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**The Key  
that Opens  
the Ear of God**

**#1116-B**

**Series: The Will of God**



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**INTO HIS LIKENESS RADIO**

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# The Key that Opens the Ear of God

The will of God! Is it (as some say) elusive, vague, impossible to discover? Is it a maze through which man must walk, never certain where he is going? Or is the will of God really clear to those who have eyes to see? Is it really the uncompromising design of a sovereign God lovingly translated into a unique, personal plan for each us? Is it understandable? Is it discoverable? Is it workable? Finding those answers is the objective of this study.

We have laid the foundation with some basic, unchanging Biblical truths. From Romans 12:2, for instance, we've learned that the will of God is *good*; it never varies from God's character, as revealed in His Word. It is *acceptable*; it is a vehicle allowing us to please God's heart. It is *perfect*; it is unchanging and incorruptible. We also learned that the will of God is *progressive*; that the obtaining of new light is dependent on our obedience to the light we have.

The next truth we learned was that the will of God is specific. It is not a blank sheet of paper with dotted lines for us to draw in our course as we deem acceptable. Jesus Himself said that in order to do the Father's will, He had to lay aside all of His own plans, even His own Words, and simply let the Father lead Him. Apart from the Father's distinct direction, He could, eternally, in man's body, do "nothing". Those were His words. So doing the will of God, even for Jesus, wasn't entering into a simple set of parameters, and then doing as He pleased. It was a minute-by-minute following of the Father's leading. It was often an all-night vigil in the Father's presence, equipping Him with the grace to obey. He was tempted in all points, like as we are. To do what? To disobey the will of God. And even as He faced that Cross, He went before the Father, shared His burden, asked if there was another way, and then surrendered to do only as the Father willed. For Him to have devised another plan, chosen any other men, touched any other lives, than those the Father ordained would have been for Him to have exited that precious pathway called "God's Will". Jesus never did. But, Beloved, it was specific.

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And it is for us, as well. These were the foundation stones upon which we began building our study of the will of God.

In our last lesson, we looked briefly at the first of two keys in determining God's will. The first was "*cemetery leading and the will of God.*" It was the absolute, found in Scripture, that guarantees us of one unchanging truth...that only those who have been born of the Spirit of God, redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ, have the capacity to discern *or* obey the will of God. To expect unbelievers to understand or do those things that only the Spirit can interpret is blasphemy. It frustrates them, confuses them, and drives them further from spiritual truth. *Only believers can know the will of God.*

The second key was this: To find that good, acceptable, perfect plan of God, we must at some point, "commit our bodies as living sacrifices." We must surrender our lives and become pliable to do or become *anything He chooses.* "Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." That is to be our prayer daily; and that is to follow a once-for-all yielding of body, soul, and spirit to Him.

With these basics understood, we move into the more practical realm of finding the will of God in individual situations, though today's study will uncover, we trust, one more basic principle that either frees God or prevents God from revealing that will to us.

You may recall that we are looking at this question through the grid of a Christian family (we chose to call them the "Ed Wilson" family), who are seeking to find God's will concerning a job change. Ed Wilson is gainfully employed. His family is satisfactorily settled. His spiritual life is obviously growing. But an opportunity has come along that *appears to be the will of God.* He has a peace about it. Most of his counsel seems to agree. God seems to have miraculously "opened the door" because he never sought the position. How can this man and his family *know for sure*, if this is God's will? Or can they? Or does God care? Those are the questions we are seeking to answer, as well as to apply those answers to our own individual situations, many of which are not too different from those of the Wilson clan.

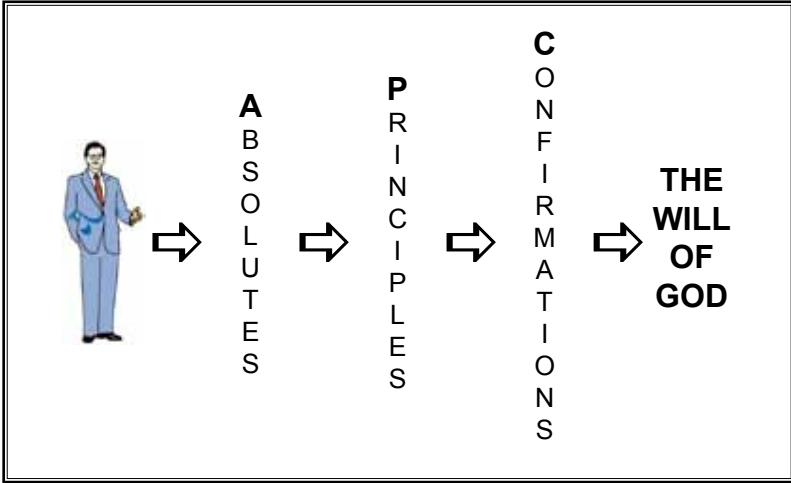
### I- THE "APC'S" OF THE WILL OF GOD

Before we proceed further in our study, we must at least preview where we are heading, so perhaps you will not get mired

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in the concrete of the foundation stones and miss the overall picture. We are moving towards a series of progressive steps that believers can take to begin to determine God's will in a specific situation. If we are to place those steps in the most simplified of terms, it would be the "A-P-C's" of finding the will of God.

"A P C" stands for "Absolutes, Principles, and Confirmation." In chart form, those three progressive steps to finding God's will look something like this:



In other words, if you have a decision to make, *any decision*, these three steps *cannot be avoided*, and if possible, they are to be taken *in this order*. Let's assume that God has placed you in Ed Wilson's shoes. Yours is a vocational decision. You have received counsel, you have a "*peace*" about it, and it *seems to be an open door*. How can you tell if this is God's will?

First of all, you ought to have compiled a list of as many Biblical absolutes as you can find that could be applicable to this kind of decision. By absolutes, we mean *those things that cannot change*, cannot be broken, cannot be interpreted differently in a specific situation. Such an absolute is "*You shall not lie.*" Scripture teaches that "a lie is an abomination to the Lord." So if that decision requires you to bend the truth, either as you respond to your new employer in your job application, as you tell your family about it, as you give your reason for leaving to your present employer, that move *is not of God*. God is Truth. He cannot change. He cannot lie. He cannot lead another to lie. James 1:13

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tells us that “God cannot be tempted, neither tempteth He any man.” So it is not the will of God for you to bend the truth, *even to the slightest degree*, to follow His leading. *That is an absolute*. If you must, then your decision is already made...it doesn’t matter how “good” you feel about it or how many “doors” are opened, (Satan is the master door-opener). It doesn’t matter how many well-meaning counselors tell you it’s okay. It’s never okay to lie to do the will of God. If that is true, you know God’s will, no matter the preponderance of “evidence” to the contrary. Your test is whether or not you will do it.

Another absolute is “*You shall not steal*.” If you have to steal your present employer’s clients to take the job, your present employer’s time to look for the job, or your present employer’s confidence to leave the job, then you are violating a Biblical absolute. What is his, is his. If you must take it to “do God’s will”, then you have missed God’s will. God doesn’t steal. He gives. And so do we, when we do His will. But more about this when we get to the section on absolutes.

Once you have run the decision through the grid of God’s absolutes and found that they *confirm* rather than refute that move, then you begin applying God’s *principles*. Principles, you recall, are those foundational parameters that reveal the heart of God. It is up to the Spirit of God, through the Word of God to apply those principles to your situation. And the results will not always be the same. But you will know, if you are seeking to do His will. One such principle is the principle of unequal yoking. Another is the principle of submission to authority. Another is the principle of preparation, as found in Luke 14:28. Another is the principle of the talents. Another is the principle of financial bondage. And on and on it goes. There are literally hundreds of such principles found in Scripture. If you must violate these principles to do what you deem to be His will, look out. Chances are, you are listening to “the voice of the stranger.”

Having determined God’s will by examining His absolutes and weighing His principles, you are then free to *confirm* that decision, using three basic kinds of confirmation revealed in Scripture; the *peace of God; the counsel of men; and the circumstances of life*. You do not make decisions based on “peace” alone, for “peace” can be wrongly interpreted by emotional mood swings. You cannot make decisions based on “open doors” alone, because Satan appears to open more doors than God. And you cannot make your decision

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based on counsel alone, for counsel varies; and it is often not the result of your seeking God, but seeking men. No, once you seem to “know” God’s will, ask God for confirmation using these three Biblical indicators. They give you the confirmation. The Word gives you the information. As we progress through this study, we will seek to move through that procedure, looking at how it works its way out practically.

### II- CARDIAC ARREST AND SLEEPY SAINTS

But be careful. You can examine the absolutes, peruse the principles, feel a peace, seek confirming counsel, and watch doors swing open so wide you can drive a truck through them, and easily miss the will of God. Because, remember, God is a heart specialist, and unless your heart is right, you are not going to be able to discern God’s will, no matter how many right things you read or study. Finding the will of God is based on one’s ability to allow the Spirit of God to reveal the Truth of God, and only those who are walking with God can do that.

For the sake of this study, we are going to look at seven heart problems people have that hinder their finding and doing the will of God. We have already looked at two, we will examine one more in this study, and the others will be taken up, one at a time, as we proceed through our look at the will of God.

To find and do the will of God, seven conditions must exist in your heart. You must have:

- 1- A regenerated heart (I Corinthians 2:9-14)
- 2- A yielded heart (Romans 12:1,2)
- 3- A clean heart (Psalm 66:18)
- 4- A searching heart (Matthew 7:7)
- 5- A surrendered heart (Matthew 6:10)
- 6- A Scripture-soaked heart (Psalm 119:105)
- 7- An obedient heart (John 15:7,8)

In our last study, we looked at man’s need to be born-again, or have a *regenerated heart* before he can understand the will of God. We saw that until we once and for all commit our bodies as living sacrifices to God, or have a *yielded heart*, we cannot be free to discern God’s will. I believe we must take a look at one more heart ailment *before we begin*. The others are problems that must be solved *as we search for God’s will*. But this one must be taken care of at the outset, or our search is futile.

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If you want an interesting study, take the saints of the Old Testament as well as the New Testament, and look for the methods God used to get their attention when they began falling asleep spiritually. Nearly always He used one of two methods: warfare or decisions. Either they were attacked by an enemy and had to fall at God's feet for strength, or they were confronted with a dilemma they could not solve and had to turn to God for wisdom. In either case, God used the crisis or the choice, to drive them to their knees. And today, Beloved, His tactics have not changed (because man has not changed). If your life has become spiritually stagnant and your heart spiritually cold, one of two things is likely to happen. Either a great crisis will take place in your life that will force you to admit that you are impotent without God or a great decision will be forced upon you to remind you that you have no wisdom without God. One or the other or both will happen. (They often come in tandem.) Decision-making is obviously one of God's tools to awaken sleeping saints who are suffering from spiritual cardiac arrest. My friend, it works.

### III- SILENT SKIES AND UNKNOWN CAUSES

Here's how it works. Joe has become spiritually complacent. He still attends church, reads his Bible, prays, and is involved in a ministry. But something inside of Joe has grown cold. His heart no longer leaps at the mention of the name "Jesus." His life no longer is characterized by a consuming desire to please God. He's going through all the right motions, doing all the right things. In fact, an outsider might nominate him for the Board of Elders and crown him as a saint. But an outsider can't see inside his heart; only God can. And inside his heart there lurk some compromises that have ever so subtly gained entrance into his heart. It may be a moral violation of the mind, or an increasingly consuming desire to have things, even at the cost of spiritual values. And though he is, on the outside, still "Mr. Spiritual", on the inside he is slowly dying a spiritual death.

Suddenly, there comes into his life a major decision. It may involve his children, his job, his ministry, his finances, or a million other things. It is a decision of such import that he wants to know the will of God, so he begins to pray. He looks for open doors. He searches for peace. He seeks counsel. He does all the right things, and *synthetically*, he seems to find an acceptable answer...but something inside of him keeps crying out, wanting to know why God isn't making it all clear to him, why God's will

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isn't obvious, the way it is for others. Reluctantly, he begins to search his heart. There he finds the key. It is that "thing", that habit, that person, that compromise. He has not found the will of God, because he does not have the heart of God. He longs for answers. He prays, but deep within, he knows God isn't listening.

### IV- THE KEY THAT OPENS THE EAR OF GOD

Perhaps you are there right now. Perhaps you are struggling to find the will of God, praying daily for insight, but somehow God seems to have His ears closed. It is as though He does not hear. So you are proceeding to find answers, using all of the other tools available to you. Still you wish He would let you know He's listening. What do you do? You begin by reading Isaiah 59. It begins like this:

Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, That it cannot save;  
Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear.

But your iniquities have separated you from your God;

And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear.  
(Isaiah 59:1,2 NKJV)

The passage goes on and describes the kinds of things that separate a man from his God. Defiled hands (vs. 3), lying lips (vs. 3), perverseness (vs. 3), vanity (vs. 4), feet that run to do evil (vs. 7), impure thoughts (vs. 7), a warped sense of values (vs. 8). The results are then described: spiritual blindness (vs. 10), the absence of an effective ministry (vs. 11-15), and finally judgment (vs. 18-19). And what is the problem? Why won't God answer? The problem isn't with God. It's a heart problem. Your iniquities have separated you from God. He has been forced to turn His face the other way when you call. He *cannot hear you*, because your heart is not pure. You may take all of the steps to finding the will of God you can find and still make a wrong decision. You can seek all the counsel you want and still not be led in the right direction. You may even get an artificial peace about what you are doing, but that peace does not come from God, because God *does not even hear you when you call*.

So many studies on the will of God overlook this one crowning truth. *A heart that is not right with God cannot receive the leading of God because its cries cannot reach the ears of God.* Period. And so Satan will move into that void and try to lead you. He may use all of the right words, send you for all of the right counsel, but your heart will be so blinded that you will hear what you want to



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hear, or what he wants you to hear, and you will miss the will of God. That's right. You will miss the will of God.

An overlooked cry from the pulpits of the world today is simply this: Repent. An overlooked passage in the lives of believers today is Psalm 66:18. The Psalmist is exhorting others to a life of praise. He begins in verse 1, "Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands." In verses 3-7, he exalts God for what He has done. In verses 8-12, he exalts God for testing them and proving them and growing them. In verses 13-17, he explains all of the right things to do to please God. "I will go into thy house with burnt offerings; I will pay my vows" (13); "I will offer unto thee burnt sacrifices" (15); "I will declare what he hath done" (16); "I cried unto God" (17)...and then that earth-shattering disclaimer in verse 18,

If I regard iniquity in my heart, The Lord will not hear.

(Psalm 66:18 NKJV)

That critical principle looms on the horizon like a gigantic door that either opens or shuts into the presence of the King's inner chamber. All of who God is, and all of what God's done, is ours for the taking...unless...we hold on to unconfessed sin, or refuse to repent and get right with God. That's an old-fashioned phrase, "Get right with God." But it's not a bad one.

Beloved, if you are seeking to find the will of God for your life, no matter in what area, I wonder if God might not be speaking to you today, as He has been to me. He is saying, "If you want to learn how to discern My will, you will need more than Sunday School lessons, patterns, principles, promises, and plans. You will need a heart that is pure before Me. A heart so cleansed that the very thought of even listening to that which is defiling, or looking at that which is defiling, or thinking that which is defiling, will break your heart as much as it does Mine."

Do you want to know God's will? So do I. We have a promise from God that we can claim. It is found in Psalm 32 where God has written in the indelible ink of Scripture this guarantee:

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;

I will guide you with My eye.

(Psalm 32:8 NKJV)

My friend, that is the leading of God. God will make His will so known to us that we will see what He sees. We will want what He wants. We will go where He goes...He will guide us with His own eye...until His eye becomes ours.

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Do you know *why* David could make that statement?

Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered.

Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity. (Psalm 32:1,2 NKJV)

David understood the problem.

When I kept silent, my bones grew old Through my groaning all the day long..

For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was turned into the drought of summer. Selah.

(Psalm 32:3,4 NKJV)

Now listen to what made the difference.

I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord," And You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah

For this cause everyone who is godly shall pray to You in a time when You may be found; Surely in a flood of great waters they shall not come near him.

You are my hiding place; You shall preserve me from trouble; You shall surround me with songs of deliverance. Selah

(Psalm 32:5-7 NKJV)

*Then...God replies:*

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye. (Psalm 32:8 NKJV)

Beloved, we cannot proceed further into the study of the will of God without stopping to have a heart examination. God cannot hear your cry for direction unless the sin and the rebellion and the filth that may have crowded into your life has been washed away. Then He will be free to hear you, and you will be free to follow Him. Otherwise, studying "Ten Steps to the Will of God" or anything else is just so much play-acting. The church in our day, perhaps more than in any other, needs to be filled with men and women who are becoming increasingly aware of their sin, and increasingly filled with a spirit of repentance. Some things you condoned in your heart a year ago ought not to be acceptable to you today. Yet for many of us it is just the opposite. Things we wouldn't think of thinking at one time gradually creep back into our lives and we allow them to settle there. It breaks God's heart and He cannot open His ear to our cries. Maybe you have in some

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way dishonored God, and instead of truly repenting, you have rebuilt your life around a more tolerant theology and ignored the depth of your sin. That breaks God's heart and He cannot open His ears to your cries. Perhaps you have broken another's heart and you've never made things right. Or perhaps yours has been a life characterized by ingratitude, and you've never acknowledged that as sin.

Whatever is true of your life, it is between you and God. But before you can continue to search out the will of God, or how to find the will of God, you must deal with it. Until you do, you are playing the most dangerous game known to man.

Only God knows. But because He does, why not quietly pray this prayer as we close this lesson. It is not an original prayer. It comes from the lips of David in Psalm 51:

Have mercy upon me, O God, According to Your lovingkindness; According to the multitude of Your tender mercies, Blot out my transgressions.

Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin.

For I acknowledge my transgressions, And my sin is always before me.

Against You, You only, have I sinned, And done this evil in Your sight—That You may be found just when You speak, And blameless when You judge. (Psalm 51:1-4 NKJV)

Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Make me hear joy and gladness, That the bones You have broken may rejoice.

Hide Your face from my sins, And blot out all my iniquities.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me. (Psalm 51:7-10 NKJV)

Now, Beloved, let us humbly seek to find the will of God.

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FOR STUDY AND APPLICATION

1- Take a week to examine the life of Christ with one purpose... to see the detail with which the Father arranged His will for The Son. What do you think Jesus meant when He said He “only spoke the words” The Father gave Him? How can you relate this truth to the personal detail God has designed in His plan for your life?

2- In preparation for the next lesson, take your Bible and begin to develop a booklet of Biblical Absolutes. List every commandment you find in Scripture that does not change. Group them by topic or list them alphabetically so you can refer to them when you have a key decision to make. Why are God’s absolutes so comforting?

3- List the four principles in Scripture that have had the greatest impact on your life. Do you know others who view these principles differently? Has God ever given you wisdom in the making of a decision through the principles of His Word? Did you thank Him?

4- What are the three things Scripture emphasizes that “confirm” the will of God? How has Satan tricked us into trusting them rather than God’s Word?

5- Find someone in Scripture who was drifting from God’s purposes whose attention was arrested by a decision or a choice? How does God still use decisions to do that today?

6- Get alone with God this week and search your heart for areas that may be still untouched or sins still unconfessed. Ask God to make you increasingly aware of His Holiness, so you can be made more aware of your sin, and call for His Precious Grace.

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