

THE WILL OF GOD

One would think that the most common questions asked by Christians would be about the meaning of certain passages of Scripture but the fact is the questions most asked have to do with knowing the will of God for their life.

Some typical questions; for example:

Is it His will that I go to the mission field?

Does He want me to pastor this church?

I have 3 job offers, which one does He want me to take?

Should I marry this girl, or that fellow?

Should I spend the money for a new car?

Which college should I attend?

Etc., etc., etc.

Many who profess to know the Lord, anguish in prayer, seek all kinds of help, and even worry over this area of their life when it is totally unnecessary.

Although it is good that His children have a desire to know and to do His will, these are questions that never should be asked. The sad fact is that many of His children spend more time praying and worrying about what He would have them do in simple physical situations than they do in serious study of His Word.

To put it bluntly, although these questions may seem to be very, very important to us, they are not! That is not to suggest, as some have, that God does not care, or that these things are not important to Him, for if He does not care then His love is not perfect, or there is some area of our lives where He is not working all things together for our good and where He is not working all things after the counsel of His own will.

After all, how do we know what our parents, our boss or the General in the Army want us to do? They tell us, they command us; it is as simple as that.

Why don't Christians have a much greater desire to do what they already know the Lord wants them to do than to get the answers to any of these non-essential questions:

Commands are imperatives and here is the place to start if we want to know His will. If we are not doing what we already know to be His will for us, that which He commands us to do, our concern about these non-essential earthly things makes it very clear that we really are not interested in doing His will, but are more interested in doing what we want.

It is usually beneficial to study the first occurrence of a subject in the Word and in this case the first expressions of His will are in the sermon on the mount where the Lord summed up His first imperatives for us in the Gospels:

Matthew 6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

The word 'seek' is ζετεο which means to seek diligently, to crave, and the word 'first' is πρωτος which means both first in time and first in importance. The expression 'his righteousness' is the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Note that here we have not only a command so that we know, without doubt, His will for our life, but we also have a promise. A promise from the God who cannot lie, 'all these things shall be added unto you.' What things - of course, the preceding imperatives:

Matthew 6:25-30 ¶ Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

Matthew 6:31-32 **Therefore take no thought**, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

Now 'these things' are the very things that seem to concern most Christians even though our Lord has commanded us to not give them a thought. The reason they are non-essential as far as we are concerned is clear, it is because He is going to add all these things to us. Our attention and concern should be directed toward that which we know to be His will not the areas where we do not.

Consider further; the first three imperatives in the Epistles are in Romans:

Rom 6:11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Rom 6:12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

Rom 6:13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

Here is Holy ground. In the very first imperative to the Church our Lord commands us to "count as a fact" that we are dead to sin. Most Christians ignore the fact that God has made us the righteousness of God in Christ and thus are constantly worrying about sin, consider themselves unworthy sinners, etc. You may consider yourself to be a "sinner saved by grace" but God never calls you that, He calls you absolutely righteous. Count it true! You are not only dead to sin but have been made the righteousness of God in Him!

2 Corinthians 5:21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Col 1:21-22 And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of

his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight:

If we do not obey this first revelation of His will for us as His body, that which we know without doubt to be His will, why have any concern at all about wanting to know His will in any other area of our life.

Further, if we do not obey the first of these commands we cannot possibly obey the other two. If we do not count ourselves dead to sin and alive to God we are unable to “not let sin reign in our mortal bodies” or to cease “yielding our members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin.”

This should be most serious for us, not what job we take, where we live, etc., but how much do we really desire to do what He clearly tells us to do. If we are not profoundly interested in obeying Him here, who cares about these other things. And if we are seriously interested in doing His will, doing what He has told us to do, He has promised to take care of the other things anyway.

That is the heart of the matter. What God knows is most important for us to do, He commands us to do, and makes us the promise that He will add all these other things unto us so that we do not need to worry about them. We thus are free to concentrate on what we know He would have us do.

Here are some more of what we clearly know to be His will for us. There is no doubt about His will here, we know because He has told us it is His will. These are the things that should occupy our time and talent and if they do, there will be no time left to spend on the non-essentials. For surely, if these other things were really essential our loving heavenly Father would have told us. Further more, we have His promise that He is taking care of them for us. We should give our attention, time and effort to do what we know to be His will.

Are we really sure our deepest desire is to do His will? If so, He has made it very clear, without any doubt or question, what His will for us is:

Romans 12:14 Bless them which persecute you: bless , and curse not.

Romans 12:20 Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink : for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.

Romans 12:21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

Romans 13:8 Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.

Romans 13:14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

Romans 15:2 Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification.

1 Corinthians 3:10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

1 Corinthians 4:5 Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.

1 Corinthians 6:18 Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.

1 Corinthians 10:10 Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.

1 Corinthians 10:14 Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry.

Galatians 5:1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

Galatians 5:16 This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

Galatians 6:2 Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

Ephesians 4:26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:

Ephesians 4:27 Neither give place to the devil.

Ephesians 4:28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

Ephesians 4:30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

Ephesians 5:2 And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

Ephesians 5:8 For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:

Ephesians 5:11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

Ephesians 5:15 See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,

Ephesians 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

Ephesians 6:2 Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;)

Ephesians 6:4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Ephesians 6:5 Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;

Ephesians 6:9 And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.

Philippians 2:14 Do all things without murmurings and disputings:

Philippians 3:1 Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe.

Philippians 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.

Colossians 2:8 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

Colossians 2:16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:

Colossians 2:18 Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,

Colossians 3:1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

Colossians 3:2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

Colossians 3:15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.

Colossians 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

Colossians 3:19 Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.

Colossians 3:20 Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.

Colossians 3:21 Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.

Colossians 3:22 Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God:

Colossians 4:2 Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;

Colossians 4:5 Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.

1 Thessalonians 4:18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

1 Thessalonians 5:11 Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.

1 Thessalonians 5:13 And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves.

1 Thessalonians 5:15 See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.

1 Thessalonians 5:16 Rejoice evermore.

1 Thessalonians 5:18 In every thing give thanks : for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

1 Thessalonians 5:19 Quench not the Spirit.

1 Thessalonians 5:20 Despise not prophesyings.

1 Thessalonians 5:21 Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

2 Thessalonians 2:15 Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.

1 Timothy 6:11 But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.

2 Timothy 2:22 Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

There are some more, but it is clear that He has told us what His will is for our lives. It cannot be stressed enough that He and He alone has redeemed us and clothed us in the new man that is created in righteousness and true holiness. It is this new man that can do the will of God. It is important to understand that the old man can do nothing to please God, it is the new man that does His will.

However, someone may say, "I have done all these and still don't know which job He wants me to take." The very fact that He has not given a direct command concerning the job should make it apparent that it is in the "other things" category; He will take care of it!

In first Samuel there is an interesting passage of Scripture. The prophet Samuel tells Saul that the Holy Spirit will come upon him and He will be changed into a new man (and so we are). When this happens he is to do as occasion shall serve. Wonderful!

1 Samuel 10:6 And the Spirit of the LORD will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man.

1 Samuel 10:7 And let it be, when these signs are come unto thee, that thou do as occasion serve thee; for God is with thee.

We can trust Him that if we are doing what we know without any question to be His will, He will take care of the rest, “do as occasion serve thee.”