationalizations and blind spots we bring to our choices. Correction sets us back on the right path, redirecting us toward what is good. Training in righteousness, like the disciplined training of an athlete, develops settled habits of godliness so that wise choices become second nature over time.

Help students see how comprehensive this is. The Bible does not merely hand us a list of rules; it teaches, confronts, redirects, and trains, shaping the whole person who makes decisions. A believer soaked in Scripture is not just informed about isolated commands; he is being formed into someone whose instincts, affections, and judgment are increasingly aligned with God. This is why much of wise decision making is simply the overflow of a life shaped by the word.

Anchor the practical payoff. When facing a choice, the believer brings it under all four of these. He asks what Scripture teaches about the matter, lets it reprove any selfish motive, allows it to correct his course, and trusts the long training of righteousness that has been forming his judgment. Far from being too vague to help with real decisions, the God-breathed word is exactly what equips us to make them.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The inspiration of Scripture: God-breathed, carrying the authority of God’s own voice (2 Peter 1:21)
- Teaching, reproof, correction, and training as four ways Scripture forms a decision maker
- Scripture forming the whole person, not merely supplying isolated rules
- Wise decisions as the overflow of a life shaped by the word
- The authority of Scripture as the reason “Is it biblical?” comes first

Discussion Prompts

- What difference does it make that Scripture is God's own breath and not merely human wisdom?
- Which of the four uses, teaching, reproof, correction, or training, do you most need right now?
- How has time in the word quietly shaped your instincts and judgment over the years?

Question 6

Student Question:

When you face a real decision, where does the Bible actually fall in your process, first, last, or somewhere it never quite makes it? What would change if Scripture became the very first place you looked?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This self-examining question asks students to look honestly at their actual practice, not their stated beliefs. Most Christians affirm the authority of Scripture in principle. Fewer consult it first in practice. Often the Bible enters a decision late, if at all, brought in to confirm a choice already made rather than to shape it from the start. The teacher should invite candor here without condemnation.

Help students see the difference order makes. When Scripture comes first, it sets the boundaries and frames the question before our preferences have hardened. When it comes last, it is too easily reduced to a rubber stamp, with verses pressed into service to bless what we had already decided. The same Bible can either rule a decision or merely decorate it, and the difference often comes down to when we open it.

Move toward a practical reordering. Encourage students to build a simple habit: before pros and cons, before asking friends, before consulting their own feelings, open the Scriptures and ask what God has already said about this kind of choice. For many, this single reordering, putting the Bible first instead of last, is the most transformative step they can take in their decision making.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The gap between affirming Scripture's authority and actually consulting it first
- Scripture brought in early to shape a decision versus late to rubber-stamp it
- The danger of using verses to bless a choice already made
- The simple, transformative habit of going to the word first

Discussion Prompts

- Honestly, where does the Bible usually fall in your decision process?
- What is the difference between letting Scripture rule a decision and letting it merely decorate one?

- What habit would help you consult the word first rather than last?

Question 7

Student Question:

Paul says the goal of God-breathed Scripture is “that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:17). What does it tell us that Scripture claims to equip us for every good work? How does this speak to the worry that the Bible does not say enough to guide our real, specific choices?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Focus students on the breathtaking scope of verse 17: complete, equipped for every good work. Paul is not modest about what Scripture accomplishes. The God-breathed word is sufficient to make the believer complete, lacking nothing essential, and thoroughly equipped, not for some good works but for every one. This is the doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture, and it directly answers a worry that drives much sign-seeking: the fear that the Bible does not address my real, specific situation.

Clarify what sufficiency does and does not claim. Scripture does not tell you which house to buy or which job to take by name; it is not an almanac of personal predictions. What it does is equip you completely for every good work by giving you all the truth, wisdom, commands, and principles you need to make such choices in a way that pleases God. The Bible is sufficient not because it answers every factual question, but because it fully furnishes the believer to live a God-honoring life, including in decisions it never mentions by name.

This is the place to guard against a subtle error. Some conclude that because the Bible does not name their specific decision, they need an extra word from God beyond it, a private revelation to fill the gap. But Paul says the opposite. The God-breathed word already equips us for every good work. The gap is filled not by new revelation but by sanctified wisdom applying the sufficient word to the situation at hand. To ask for more than Scripture in order to make a good decision is to ask for something God has not promised and we do not need.

Encourage students with the confidence this should produce. They are not under-resourced. The believer with an open Bible, a praying heart, godly counsel, and a renewed mind has everything required to make wise, God-honoring decisions. The sufficiency of Scripture is not a limitation to lament but a sturdy floor to stand on.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The sufficiency of Scripture: complete and equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:17)
- What sufficiency claims (full furnishing for godly living) and what it does not (a list of personal predictions)
- Sanctified wisdom, not new revelation, applies the sufficient word to specific choices

- A correction of the idea that the Bible's silence on a specific requires private revelation
- Confidence that the believer is fully resourced to decide wisely

Discussion Prompts

- What does it mean that Scripture equips us for every good work, even ones it never names?
- Why is it a mistake to think the Bible's silence on a specific choice means we need a private word from God?
- How does the sufficiency of Scripture give you confidence rather than anxiety in a decision?

Question 8

Student Question:

How well do you actually know what God has revealed? Many believers wait for special guidance partly because they are unfamiliar with the guidance already given. What is one practical step you could take to know the Scriptures well enough to obey them?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question makes a gentle but important diagnosis: a good deal of sign-seeking grows not from rebellion but from biblical illiteracy. People wait for special guidance because they genuinely do not know how much guidance God has already given. You cannot obey a revealed will you have never read. The teacher can raise this without scolding, framing it as an invitation rather than an accusation.

Help students connect knowledge of Scripture with the confidence to decide. The believer who knows the Bible well carries its wisdom into every choice almost without thinking, recognizing quickly what God has said about honesty, money, relationships, work, and worship. The believer who rarely opens it is left feeling that every decision is a fresh mystery, when in fact God has spoken to most of them. Familiarity with the revealed word quietly removes much of the fog.

Then call for one concrete, sustainable step. Not an unrealistic vow to read the whole Bible in a month, but a real habit: a daily reading plan, a book of the New Testament read slowly, a regular place in a Bible class, time memorizing key passages, or simply opening the Scriptures before opening the phone each morning. The goal is steady growth in knowing the God who has spoken, so that obedience has something to obey.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Biblical illiteracy as a common root of sign-seeking
- Knowledge of Scripture as the quiet confidence behind wise decisions
- You cannot obey a revealed will you have never read
- Concrete, sustainable habits for growing in knowledge of the word

Discussion Prompts

- Honestly, how well do you know what God has already revealed?
- How might unfamiliarity with the Bible feed a habit of waiting for signs?
- What is one realistic step you could take to know the Scriptures better?

Question 9

Student Question:

Some teach that God still guides His people today through new revelations, private messages, inner voices, or continuing inspiration beyond the Bible. In light of Deuteronomy 29:29 and 2 Timothy 3:16–17, how should a Christian respond to that idea? If the complete New Testament is now our authority, how does God guide His people today?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This is the heaviest doctrinal block of the lesson, and it touches a boundary that runs through the entire study, so handle it clearly and confidently. The question is whether God still gives fresh, authoritative revelation today, private messages, inner voices, dreams, promptings, or continuing inspiration, that functions alongside or beyond the Scriptures. The consistent teaching of the New Testament is that He does not. The faith was “once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3). God, who spoke long ago in many ways through the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son (Hebrews 1:1–2), and that word has been delivered completely through the apostles and recorded in the New Testament.

Show students why this matters so much, and do it without harshness toward sincere people who think otherwise. If we expect God to keep handing out private revelations, several dangers follow. We become vulnerable to mistaking our own feelings, indigestion, or desires for the voice of God. We open the door to manipulation, where anyone claiming a special word from the Lord can bind it on others. And we quietly demote the Scriptures, treating the sufficient word as insufficient and craving something more. The doctrine of the completed, all-sufficient New Testament protects God’s people from all of this.

Be precise about what we are and are not denying. We are not denying that God is active and present, or that He works providentially in the lives of His people. We are denying that He guides today by giving new inspired revelation beyond the Scriptures. The miraculous, revelatory gifts served to confirm and deliver the word in the first century; with the faith once for all delivered and the New Testament complete, that revelatory function has finished its purpose. What remains is the finished, sufficient word of God, living and active still.

Then answer the constructive half of the question, because students need to know how God does guide them. He guides His people today through His completed Word, which equips us for every good work; through the sanctified wisdom He grows in a renewed mind; through the counsel of mature believers in His church; through prayer, in which we ask Him for wisdom and lay our requests before Him; and through His unseen providence, which orders our

circumstances. This is not a thinner form of guidance than a private voice would be. It is richer, surer, and safer, because it rests on the unchanging word of God rather than on the shifting impressions of our own hearts.

Leave students with confidence rather than loss. Some may feel, at first, that giving up the hope of a private inner voice takes something away. Help them see that it gives far more than it takes. They are not left to decode whispers; they are handed the very speech of God, complete and sufficient, and invited to walk in it with wisdom, prayer, counsel, and trust. That is solid ground to build a life of decisions upon.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The faith once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3)
- God's final word spoken in His Son and recorded in the completed New Testament (Hebrews 1:1–2)
- The dangers of expecting private revelation: mistaking feelings for God, manipulation, demoting Scripture
- The revelatory gifts as serving to deliver and confirm the word, now complete (2 Timothy 3:16–17)
- How God guides today: completed Word, sanctified wisdom, godly counsel, prayer, and providence
- The sufficiency of Scripture as richer and safer guidance than a private inner voice

Discussion Prompts

- How would you lovingly respond to a friend who says God gave them a private message about a decision?
- What dangers follow from expecting new revelation beyond the Bible?
- If God guides through Word, wisdom, counsel, prayer, and providence, why is that better than an inner voice, not worse?

Question 10

Student Question:

Look back across Deuteronomy 29:29 and 2 Timothy 3:16–17. God has spoken, fully and finally, and what He has revealed belongs to us. Name one specific way you sense Jesus forming you through these verses. What is the single truth here that you most need to carry into your next decision?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This capstone question gathers the lesson and asks each student to name one concrete way Christ is forming them through these texts. Resist letting answers stay general. “I should read the Bible more” is a fine start, but press toward the specific: read what, in order to obey what,

beginning when. The truth of these verses is meant to travel home into a real decision waiting this week.

Walk back through the movement of the lesson as a prompt. God has divided the secret things from the revealed things, given us the revealed things to obey, breathed out a Scripture that teaches, reproves, corrects, and trains, and equipped us completely for every good work, all without any need for private revelation beyond His finished word. Invite students to ask which of these truths their heart most needs to seize before the next choice they face.

Close by recentring on transformation. The aim of this lesson is not merely to win an argument about the sufficiency of Scripture, but to form people who actually go to God's word first, obey it gladly, and rest in its sufficiency. Encourage each student to leave with one truth to carry, return to, and pray over, so the word does its forming work in the week ahead.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Scripture aimed at transformation and obedience, not merely at right opinions about the Bible
- Going to the revealed will of God first as a settled habit
- Resting in the sufficiency of Scripture in real decisions
- Carrying one concrete truth into a specific choice this week

Discussion Prompts

- Which truth from this lesson does your heart most need before your next decision?
- What decision this week could you bring under the question, what has God already said?
- How can this group pray for and encourage you in that one specific step?