**How Can I Know God’s Will?**

(by Ken Weliever)

 I was talking to a lady last week who was being evicted from her apartment. She expected the judge to evict her in three days. However, to her surprise, she was given two weeks. She suggested to me that it was God’s will. God gave her an extra two weeks. I’m not so sure that the apartment manager thought it was the will of God for this woman to get two months of free rent!

 This situation got me to thinking of the many times people interpret something unexpected or inexplicable as the will of God. A child suddenly dies of an unknown disease. A husband and father is killed in an auto accident. A godly wife and mother is stricken with cancer and dies within six months. A mad gunman opens fire on school children and 20 are murdered. When these situations occur, someone is bound to say, *“It was God’s will.”* But was it?

 As I contemplated this question, I recalled a fine lecture by Colly Caldwell at the 2012 Florida Lectures on ‘The Will of God.’ To understand the will of God, Colly said that we need to remember that God created us for His purpose. To praise Him. To glorify Him. To live for Him. And to love Him. To enjoy a relationship with Him. Just as a parent seeks to bring children into the world that will honor, respect and love them, God wants that from His children. However, He made us with the free will to choose. While it is the will of God that we fulfill the purpose for which He created us, sometimes we make choices that are contrary to that purpose and to His will.

 Colly suggested that God’s will falls into three categories. He used the life of Joseph as an example (**Genesis 37-50**).

1. There are some things that are the ***unconditional will of God***. They are unchanging. His plan for man’s salvation was and is God’s will. That is changeless. Constant. Eternal. God’s will was to use Joseph to bring about a great deliverance for Jacob’s family and save them from an impending famine.
2. There are some things that are the ***conditional will of God***. There are some things that God desires, but may or may not occur depending on the choices we make. Joseph chose to be faithful to God. And God was able to use that to carry out His will. Israel on the other hand chose to be unfaithful. God desired for them to love and serve Him, but they did not.
3. Then there are some things that are the ***permissive will of God***. There are things that God may or may not desire to happen, but He permits them. We don’t always know. Sometimes we make choices that we are not sure if it is the best choice or not. But God permits it. God does not always agree with everything He allows. Joseph’s brothers were envious and had murderous intent in their hearts. I think it is safe to say that that was not God’s will. But He allowed it.

Dr. Caldwell then made this important observation, *“Things are not always what they seem to be.”* Rachel was barren and thought she couldn’t have children, but she did. Joseph’s brothers thought he was being presumptuous with his dreams, but they were given to him by God foretelling the future. Jacob lived a good part of his life thinking Joseph was dead, yet he was alive. Joseph languished in prison and thought he was forgotten, but he wasn’t. Joseph’s brothers were sure he would retaliate and seek revenge for their sins against him, but that was not his intention.

In the final analysis, Colly suggested, there are two things we can know for sure are the will of God. (1) That He wants us to be saved. (2) That He wants us to be good. I can know this is God’s will because it’s revealed in the Bible!

Indeed this is a challenging subject. But we know that God is in control. That He allows us free moral agency. Thus, I am responsible for my actions. And He can even take the bad things that people mean for evil toward us and He can use them for good. My role and responsibility is to love God. Trust God. And serve God. And say, *“Your will be done.”*

**Praying Without Ceasing**

(Selected)

 When I first open my eyes in the morning, I pray, Lord, open the eyes of my understanding; and while I am dressing I pray that I may be clothed with the robe of righteousness; and when I have washed me, I ask for the washing of regeneration; and as I begin to work, I pray that I may have strength equal to my day; when I begin to kindle the fire, I pray that God’s Word may revive in my soul; and as I sweep out the house, I pray that my heart may be cleansed from all its impurities; and while preparing and partaking of breakfast, I desire to be fed with the hidden manna and the sincere milk of the Word; and as I am busy with the little children I look up to God as my Father, and pray for the spirit of adoption… and so on all day. Everything I do furnishes me with a thought of prayer.

The One Who Is Wise

1. Fears God (**Proverbs 9:10**)
2. Lives a good life (**James 3:13-17**)
3. Refrains his lips (**Proverbs 10:19**; **29:11**; **17:28**)
4. Wins souls (**Proverbs 11:30**)
5. Hears and obeys the Lord (**Matthew 7:24-27**)

Words of Wisdom

~ Productive prayer requires earnestness, not eloquence.

~ Contentment is not found in having everything, but in being satisfied with everything you have.