

***God Does Not
Have a Wonderful Plan
for Your Life?***

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Myths About Guidance

1. That God has a wonderful plan for your life (there is only one way to do the will of God)

Myths About Guidance

2. That God wants to make the decision for you

Myths About Guidance

3. That the best way to find your way is by asking for a sign

Myths About Guidance

4. That God leads mainly by supernatural signs and prophetic messages

Myths About Guidance

5. That God's will is hard to find

Myths About Guidance

6. That what God wants cannot be something you find pleasure in

“We ask to know the will of God without guessing that his will is written into our very beings.”

Elizabeth O'Connor, *The Eighth Day*, 14-15.

Myths About Guidance

7. That you should do what others think is best for them

Myths About Guidance

8. That the expression of your personal mission remains constant through your life

Finding God's Will: A Pagan Idea?

“Finding God’s will equals divination – discovering hidden knowledge by supernatural means. Eighty per cent of the Ancient Near East texts pertain to divination, wanting to know whether they should go to war, etc.”

Bruce Waltke

Finding God's Will: A Pagan Idea?

- ***In pagan religions***

- by casting lots (Jonah 1:7)
- by rhabdomancy (arrows), hepascopy (liver analysis)
- by astrology (Isa 47:13)
- by hydromancy (Gen 44:5)

- ***In Eastern Religions Today***

- fate and fatalism
- luck
- ancestors/spirits/gods

Finding God's Will

- ***The Old Testament***

- by sorcery, witchcraft , spiritism and consulting the dead – disallowed (Deut 18:10).
- by going to the prophets (1 Sam 9:9)
- by going to the priest – Urim and Thumin
- by ad hoc dreams, visions and signs (1 Sam 28:6; 1 Sam 4:18; Josh 18:6)

After the appointment of Matthias to replace Judas there is no instance in the New Testament of a mechanical means of determining the will of God. Now all have the Spirit.

God's Purpose

- To bring about the transformation of all creation, including the renewal of people and “all things” through a love relationship with his creation and his people, towards the final end when there will be a grand rendezvous of God, people and creation, a continuous sabbath rest with everything in harmony and unity.

Finding God's Will

- ***In the New Testament***

- the Acts records many instances of **revelation as compared with divination** – through unsought but graciously given dreams, visions, Spirit-promptings, angelic visitations (Acts 13:1; 21:12-14; 10:9-23; 8:26; 16:16).

- God's will, profoundly revealed in God's interaction with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, is not a divine fiat, an inexorable force to which one blindly and cravenly submits; nor is it chance or fate. God's will is an empowering vision, a dream of greatness (as with the dreams given to Joseph). God does not have a wonderful plan for our lives but a wonderful purpose. So the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob positively inspires envisioning, inventing and implementing.

The End - Presence, People and Place

<i>THE GARDEN OF EDEN</i>	<i>THE FALL</i>	<i>THE NEW COVENANT</i>	<i>NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH</i>
Communion With God	Alienation	Access and Acceptance	Continuous Communion
Community-Building	Brokenness Rule and Revolt	Fellowship Neighbouring	City of God People of God
Co-creativity	Destruction	Meaningfull Work Earth-Keeping	Fulfilled Creativity

A Story: Greece, Egypt and Israel

DISCERNING YOUR PERSONAL VOCATION

- MOTIVATION – PASSION
- TALENTS AND GIFTS
- PERSONALITY
- CONSTRAINTS
- BLOCKS / DYSFUNCTIONALITIES
- DIRECT LEADING OF GOD

DISCERNING YOUR PERSONAL CALLING

“Speak Lord for your servant
Is listening” 1 Sam 3:10
“Here am I” Gen 46:2
“Here am I. Send me!”
Isa 6:8

**DIRECT LEADINGS
OF GOD**

BLOCKS

Dysfunctionalities that affect
my freedom are.....

Factors that affect my
future service are....

CONSTRAINTS

PERSONALITY

My temperament...
Values I cherish.....

GIFTS AND TALENTS

My creationally endowed abilities...
God seems to work through me in...

MOTIVATION

My passions are.....
My central motivational thrust is.....

Spiritual Sources of Creativity

Inspiration to Creativity

1. Our Dignity as Co-Creators and Priests of Creation

- encouraging us to risk in taking initiative in so doing (human beings have limited sovereignty – everything is not determined), and able in his gracious sovereignty to weave his purpose even into the mistakes human being make. God is a moveable mover.

Inspiration to Creativity

2. Opportunity in an open creation

- Human beings can make a difference, symbolized by the Genesis mandate and the naming of animals by Adam.

- **“Entrepreneurs see change as the norm and as healthy. Usually they do not bring about the change themselves. But – and this defines entrepreneur and entrepreneurship – the entrepreneur always searches for change, responds to it, and exploits it as an opportunity” (Drucker, 27-28).**

Inspiration to Creativity

3. Risk-Taking inspired by the Triune God

- The Triune God inspires creativity and risk-taking.
- In *The Creation of Wealth* Brian Griffiths notes that among world religions, “the Trinity is unique to Christianity.” It expresses the relationship between the one and the many. “When,” he says, “the One is given preference, as in Islam, the consequence has been a form of totalitarian state which attempts to discern the will of Allah.” (He argues that Fascism and Marxism also attempt to emphasize the one.)

- The Triune God inspires creativity and risk-taking.
- “When the many are given priority the result is anarchy.” But Christianity brings to economic life both the individual initiative and the community concern. It is personal because God is personal, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God inspires wealth creation, entrepreneurial activity, creativity in all spheres of life, whether remunerated or not. (55)

- “The impressive achievements of the Arabs [in developing a system of numbers] suggest once again that an idea can go so far and still stop short of a logical conclusion. Why, given their advanced mathematical ideas, did the Arabs not proceed to probability theory and risk management? The answer, I believe, has to do with their view of life. Who determines our future: the fates, the gods, or ourselves? The idea of risk management emerges only when people believe that they are to some degree free agents. Like the Greeks and the early Christians, the fatalistic Muslims were not yet ready to take the leap.”

– See Peter L. Bernstein, *Against the Gods: The Remarkable Story of Risk* (New York: John Wiley, 1996), XXXV.

- **The parable of the talents (Matt 25:14-30).** The one talent man had a deficient view of God and so was "afraid and went out and hid [the] talent in the ground" (24-25). A harsh exacting God that is to be feared inhibits risk-taking whereas a God who is creative, loving, forgiving and good inspires risk-taking. Failure might even be a kind of success.

- **The Parable of the Talents** (Matt 25:14-30) – living vocationally with faith
 - the enigma of the one talent man
 - the point – being steward investors with hope
 - the one talent man had a wrong conception of God, wrong conception of stewardship and a wrong conception of the coming kingdom (nothing to do except fold up our hands and wait).

- It is a sin to squander what God has given us to use, or to wrap up our talents, our ideas and our dreams in a handkerchief and bury them for fear of losing them through a risky experiment or doing our work incorrectly. We are accountable.
- We have a God who wants us to take risks and we are accountable for the risks we do not take!

Inspiration to Creativity

4. Calling and Gospel Confidence

- **Calvin** (Wauzzinski, 110)
 - each person should find their place/calling where they can express their gifts and talents
 - our work is for the common good, practical love for the neighbour
 - we should choose what work serves our neighbour best

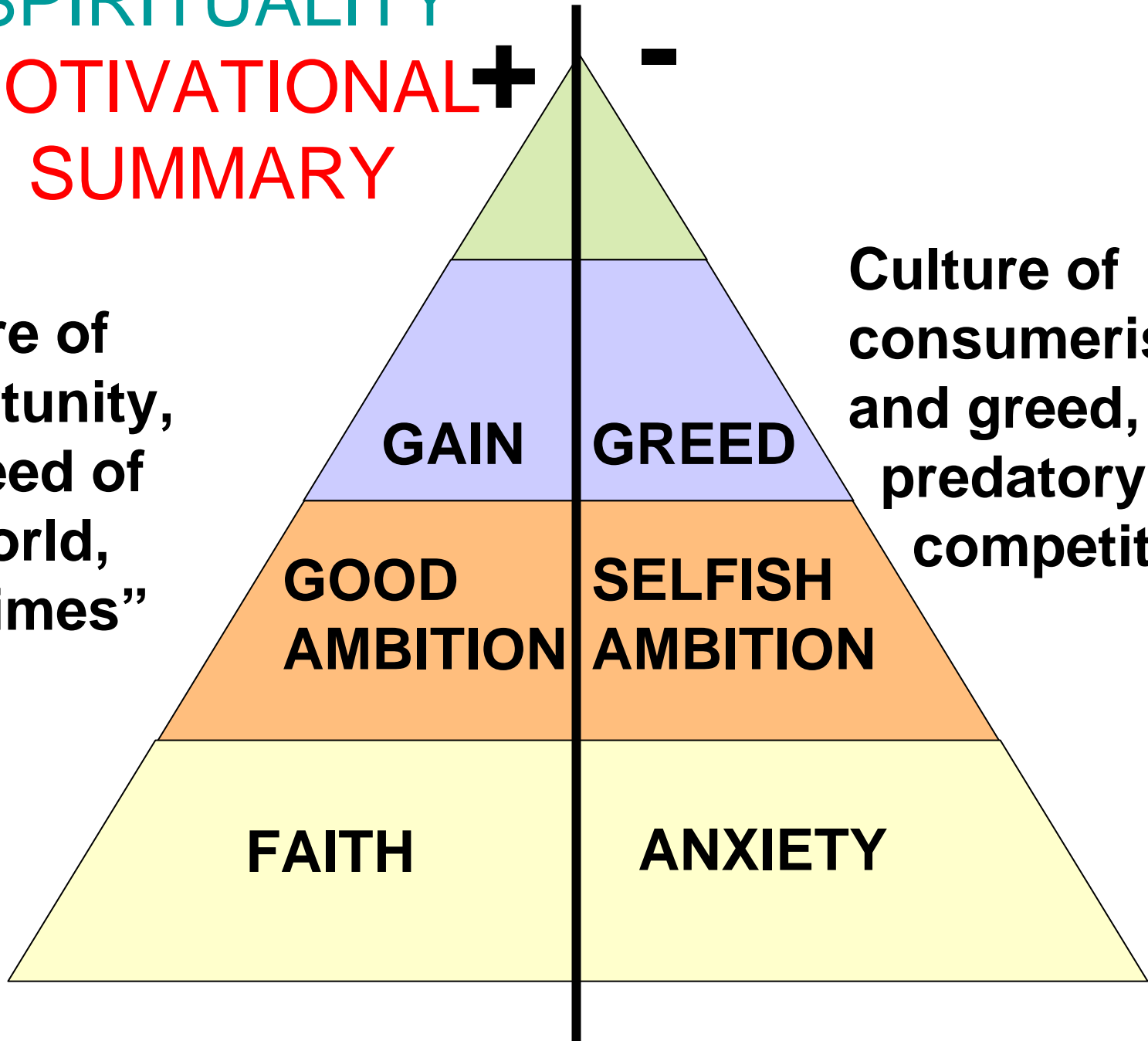
Inspiration to Creativity

5. Good Ambition and a Proper Selfishness

- There is a place in Scripture for self-affirmation – appreciating one's value, dignity, talents and capacities – and profitability – seeing that one's life and one's investment leads to a worthwhile end (Matt 16:26).

SPIRITUALITY MOTIVATIONAL + SUMMARY

Culture of
opportunity,
the need of
the world,
the “times”

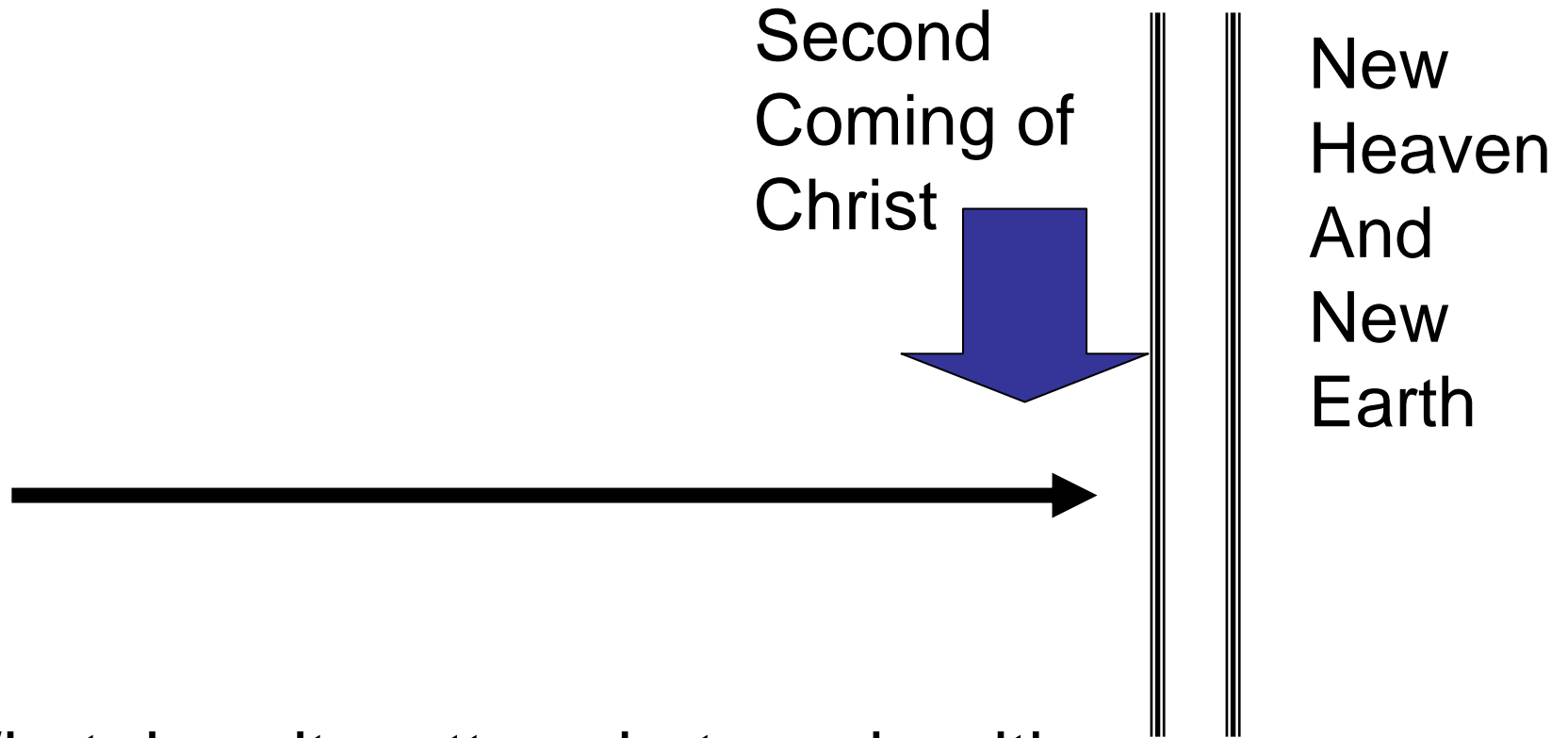


Culture of
consumerism,
and greed,
predatory
competition

Inspiration to Creativity

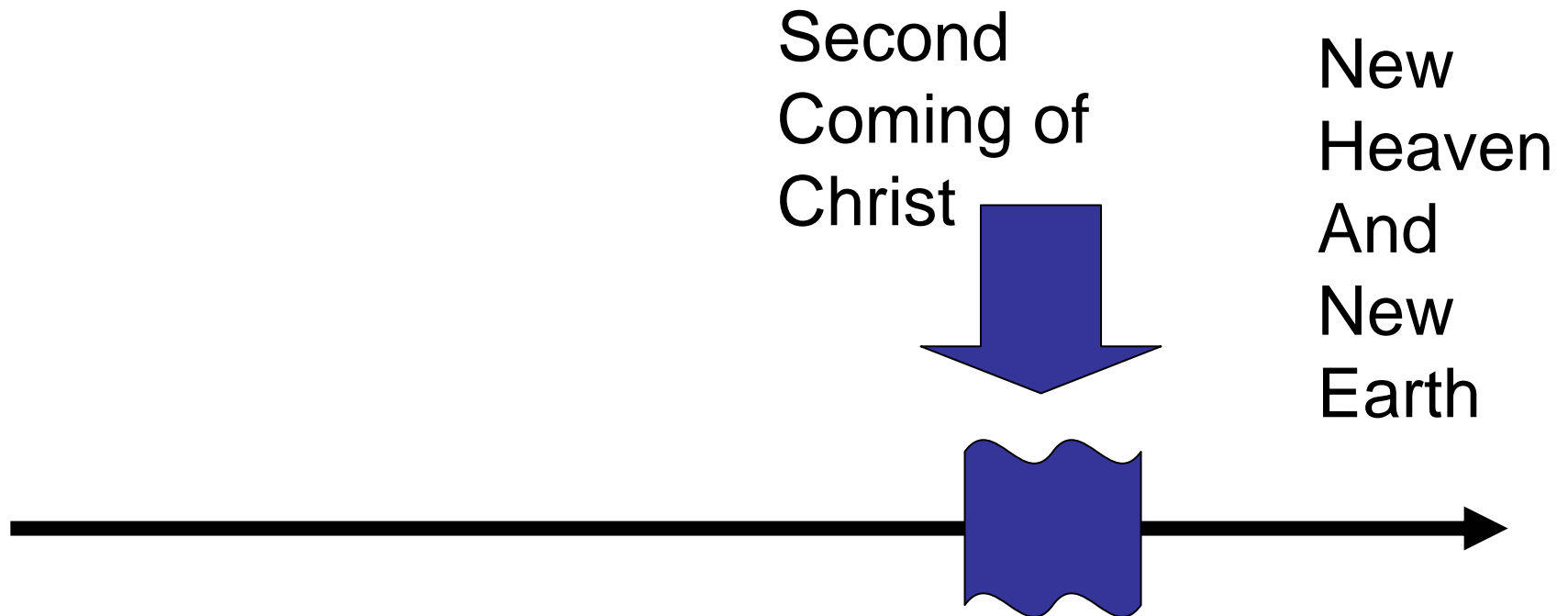
6. The vision of a new heaven and a new earth and our contribution to the future of planet earth and the human community

The Question of the Continuity of Creation



What does it matter what we do with
Creation if it is going to be annihilated anyway?

The Question of the Continuity of Creation



The transfiguration of creation at the Second Coming

- Premillennialism – people were to concentrate on personal salvation, leading people to be culturally pessimistic.

- D.L. Moody said, "I look on this world as a wrecked vessel. God has given me a lifeboat and said to me, 'Moody, save all you can'"
(Wauzzinski, 57).

- The vision of the new heaven and the new earth is the end to which God's and humankind's joint work is striving - not a "spiritual" heaven, but a new heaven and a new earth, a transfigured creation.
- We make our marks on heaven!

- Heaven as the place of continuous creativity
- Heaven as the continuing location of creative work we have done on earth, done with faith, hope and love

A Plan or a Purpose?

So What?

So What?

- It gives human beings great dignity and decisional responsibility
- It inspires creative action and risk-taking
- It delivers us from the oppressive weight of inventing the meaning of our own lives and being solely responsible for the future
- It frees us from paralysing fear that we might make a mistake and are doing God's "second best."