

God's Will 101

By Elder Timothy Binion

Introduction: Doing God's will is the most foundational and essential pursuit of Christian living. It affects everything, all our relationships and all our choices. Decisions of life need to be guided and directed by a compelling desire to do the will of God. If Christianity were a college degree, fluency in the will of God would be a mandatory, introductory level 101 course titled "God's Will 101". Before we get started, consider these basic definitions for this course:

1. **GOD:** The one Supreme Being whose name is Jehovah; an eternal and infinite spirit that created all things, and as creator has sovereign authority over us. Strong's short definition of God: "God is the infinite and perfect Spirit in whom all things have their source, support and end" (Because He is infinite, a comprehensive definition portrayal of God is impossible).
2. **WILL:** That faculty of the mind by which we determine either to do or forbear an action; the faculty which is exercised in deciding, among two or more objects, which we shall embrace or pursue. Disposition; inclination or desire. The discovery of His desire for us or what He wants us to do. What He's leading us to do or doing or living in a way that pleases Him.

A. There Are Two Theological Aspects of God's Will Revealed In Scripture: The will of God always done and the will of God to be done. In other words, God's own personal will that's always done (His decrees) and His revealed will to be done by us (His desired will). The Bible frequently speaks of God's purpose and plans as His "will" (decreed before the foundation of the world). It also speaks of God's will He desires but has not decreed. Some call this His prescriptive will and the other His determinative will (what shall be and what should be). Both originate within the nature and character of God and are in complete harmony.

1. For example, it is His will (desire) that no one perish (2 Pet. 3:9), yet He has not decreed that everyone will be saved, but He has decreed that everybody can be saved in Christ.
2. Believers are to seek to know or understand God's will (Acts 22:14; Eph. 5:17; Col. 1:9), and are to do His will, that is, to see that what He desires is carried out in our lives. As David prayed, "Teach me to do your will" (Ps. 143:10). Our objective today is to gain a better understanding of what His desired will is, its fundamental purpose, and its benefits.

B. There Are Also Two Theological Aspects of God's Desired Will: One needs to be considered as primary and the other secondary. These are the primary and secondary revelations of God's will: the MORAL will of God and the PERSONAL will of God.

C. God's Moral Will: There are certain areas of life that are unquestionably clear in His Holy Word what His will is. His mandates, commandments (The Ten Commandments), clear Biblical instructions on how to live, the words of Christ, etc. In Psalm 143 verse 10, David prayed, "Lord, teach me to do your will." He didn't say, "Teach me to understand your will." He didn't say, "Teach me to know your will." He didn't say, "Help me find your will." He didn't say, "God, please disclose your will, reveal your will, manifest your will." He said, "Lord, teach me to do your will." This carries the presupposition that it was not a matter of information, but it was a matter of obedience. It wasn't a matter of knowing it, it was a matter of doing it. He doesn't ask God to reveal His will, instead he simply says, "Empower me to do it," which assumes that he knew what it was.

D. God's Personal Will For Our Life: Those things not clear in Scripture: who should I marry, where should I live, what school to attend, where should I work, what church should I join, or how to handle some difficult circumstance. David also often inquired of the Lord as we read in 2 Samuel 2:1 "And it came to pass after this, that David enquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah?" (2Sam. 5:19; 5:23; 23:2; 23:4; 23:9-12; 30:7-8; Psa. 25:4-5; Psa. 27:4). So, there are moral principles we live by and know this is the will of God and then there are personal times in our life when we have to seek the right path of life. "Thou wilt shew me the path of life" (Psalm 16:11).

E. The Harmony of God's Wills: These two ways of understanding His will are linked together and are always in perfect harmony. God's primary will is revealed in Scripture. Now, if He has revealed His will in Scripture and you aren't doing His will revealed in Scripture, then what gives you the right to think that you can demand from Him, His will that isn't revealed in Scripture? Basically, that's the issue, that's the problem. I believe we can know God's will. I don't think God wills things for us that He doesn't make available to us.

1. If God has a will for my life, then He will reveal it to me if I'm in the right place to receive it. 1 John 2:6 says "We ought to walk as He walked. And He walked in submission to the will of God. Is that your desire? It should be if you call yourself a Christian. In John 7:17 Jesus said, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." Literally what it says is

"If any man wills do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God or whether I speak of myself."

2. How does a person get from ignorance to knowledge? He has to want it! He has to will to know it! If any man wills to do God's will or desires God's will then this man shall know of the doctrine.

F. Self-Abandonment to God's Will: Are you willing to do the will of God, whatever it is, from the heart? That is where you begin to take the steps necessary to experience and understand the will of God. As long as you are still holding onto your own will, your agenda, your plans, your ambitions, your purposes, it will result in a conflict that will not yield the will of God. Understanding God's will starts with total abandonment to do God's Will. The express: on at the end of Ephesians 6:6 is this: "Doing the will of God from the heart." The attitude "Your will be done" is doing the will of God from the heart; not reluctantly, not only outside, externally, but from the heart. That's where we have to begin. So you want to know God's will for your life? Then you have to want God's will above everything else, whatever that will might be, whatever it might involve. It has to be, in a sense, the mortification or the slaying of your own agenda; your own will, your own desires, your own longings, your own hopes, dreams, plans, and ambitions. That's where you have to start. I can promise you that if you do not have a from-the-heart commitment to the will of God, you will never experience nor understand the fullness of God's will for your life.

G. Understanding God's Will: Bro. Calvin Perrigo wrote: "Divine leadership is a reality. It's not a sentimental feeling. God's direction can be a sweet and blessed reality in the life of an individual that really wants to do God's will. There is a difference in wanting to do His will and wanting to know what His will is for you. We need to consider that as we think about who can find God's will today. We can find God's will if we want to know it in order to do it. It's difficult to come to an understanding of what God would have you to do if you just want to consider it and vote 'No' on it, or take a vote on it, whether you want to do it or not. I don't think that it would be left up to our vote if we were really called upon by the Lord to do something. I think we should be an obedient child of God and try to do that which He would ask us to do."

1. God's will for your personal life will become second nature if you will do his primary will. Psalm 37:31 says "The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide." Psalm 37:23 reads "The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way." Psalm 37:24 reads "Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth him with his hand." The reason we are in the dark all

the time about what God wants us to do is that we are not walking in the light of His word! The monumental decisions of life will become crystal clear if you will obey His word.

2. The Bible is the first place we must go to discover God's will. Understanding God's will for our lives starts with the supremacy and sufficiency of scripture. Consider the following verses: "When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee " (Pro 6:22); "For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life" (Pro 6:23); "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. " (Psa 119:105); "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. " (Isa 8:20) as well as Psalm 119:96 and 2 Timothy 3:16-17. There are four things you have to do with the Word:

a. Heed it (Matthew 13:9)

b. Handle it (Second Timothy 2:15)

c. Hide it (Psalm 119:11)

d. Hold it forth (Philippians 2:16). Let the word of Christ dominate you. It is the handle by which the Holy Spirit turns your will and reveals God's personal will for your life.

H. Jesus and The Will of God: Every true believer knows that Christianity is not just attending church and living a moral life, the believer is following Jesus. If there is one thing, one principle thing, taught to us by the life of Jesus, it's that He expects us to follow Him and do the will of God. How much of the God's Word influenced what Jesus did? Every JOT AND TITEL! "Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. " (Heb. 10:7). The word used here is "volume" - Ke9aA.1t; kephalis - which means properly "a little head;" and then a knob, and here refers doubtless to the head or knob of the rod on which the Hebrew manuscripts were rolled. Christ came to the sacred writings of Scripture and opened them with the attitude and commitment to doing what they said. Our Lord set the example for a life devoted to doing the will of God when even facing the horrors of the cross and the wrath of divine judgment as He bore the sins of the world. He said this, "Not my will but yours be done," (Luke 22:42). He was totally, consistently, and singularly devoted to His Father's will. He lived His life on that commitment. In John 4:34, He said, "I am come to do the will of him that sent me." Twice again in the gospel of John in chapter 5 verse 30 and in chapter 6 verse 38, He put it this way, "I do not seek my own will, but the will of him who sent me."

I. The Scriptures Are Very Specific about What God's Will Is For Us.

1. It is God's will that you be saved: "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. " (2 Pet. 3:9).
2. God's will is that you be filled with the Spirit: "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is " (Eph. 5:17). "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18).
3. God wills your sanctification: "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication " (1Th 4:3). "That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour" (1Th 4:4).
4. It is God's will (desire) that believers: be holy (1 Thess. 4:3), be grateful (5:18), dedicate themselves to the Lord (2 Cor. 8:5), do good (1 Pet. 2:13-15), and submit and suffer, if necessary, for doing good (3:17; 4:19). They are to live not for human desires but for God's will (4:2).
5. God wants us to make wise decisions by taking into account circumstances, wise counsel, the leading of the Spirit, and Biblical principles. When a Christian follows God's will, his or her relationship to Christ is made more intimate (Matt. 12:50), and he or she is assured of rewards in heaven (Heb. 10:36). Unlike the world, which will pass away, those who follow the will of God will live forever (1 John 2:17). Therefore, believers are to be equipped to do God's will (Heb. 13:21) and are to stand firm in it (Col. 4:12). God listens to the prayers of those who do His will (John 9:31) and He answers prayers that are voiced with the desire that His will be done (1 John 5:14; see also Rom. 1:10; 15:32; James 4:15).

J. Transitioning To the Will of God: Everyone knows Romans 12:1-2. Most of us can quote it word for word. We are drawn to these verses and have great familiarity of them because of the transition to the will of God: "/ beseech you (EXHORTATION) therefore, (TRANSITION) brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, (CONSECRATION) holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service (verse 1). "And be not conformed to this world: (SEPARATION) but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, (TRANSFORMATION) that ye may prove (EXPECTATION) what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God (verse 2).

1. For the carrying out of God's will there must be first the consecration of our body to Him as a living sacrifice. Then we must walk in separation from that which would interfere with our wholehearted service. The process of transformation will inevitably follow. A life consecrated to the Lord leads to conformity to His character and HIS

WILL. "That you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. " This verse is a transitional verse and exhorts us **IN RESPONSE TO THIS MASSIVE ARRAY OF MERCIES** in the previous eleven chapters, do this!

2. In Psalm 116:12 the writer asks: " What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits unto me? " He was really at a loss for words. He didn't know what to give. Here's the answer: your life in all its components as a living sacrifice or complete self-abandonment to the will of God. The more you understand about the greatness of your salvation (like explained in the first eleven chapters of Romans) and the richer your grasp of it, the greater your motivation to offer yourself constantly as a living sacrifice.

K. Therefore and The Wherefores In The New Testament: The therefore and the wherefores say, "In view of the doctrine I've just told you, therefore do this." Or, "On the basis of what I've just said, wherefore here is your behavior." The therefore and the wherefores are the changes, or transitions, from information to action. Consider Paul as he goes through Galatians and says, "You're free from the law. You're free from the law. You're free from the law," and he gives all of the information. Then he says in chapter 5, "Therefore let us standfast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." The Apostle Paul says, "We have victory over death... Therefore be steadfast, unmovable." ((I Corinthians 15). Paul continues, "Jesus is coming. Wherefore comfort one another with those words." There's always that transition into action. The "therefore" in Romans 12:1 makes the transition from the previous eleven chapters of the great doctrine of salvation: "Now, I beseech, therefore, brethren, on the basis of all the mercies of God I've given you for eleven chapters, present your bodies ".

L. YOUR ORTHOPRAXY IS A DIRECT REFLECTION OF YOUR ORTHODOXY:
Your ethical behavior is a direct reflection of your dogma. Your duties flow out of your doctrine. It's what you believe that essentially designs your behavior. God's method for instruction is simple. It is to set before the individual the moral and spiritual principles, and then show him how to apply those principles or motivate him to want to apply those principles.

1. The people of God are to be living proof that the will of God is good, lofty, and noble. We are to show the world and prove by our life what the will of God is and how it's the best way of life for them. You put the will of God on display by doing His will. You show the world the approved will of God by doing it.

2. This is followed by 101 ways to showcase His will to a lost world. Romans 12:3 - 12:15 reads "not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; think soberly; u&e Your Gifts; Let love be without dissimulation; Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good; Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer... "

M. In Conclusion: "God's Will 101" has become for us today God's will one hundred and one! To review, let's consider these five points from the teaching of Elder Calvin Perrigo on the will of God (Elder Calvin Perrigo's Book on the Will of God 1982):

- 1."rPhere must be an honest sincere willingness to do God's will. We used the prayer of the Lord in Gethsemane for an evidence of that rule.
- 2.God's will is always in harmony with God's Word. His will, will not lead contrary to the teachings of His Word, because His Word is what? A lamp to our feet, a light unto our path.
- 3.Providential circumstances may indicate God's will. He's able to change every circumstance within our life and cause us to realize that we are not where we should be, not doing what we should do, and we should abide in the calling that we were called to do.
- 4.God's will is made known in answer to prayer. We know that we must be honest and sincere when we ask the Lord to reveal His will to us. We need to pray honestly and sincerely because of our need, and we need to listen to the answer that God gives to you and me when we have prayed in that fashion.
- 5.Peace of mind should attend the doing of God's will. Regardless of the outside storms, inside peace should reign in our mind and heart that we are in the center of God's will."

Mat 7:21 hrot everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.