

Understanding God's Will

Introduction

Welcome to this edition of ***"My Thoughts with Dale Van De Bogart."*** I would like to welcome all of our faithful and new watchers to the broadcast. As a reminder, all notes are in PDF, and located on our website, vdbm.org. Click on My Thoughts Video Series, scroll down on the page to choose the series, and download our notes.

In this week's segment, ***"Understanding God's Will"*** I will discuss five progressive truths of God's will. I would like everyone to remember that ***"God's will"*** means God's wishes and desires for each of us. Open your Bible to the Book of Ephesians 5:1-21.

Let Us Not be Foolish

Every Christian should seek to understand the will of the Lord; or, to use a literal translation of Ephesians 5:17, we should ***"not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is."*** Some Christians are ***"unwise"*** or ***"foolish"***, for they have no discernment in the things of the Lord, and this disqualifies them from real usefulness in the service of God.

As you can see, I replaced the word ***"foolish"*** with ***"unwise."*** Foolish (***aphron***) means without reason and unwise (***asophos***) derives from the Greek word ***"Sophos"*** meaning skilled or wise. Now place the letter ***"a"*** in front of Sophos and it means absent. So, they are absent in skill or being wise. Now, we have the word ***"foolish."*** Remember, ***"foolish"*** does not mean ***"stupid."***

Example of Being Foolish

- ***They do not understand the true nature of the Christian life.*** It is imparted by a new birth (John 3:3-7), and it is experienced upon receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior.
- ***They do not know the secret of life more abundant*** (John 10:10), of fruitfulness in service (John 15:5), deliverance from bondage to sin and self (Romans 8:2), and a life of triumphant holiness (2 Corinthians 2:14).
- ***They do not understand the true nature and purpose of the church,*** which is not primarily an outward organization but an invisible, living organism consisting of every true believer (1 Corinthians 12:12-13).
- ***They do not realize God's purpose is forming and completing the Church*** (Acts 15:14). They feel the world will not be converted; the kingdom of God will not be built on earth, and the world will go on getting worse.
- ***They know nothing about God's future program for the world.*** We find a wonderful revelation of all these great truths in God's Word. Ask God to open our eyes to see these truths (Psalm 119:18).

Passage Text - Ephesians 5:1-21

First Truth - It is God's Will that Everyone Should be Saved

God desires the salvation of everyone. 2 Peter 3:9, ***"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."*** In His great mercy He has provided salvation for everyone.

He wants as many people as possible to come to faith in him. God, in his great love, is not willing that any should perish but all should come to repentance. Jesus is delaying his second coming so sinners will repent and turn to him. Love is the reason that He delays the destruction of the world. God desires all people to be saved. He is not indifferent. God gave people free will. Some will exercise their free will and reject God, but this is not God's desire.

This is not to say that everybody will accept God's provision. The Word of God never leads us to believe that all will be saved, but it does teach that all may be saved. Romans 10:13, ***"For whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."***

Second Truth - It is God's Will that those Whom He Saves Should be Sanctified

1 Thessalonians 4:3-4, ***"For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor."*** Becoming ***"holy"*** involves a process called ***"sanctification."*** This process continues throughout every believer's lifetime on earth, preparing us for heaven. God takes our old patterns and behaviors and transforms us to His standards and will.

Let us look at the meaning of ***"sanctification."*** It is the action of making or declaring something holy or being freed from sin. The Greek word for ***"sanctification"*** is ***"hagiasmos,"*** which comes from the primary work, ***"hagios"*** meaning sacred or holy. Another word used with ***"sanctification"*** is ***"consecrate" (hagiazō)*** which means to make holy or sanctify.

Those who are being sanctified have accepted Jesus Christ as Savior and are allowing the Holy Spirit to work in their lives, making them more and more like Jesus. God's will for His children is that they should be holy. Ephesians 1:4, ***"just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love."***

God's purpose is our ***"sanctification,"*** that we may live separate from the world in purity of mind and body. If you are His child, then God's will for you is that you should be holy; that is, whole; clean, and constantly being filled with the Holy Spirit.

Third Truth - It is God's Will that those Whom He Saves and Sanctifies Should Serve Him

We are saved to serve. What is Christian service? The answer to this question is found in Romans 12:1, ***"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service."*** The word ***"beseech"***

(*deomai*) in Greek means to want, entreat or beg, or implored or pleaded. So, Paul is telling us he “**wants us to present our bodies as a living sacrifice in service to Him.**”

Only two “*living sacrifices*” are in the Bible:

- First was Isaac in Genesis 22.
- Second was our Lord Jesus Christ who died on our behalf, as a sacrifice, in obedience to God’s will.

The fundamental meaning of service for God is we present ourselves wholly to God and place ourselves absolutely at His disposal do His work in and through us. This is His will for every one of His children. The nature of our service may vary, but the meaning will always be the same. In the light of this, are you, His servant?

Fourth Truth - It is God's Will that those Whom He Saves and Sanctifies and Who Serve Him Should also Suffer for and with Him

1 Peter 3:17, “**For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.**” I would like to let this truth sink in for just a moment. Many of God’s children do not understand what Jesus, Paul, and the other disciples meant about suffering.

When we talk about suffering, we do not mean physical abuse because we are Christians. Certainly not! I like comparing this type of suffering to persecution. Sometimes our old friends, certain family members, and the world want nothing to do with us. Six things to do in view of suffering:

- Be happy in suffering (1 Peter 3:14; Matthew 5:10)
- Be not afraid of man (1 Peter 3:14; Matthew 10:28)
- Be not troubled by trouble (1 Peter 3:14)
- Take suffering as unto God and hold Him sacred in your heart (1 Peter 3:15)
- Be ready to give an account of your life, conduct, and hope (1 Peter 3:15)
- Maintain a good conscience by good behavior (1 Peter 3:16)

Now, because we have accepted God’s gracious gift of salvation, we are holy or set apart from the world.

No Christian should ever suffer because of evildoing, and no Christian should be surprised if he suffers for welldoing. Our world is so mixed up that people “**call evil good, and good evil**” and “**put darkness for light, and light for darkness**” (Isaiah 5:20).

Don't Be Surprised!

We can suffer because it is the will of God for us to suffer, but we should not be surprised. Jesus warned us in John 15:18-25 as in reality, people hate us because they hated Jesus first. I have a

“My Thoughts” on this subject under ***“The Cost of Discipleship”*** series called ***“They Don’t Hate You.”***

My advice is to stay the course, spend time in God’s Word, and let in the light. Darkness will never overcome the light. For some assistance, in Romans 12:2, you will notice three characteristics of God’s will we can use and apply in our lives:

- Do not be conformed to the world
- Be transformed by renewing of your mind
- Prove what is good and acceptable

Fifth Truth - It is God's Will that those Whom He Saves and Sanctifies, and Who Serve Him and Suffer for Him, Should Always Understand and Know His Will for Them.

The question of knowing God’s will is with some of us a very real problem. Let us take a look at some promises God made in His Word.

- Psalm 25:9, ***“The humble He guides in justice, and the humble He teaches His way.”***
- Psalm 32:8, ***“I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye.”***
- Psalm 73:24, ***“You will guide me with Your counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.”***

Let us shift our focus over to the Book of Proverbs and some godly wisdom on God’s will:

- Proverbs 3:5-6, ***“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.”***
- Proverbs 16:3, ***“Commit your works to the Lord, and your thoughts will be established.”***

Let us not forget what God told Isaiah about His will:

- Isaiah 58:11, ***“The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your soul in drought, and strengthen your bones; you shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail.”***

Even the New Testament has something to say about God’s will for us:

- John 16:13, ***“However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.”***
- 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4, ***“For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor.”***

- James 1:5-6, *“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.”*

Conclusion

How may we know God’s will? How does He reveal His will to us?

- **By His word, in response to our study – 2 Timothy 2:15.** The more we study the Word of God the more we become acquainted with the things which are pleasing to Him and He desires in the lives of His children (Acts 9: 6; John 2: 5).
- **By His wisdom, in response to our surrender – Romans 12:1-2.** When we are seeking God’s guidance on a certain matter, we must take into account all the circumstances, and trust Him to arrange these that we may understand His will (Psalm 37:5).
- **By His holy spirit, in response to our earnest prayer – Romans 8:26-27.** We can be sure of God’s will when the clear teaching of the Word, the wisdom and the voice of the Holy Spirit all harmonize. Let us pray for each other the prayer which Paul and Epaphras prayed for the Colossians (Colossians 1:9, 4:12).

Amen!

I am Dale Van De Bogart and I fully agree on God’s Word!

If you are reading this and never accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, what are you waiting for? Click on [FREE GIFT](#) and make Jesus the Lord of your life **TODAY!** Remember, read your Bible daily, it’s good food! Like and follow us on [Facebook](#), subscribe to our [YouTube](#) channel, and watch this and other My Thoughts videos.

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