

The Brown Street Beacon

"...Shine out among them like beacon lights,

holding out to them the Word of Life" (Phil 2:15-16)



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God's Will

The Bible often speaks of the will of God. Knowing, respecting and ultimately doing the will of God is essential to making it to heaven. Jesus once said, "Not 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" (Matthew 7:21). Fortunately, we can know and do God's will. Such is suggested by Paul when he admonished the brethren at Ephesus not to be unwise but rather to understand the will of the Lord (Ephesians 5:17). The will of God points to His divine wishes and desires. It should be the goal of us all to fulfill the desires of God. This was certainly the case with Jesus. We remember well the prayer of Christ in the garden when He said, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt..." (Matthew 26:39). Indeed, Jesus found His nourishment in doing the will of His Father (John 4:34). Can we honestly say that we find strength in doing God's divine will? Too often we get caught up in the "me first" syndrome in which everything is about us. We even relegate God to the back seat of our lives as we happily strive for self-fulfillment. How much better off would we be if we trained ourselves, no matter what the circumstance or situation may be, to always put God's will first.

God's will, however, isn't always so easy to know. Yes, we can understand His direct and revealed will. This is the part of God's will that encompasses His commandments for man and how He desires for us to live. This has been clearly set forth in God's Word. There is no need to guess about how God wants us to behave. There is no need to stumble around in the dark so far as how God demands that we worship Him. God gives man instructions along these lines, and He always has. But has every wish, want and desire of God been revealed? The answer is no. This is why James said, "For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that" (James 4:15). The truth is there are many things that come up in life where we struggle in trying to determine what course the Lord wants us to follow. We all face these struggles. God hasn't revealed to us what we should do in every circumstance of life, that is, not directly. One might wonder if taking a certain job is God's will or if it is His will that we turn down the job. Is it God's will that we send our children to public schools or does He want us to home-school? Even spiritual decisions aren't always clear. How often should I pray? What local church should I attend? These are just a few examples of how we, at times, wrestle with determining exactly what God's will is for us. There is, however, one rule we can always follow. We can determine to make decisions that never violate God's revealed will. As we said earlier, God has revealed how He wants us to live. He has taught us through His Word to deny ungodliness and worldly lust, and to live soberly, righteously and godly (Titus 2:12). When we keep our decisions in line with that standard, and when we continue to keep God in our decisions through prayer, asking Him for His will to be done in our lives, our choices in life are usually good ones.

One more thought on the will of God. Don't make the mistake of thinking that everything that ever happens is God's will. It's not! Some things in life happen by chance (Ecclesiastes 9:11; Luke 10:31). It is true that nothing happens apart from the permissive will of God, but God doesn't attempt to control every bounce of every ball. When a child rides his bike into the street and get killed, that is not God's will. Yes God knew it was going to happen, and even could have prevented it, but in His unsearchable wisdom, God has decided not to control every step of every living being in this world. This doesn't mean that He never intervenes in our lives. He does, but not always. Bad things ultimately happen in life because of the presence of sin and sin is man's fault, not God's. So, don't blame God every time tragedy strikes and attribute it to God's will. That's not fair to God. Let's do our best to live according to God's revealed will and ask God to guide us by the principles of His Word when we are in doubt.

Don

Society Has Failed You

Kenneth D. Sils

About seven years ago, a decision was handed down in a famous court case in Texas. This case involved the so-called "vampire" killer who murdered several people in very brutal ways. The jury found him guilty of murder I the first degree and the Judge sentenced him to die for his heinous crimes.

While listening to the national news, I heard a curious statement reported of what the Judge in the case had to say to this corrupt young man during sentencing. The Judge reportedly said this to this killer, "Your parents failed you, society has failed you!"

This is not the first time I have heard such "foolishness" come from the lips of judges in America. Someone, somewhere, in some way...has failed you. We live in a society which has accepted the liberal pap of...someone else is to blame for your actions. Our country was founded on the truth of individual responsibility and accountability, but today the mantra of our nation is, "find someone else to blame."

From the dawn of time, man has attempted to justify unlawful actions on the backs of other people. In the garden, God told man in Gen. 2:17-18, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." We know the story! Satan tempted Eve and she ate, then she gave it to her husband and he ate. When God confronted them with their sin, they looked for someone else to blame: Adam blamed Eve, Eve blamed the serpent and the serpent must have laughed. God's way is personal responsibility. God punished the serpent for his sin, Eve for her sin and Adam for his sin.

This is and always has been the Bible way. Ezekiel told Israel to straighten up and quit blaming their fathers for the consequences of sin they wre now reaping. Ezek. 18:20 states, "The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the quilt of their father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous will be upon himself and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself." Only upon ourselves, guilt and punishment will come for our own wickedness. Although others may influence us to sin, God will demand payment from our hands. It is our fault regardless of the environment we live! Yes, maybe our parents didn't train us correctly. Maybe society deems our promiscuous behavior acceptable. Possibly all of our peers are doing it! Yet God will punish you for your sin and God will punish me for my sin! You have failed yourself!

Brothers and sisters, we need to place this truth deep into our hearts and the hearts of our families. God expects us individually to serve Him and obey the Gospel. He has given every able-bodied Christian the duty of “assembling with the saints, Heb. 10:25”, on a consistent basis. God admonishes each of us to bear our own load, Gal. 6:5. God encourages us to work in His vineyard as He has given us a variety of talents to utilize and bear spiritual fruits for the glory of God. Are you bearing your own load?

One of the songs we sing exhorts us by saying, “There is much to do, there’s work on every hand.” Don’t attempt to put your load of spiritual service on another brother or sister. Don’t leave it for the preacher, the Bible class teacher or the “faithful few.” When you drift from God, don’t blame the church for its lack of teaching or concern. If you are overcome in sin, don’t lash out against your family or friends as though they are responsible for your wickedness. On the day of judgment, all people will stand before Jesus and you’ll never hear from Him, “Your parents failed” or “society has failed you.”