

Does God Control Our Circumstances?



Does God control my circumstances, or are the circumstances in my life just that—circumstances?

Well ... uh ... yes.

God often uses our circumstances to guide us and show us what to do, but sometimes the circumstances surrounding us have nothing to do

with what God wants us to do. Let me give examples of both.

1. God is behind our circumstances.

Ruth was not a Jew, but she came to Judah with her mother-in-law Naomi. Ruth went to find work gleaning in a field, and she "just happened" to end up working in the field of Boaz, a man related to Naomi. In their culture, Boaz could marry Ruth and be the "kinsman-redeemer" for two women in desperate straits. These "fortunate circumstances" brought the couple together who figure into the family tree of King David and Jesus of Nazareth. (It's worth reading the short [Book of Ruth](#) for the full story.)

Esther was a Jewish woman in exile, yet she was forced into a beauty contest which led her to become queen of the entire Persian Empire. These circumstances happened around the time a law was created to exterminate all the Jews. Her cousin, Mordecai, challenged her to use her position as queen to save their people. "And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?" ([Esth. 4:14](#)).

2. God is not behind our circumstances.

Samuel. God sent Samuel to Jesse's family in Bethlehem to anoint the next king of Israel. Everything pointed to Jesse's son, Eliab, as the obvious candidate. But God was not behind this.

"The LORD said to Samuel, 'Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart'" ([1 Sam. 16:7](#)).

David. Saul was king of Israel, but everyone knew David would be king. Everybody. Even Saul, which is why he was set on destroying David. In spite of God's promise



and anointing to be king, David ran from Saul. On one occasion, David and his men were hiding from Saul in a cave, the very cave Saul ventured into to ... um, take care of business. All the circumstances came together for David to kill Saul and take the position God had ordained for him.

But David wouldn't do it. These circumstances were not directed by God. David said, *"The Lord forbid that I should do such a thing to my master, the Lord's anointed, or lay my hand on him; for he is the anointed of the Lord"* ([1 Sam. 24:6](#)).

So God is in our circumstances—and He isn't. So how do we know the difference? How do we know when God is using our circumstances to say, "Take action"?

God uses several things to communicate His will to us: the Bible, other believers, and yes, circumstances. But the counsel of other believers and the "nudging" of our circumstances must always be in line with God's Word.

Always.

Twelve Israelites ventured into the promised land to check out the land they would soon be moving into. But every piece of circumstantial evidence screamed this was a bad move. But God had already told them He had given them the land and He wanted them to move into what He had promised. They were not to worry about the circumstances because the circumstances did not line up with God's word.

Discerning the "message" of our circumstances is intricately tied to knowing God's Word. Obedience to His Word makes us sensitive to and in tune with the voice of the Holy Spirit.

"Teach me good discernment and knowledge, For I believe in Your commandments" ([Ps. 119:66](#)).

"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect" ([Rom. 12:2](#)).

We renew our minds with a solid diet of reading, studying, and meditating on God's Word. And when we follow this diet ...

"Solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil" ([Heb. 5:14](#)).

Unwavering faith is not grounded in our circumstances, but in the trustworthy Word of God.