

Finding God's Will (Part 1)

In conversations I have had with family, friends, and acquaintances during the past few weeks, the subject of finding "God's will" has surfaced in regard to a number of situations:

- ◆ a family member seeking a new position, another regarding a ministry opportunity
- ◆ one friend regarding a purchase, another regarding an upcoming trip, and
- ◆ one acquaintance in relation to choosing a place to live, another in accepting an invitation

I have found that most questions concerning "**God's will**" relate to a matter of direction or guidance:

- ◆ How will I know if this is the right job for me?
- ◆ Which ministry opportunity should I choose?

How will God indicate His will as to purchasing this item, taking this trip, or accepting that invitation?

Often the questions that are being asked are approached in the wrong way. The "**will of God**" is not primarily a map to guide us (although that is a minor part of it), it has to do with our relationship with Him. It is not what we do, but who we are and whose we are.

We must look to the Bible to find and define the "**will of God**". First, the broader aspect of God's will is referred to as **His sovereign will**. God sovereignly ordains and is in control of everything that happens (*Isaiah 40:12-17, 21-24; Daniel 4:35; Ephesians 1:11*). He has the power to permit, postpone, or prevent the actions and events of our world (*1 Chronicles 29:11*). Often, His **sovereign will is hidden** from us until after it comes to pass (*Deuteronomy 29:29*).

Another aspect concerning God's will is **His revealed or declared will**. It is this aspect of God's will that He reveals in His Word. His moral law is also written on the human heart and revealed in our conscience (*Romans 2:15*). It is what He commands us to do or not do. It is this aspect of God's will that should be the top priority of our lives. Romans 12:1-2 summarizes what should be the duty and desire of every fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ. We are called **to offer our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, which is our spiritual act of worship. And not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of our minds, so that we will be able to test and approve what God's will is---His good, pleasing and perfect will.**

There are only two places in the New Testament where God's **revealed or declared will** is referred to in the phrases, "**this is the will of God.**" Both are found in Paul's letter to the church in Thessalonica. In *1 Thessalonians 4:3* we read, "**For this is the will of God, your sanctification.**" The word "sanctification" comes from the same root that we get the word "holy". The word "holy" means "set apart". It is in this context that it refers to people set apart as God's possession (*Leviticus 20:26*). They belong to God (*1 Peter 2:9*), not only in ownership, but a people He indwells (*Ephesians 3:17*). He is the Holy One and it is His presence in us that makes us holy (*1 Peter 1:16*). His ownership extends to every part of our being---spirit, soul, and body (*1 Thessalonians 5:23*).

There are those who take up the unproductive quest of seeking to know **God's secret or hidden will** in hopes of appearing spiritual. However, the true mark of spirituality is seen in those who desire to know and live according to **His revealed will** as found in the Scriptures. Our command is to obey **His revealed will** and not spend time speculating on **His hidden will**.

God's will is not in terms of finding what He is asking of us, but in offering our whole beings to Him for His habitation and exclusive use (*Mark 8:34-35*). How does this strike you?

Do you view it as an interruption of the plans you may have made, or an infinite honor of being chosen to express the holy life of God to a thirsty and searching world?

We will never know the will of God unless we start here.

Have you offered your whole being to God? Have you surrendered it all, holding nothing back?

This is the kind of life that is pleasing to God (*1 Thessalonians 4:10*). It is a life that is totally surrendered to Him (*Luke 22:42*) and lived out by faith in Him (*Hebrews 11:6*).

If we, being led by the Holy Spirit, know and obey His revealed will, we will be in His will. We will be---**holy** (*1 Peter 1:15-16*), **righteous** (*1 John 3:7b*), **being conformed** to the image of God, the Son (*Romans 8:29*), and **bringing glory** to God, the Father (*Philippians 1:11*).

Why not submit to His Lordship right now and allow Him to live His life through you?

Whether you are making this decision for the first time, or are surrendering an area of your life that you have been holding back, He will delight in fulfilling His will in you and making you an expression of His holiness, peace, and love.

Next month we will look at the second phrase in the New Testament where it states "**this is the will of God**" for us.

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