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Absolute-ly the Will of God

(Part 1)

1117-A

Series: The Will of God

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INTO HIS LIKENESS RADIO

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(Part 1)

We live in a world where nothing seems certain. Morality is espoused to be “relative”; national leaders are “suspect” of ethical crime at every turn; and even religious leaders are, of late, simply the object of scorn and ridicule. The implication is that because God’s people fail, God’s standards have changed. Even many of the established religious institutions of our day build their theology on the fact that changing times call for changing standards, and therefore all moral behavior is subject to personal interpretation. And all of this is accentuated by a worldwide media, which literally programs society to a contemporary lifestyle, in which self is God, and where anything that makes you happy is acceptable, and any standards by which mankind has operated in the past, even if they are God’s standards, are made to look comical.

The end result is a combination of emptiness and chaos: emptiness on the inside, chaos on the outside. No small wonder, then, that counseling offices are filled with frustrated people, both believers and unbelievers alike. And no small wonder that the counsel they are receiving so often simply amplifies their confusion.

What is the problem? The problem is there are no longer considered to be any absolutes. Nothing is certain. Nothing is unchanging. Nothing is beyond question. Everything is subject to personal interpretation and personal experience. So the creature has become the creator, and the world is on the brink of despair.

Making decisions in a world like that is virtually impossible. On what do you base your decisions? To answer that, we must briefly refer back to our childhood and to our earthly parents, for a pattern. As a child, your decisions were based on the fact that your parents had parameters set for you, and so the more important decisions were already made. You didn’t have to decide whether or not to play in the street. That decision was made for you. You didn’t have to decide whether or not to jump off the roof. That decision was made for you. And the fact that those basic decisions were already made, freed you, as a child, to concentrate on the decisions you were allowed to make, and to use the framework imposed on you by your

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parents as a guideline to making other choices. Those decisions which were made for you, you see, taught you principles that gave you wisdom about the other things you needed to decide. Not being allowed to play in the street taught you some things about danger, about location and safety, about presumption, about confidence in the sanctuary of your own home. So, by being obedient in matters in which you had no choice, you began learning how to structure your life. The difference, you see, was you were *under authority*. And being under authority, *there were some absolutes*. There were some things you absolutely could or could not do without specific consequences. There were some things already decided for you, and that freed you to make determinations about everything else.

As an adult, you may long for that kind of stability. You may wish there were still some kind of parameters in life that would make the bigger decisions for you, and free you to make wise decisions about lesser things. It is that issue that we will be addressing in this lesson and the next, as we continue our look at the subject of the will of God.

These lessons are entitled: “Absolute-ly the Will of God”

I- ONE FINAL FACT

The last few studies have been designed to lay a foundation, to uncover the basic principles that free God to lead us...issues such as the New Birth, a once-for-all commitment to Lordship, and the matter of unconfessed sin. These are the fundamentals of decision-making; the essentials so often overlooked in “how to” studies on the will of God. And I trust we have seen that attempting to utilize the tools without the power is as fruitless as attempting to drive a car without a motor. There might be much activity but no productivity. And so it is with decision-making. Unless your heart is right with God, doing all of the right things merely frees Satan to deceive you with signs and feelings and “open doors”. It allows you to do the right things and get the wrong answers because the Spirit of God is not free in you to interpret the answers. So your relationship with God is, and always will be, the key to finding and following the will of God. If you are not a believer, or if you are out of fellowship; or if you are harboring unconfessed sin, doing the right things may well lead to the wrong answers because you will be led by the wrong spirit. Never forget it.

Once we are over that hurdle, however, and are, as honestly as we can determine, in fellowship with God, then we must look at

the logical steps to finding His will. The purpose of this lesson is to begin that process.

Now you do not have to do much counseling or discipling or encouraging to recognize the first step — fact-finding. That may seem to be such an assumed reality that it appears redundant to discuss it; but believe me, it's not. In fact, it appears to be one of the greatest missing ingredients in the process. Here's an example: A young man, seeking counsel on what school to attend, is asked, "Well, does that school offer all the courses you need?" He responds, "I guess so, I haven't looked into it." He hasn't even checked to see if that school is a possibility, yet he is churning with confusion between two schools, when one of them may not even be an issue.

A young man approaches you for counsel about a job change. "Tell me about the hours you will be asked to work. What about the time away from home? Will there be any moral violations required of you?" All you get is a blank look. "I don't know the answers to any of those questions," he responds. "I just want to know if this job is God's will." Step one in the decision making process is to get the facts. All the facts. Ask questions. Write letters. Read books. Make phone calls. Write down what you find because what you find will be the basis for transferring the information into inspiration about the will of God.

That's why God was so specific in His Word. In Proverbs 23:23, the Living Bible makes this astonishing command: "Get the facts at any price; and hold on tightly to all the good sense you can get." You cannot make a decision without the facts. So often one final fact eliminates something from contention, and frees you from hours of worry and counsel and indecision. I believe just getting the facts will so narrow your choices that it will make at least 50% of your decisions for you.

This principle is illustrated for us in Luke 14:28-33. Listen:

For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it—lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.'

Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand?

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Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace.

So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple. (Luke 14:28-33 NKJV)

Granted, the primary message of the passage is the message of the cost of discipleship. But we must always look beyond the message for the principles, and in this passage there lies a principle that is literally engraved on the tablets of Scripture. *It is the principle of preparation by information.* What it says is this: “You don’t begin something you can’t finish. You don’t issue a challenge you can’t meet. You don’t engage in either offensive or defensive decision-making without first getting the facts, and counting the cost.” Jesus is saying, “You don’t just ‘feel led’ to build a house. You get out the plans; you estimate the costs; you contact the bank. You count the cost first. And until all of the facts are in, you can’t make a logical decision.” If you just scan a couple of pages of cost estimates, you might assume that you can afford it. But tucked away on the last page might be the cost of the foundation, or the roof, or the materials for the walls. And with that added in, you may well find that there’s no way you can afford it. But if you just start building without all the facts, without counting the cost, Scripture says you are setting yourself up to be the laughingstock of the community, because you will have started something you couldn’t finish.

Likewise, Jesus reminds us, a general doesn’t declare war on an enemy until he first inventories his troops and his ammunition. He doesn’t send ten thousand men to do battle with twenty thousand, unless he knows something they don’t know. He doesn’t just “hope” for the best. He counts the cost, and then makes an intelligent decision. The best decision may be to send an ambassador to negotiate a settlement. So God expects His children to examine the facts before they make a decision. You cannot apply the absolutes or the principles unless you have information to apply them to. So rule number one in decision making is this: Before you begin seeking counsel or applying principles, give your time and your energy to one task...getting all the facts. Many believers assimilate more information before they buy a stereo than they do before they make a decision that will change the course of their lives. If they are buying something, they’ll ask a million questions, do comparative shopping, analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the various products, and make an intelligent choice.

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But often that same person, when trying to decide whether or not to change jobs, enter a ministry, change churches, choose a school, or even choose a mate to spend their life with, will move based on the fact that they “feel right about it”, or “God has opened doors” for them, or some “counselor”, based on information they provided, said, “Why not?” Get the facts, Beloved, at any cost. If you want a good commentary on how specific you need to be, look at how specific God was when He gave Noah instructions on building the ark. Or look at His plans for building the tabernacle. Or look at how specific the law was. God is a God of detail. No fact is incidental to Him. Study, investigate, analyze, consider. And be sure you have all the facts. Otherwise you may awaken to discover, that had you only had that one final fact, your entire decision would have been different. At the conclusion of this series, we hope to give you a series of questions to use as a basis for investigating some of the major decisions we might be called upon to make.

II- BECOMING A “PRO-CON” ARTIST

The next step, once you have compiled the facts, is to become a “Pro-Con” artist. A “Pro-Con” artist isn’t someone who professionally takes advantage of other people. It’s someone who has learned to take the facts he has accumulated, and list the “pros” and the “cons” on separate sheets of paper so he can watch God apply the principles, surface the areas of concern, and accurately display which way the scales are tipping. We will pursue the practical aspects of this concept more as we progress in the series, but even at this stage, it is important to determine what makes something a “pro” and what makes it a “con”. Most of us would consider something a “pro” or favorable aspect, if it is something that would make us happy or better our lifestyle. In the case of a job change, for instance, we would consider the “pros” to be “higher salary, more benefits, better chance for advancement.” But remember our definition of the will of God. The will of God is that which furthers the kingdom of God, and thus brings joy to the heart of God. So if you are looking for the will of God, rather than just for what you want, then the “pros” on your list would be those things that would appear to be likely to further the kingdom of God, further develop in you the character of God, and be most likely to bring joy to the heart of God. That may not be the one with the highest salary, or the greatest chance for advancement, but rather the one with the greatest possibility to become a servant. That changes the complexion of what’s a “pro” and what’s a “con.” More about that later.

III- THUS SAITH...“AMEN”

Once we have compiled the information and interpreted what we consider to be the “pros” and the “cons”, it’s time to lay it out in the light of Scripture. Now I would remind you at this point, that either the Bible is the final authority in every matter, or else the basis upon which you make decisions as a believer is no different than that of the unbeliever; in fact, it is a more frustrating world for you, for without the authority of the Scripture, you are trying to conform to a higher law with no standards to guide you.

To proceed then, you must agree with two basic issues.

1- God is both infallible and omnipotent. He cannot make a mistake. He cannot err, either in principle or in fact, or He is not God. He is perfection. So if God declares an absolute, such as “Thou shalt not lie”, any kind of lying becomes sin. If God were not infallible, then His opinion about lying could be laid side to side with other great philosophers, or could be given consideration for your final approval, having applied His suggestions to your present situation, and judged for yourself whether or not in this case, lying is sin. As basic as it may seem, if you are to build your life on God’s absolutes and make your decisions accordingly, you simply must never waver on that one basic issue. God is infallible. In Ecclesiastes we read:

I know that whatever God does, It shall be forever. Nothing can be added to it, And nothing taken from it. God does it, that men should fear before Him. (Ecclesiastes 3:14 NKJV)

Do you believe that? Do you believe that if God deems it proper to send you to the depths of an unknown part of the world to minister, or asks you to give up everything you are clinging to, it is because He knows best? And are you convinced, that if He, in His Word makes a statement that is diametrically opposed to all of the logic and reasoning of the world, that opposition simply amplifies His authority; it doesn’t diminish it? God is infallible. Nothing He has ever said has been less than 100% accurate. Nor has anything He prophesied failed to come to pass in its appointed time. If you are to take the Word for what it is, you simply must take God for who He is. He makes no mistakes.

And your infallible God is omnipotent. There is nothing He cannot do. I Chronicles 29 adds:

Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, the power and the glory, the victory and the majesty...

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...In Your hand is power and might; In Your hand it is to make great And to give strength to all.

(I Chronicles 29:11,12 NKJV)

So principle number one is simply this: God is both infallible and omnipotent. Nothing He has ever said, is saying, or will say is less than perfect; and nothing He has ever promised to do will be left undone. If He has said judgment will come, it will. If He has said Jesus will come, He will. If He has said His Spirit will intercede for us as we pray, He will. Therefore, with confidence we can say:

For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.

(Psalm 33:9 NKJV)

2- The second key is that not only is God infallible and omnipotent, His Word is immutable. It cannot change. It will not vary with the moods of man or the tides of men. It is absolute. It is why the Psalmist said,

Forever, O Lord, Your word is settled in heaven..

(Psalm 119:89 NKJV)

And again in Numbers 23:19:

“God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do?”...

(Numbers 23:19 NKJV)

Therefore, if all God does is perfect, and if all God has said will come true; and if nothing God has said will change, then you and I do have a sure anchor in a drifting world. All we must do is lay our hands on the absolutes of Scripture, those things our God has spoken once and for all as His final word to us, and we do have something in life that will not change. Thus, when we have a decision to make or are trying to determine God’s will, all we have to do is to weigh our choices against the unchanging, immovable Word of a perfect, all-powerful God. And once we have found His absolutes, we are absolutely sure we have found His will.

And remember: God’s word is not true because you believe it. You believe it because it is true. A church I attended many years ago had a sign in the sanctuary that read like this: “God said it. I believe it. That settles it.” I can never forget what an impression that sign made upon me. But it isn’t true. There is one phrase too many in that slogan. It should read: “God said it. That settles it.” Whether or not I believe it may affect my destiny, but nothing affects God’s Truth. It is so because it is. And every decision in life that must be made, must be made in the light of that immutable Word, the

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once-for-all absolute utterances of an infallible, omnipotent God. So be it.

IV- ABSOLUTE-LY THE WILL OF GOD

If you are surrendered to those two truths, and you have accumulated the facts, then you are ready to begin searching the Scriptures for absolutes. Absolutes, remember, are God's permanent laws that apply to every child of His, in every age. Let's close by reminding ourselves of three basic things about absolutes, and as we do, let's see how those basics might affect our decisions.

1- Absolutes are a reflection of the nature of God, and since "in Him there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning", then these absolutes reflect that same unchanging nature. "You shall not lie," is an absolute, because the nature of God is truth, and the nature of God will never change. Therefore, any decision you make can be easily made based on that absolute. Like the child who can't play in the street, God has made that decision for you. You have to tell the truth. And that frees you both to choose aright, and to concentrate on the other decisions He has assigned to you.

2- As with little children, absolutes set God's children free. They set us free, because the major choices, those which govern eternity, are already set for us. All we have to decide is whether or not to obey. And secondly, they then free us to make the lesser choices, which are all, in essence, simply amplifications and applications of principles that are spawned by the absolutes.

3- So the third truth is that while the absolutes are God's definitive statements concerning choices, each absolute generates a series of principles, which will further amplify, and further clarify the particular decision we have to make. For instance, there is an absolute in Scripture that says Jesus is coming again.

In Acts 1:11, the angel made this statement:

...This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."

(Acts 1:11 NKJV)

That is an absolute. Jesus is coming again. Nothing man can say, nothing Satan can do, nothing the world can concoct can change that fact or alter that truth. Jesus is coming again. That is an absolute. You can stand on it. But how will that help you make a decision about a job, or a ministry, or a move? Beloved, that absolute has generated in Scripture, dozens of principles. And it

is those principles, which are based on that absolute that help us determine God's will.

For instance, there is the principle of readiness. In II Peter 3:11, we are admonished that seeing that these things should come to pass "what manner of persons ought we to be?" It answers that our days ought to be filled with readiness, "Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of the Lord." So if a decision lessens our opportunity to prepare for the day of the Lord, even though it heightens our chances for success in this life, the principle of readiness ought to affect our decision. And that principle must stand, because it is built on the absolute that *Jesus is coming again*. Another principle built on that absolute is the principle of rewards. In Matthew 16, Jesus makes this clear statement:

For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?

For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.
(Matthew 16:26,27 NKJV)

That principle may well affect which job you take, which ministry you undertake, which friendships you cultivate. If, in the process, of making that decision, you exchange the potential for future rewards, for that which is temporary, no matter what the world thinks, you are a fool. Why? Because God is going to reward you one day according to the things done in the Spirit. And that principle is sure. It is built on the absolute that *Jesus is coming again*.

Another absolute in Scripture is "Thou shalt not commit adultery." It does not say, "Be careful before you commit adultery, it is a dangerous thing to do; it might displease God." It says, "Don't." "Don't" means "don't". God's will concerning adultery will never change. Not even in the "80's" will it change. (Or in the "90's" should God tarry.) Why? Because it is an absolute. And that absolute, if properly applied, helps us make dozens of other decisions as well.

For instance it spawns the principle that condemns divorce and remarriage.

"Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

... "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her.

"And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another,

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she commits adultery.”

(Mark 10:9,11,12 NKJV)

You say, “But society now condones divorce. So when someone comes to me for counsel I must remember the age we live in.” Nonsense. You must *remember the Kingdom you live for*. And that Kingdom contains an absolute. “Thou shalt not commit adultery.” That absolute amplifies a principle that makes your counsel to those seeking divorce clear.

There is another principle that is spawned from that absolute. It is found in Matthew 5:

“You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘*You shall not commit adultery.*’

But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

(Matthew 5:27,28 NKJV)

Then the passage goes on and tells the depths you should go to in order to avoid this kind of adultery. If your eye offends you, pluck it out. In other words, if you are praying about whether or not to go into a situation where there will be known temptation to lust, and you have a choice, the choice is made. It is based on the principle of the lust of the eye, which will always stand, because it is based on the absolute, “You shall not commit adultery”.

More about absolutes and principles in the next lesson. But the issue is clear. *We can absolutely know the will of God*, if we positively know the absolutes of God. Our next lesson will be given to the practical application of this truth. In the meantime, why not use the chart on the back of this lesson to begin to list some of God’s absolutes, and some of the principles those absolutes generate.

It will absolute...ly change your life.

OH, THE ABSOLUTES OF GOD

Oh, the absolutes of God
How clear they make His will
Though they were written years ago
They are in concrete still.

They, like the God they represent,
Will never, never, change
And if you yield yourself to them,
They will your life arrange.

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They'll show you just what you're to do
They'll help you to decide
Because the absolutes give light
When properly applied.

Memorize the absolutes
They're all within God's Word
That when decision time comes 'round
You'll hear... "Thus saith the LORD."

FOR FOCUS AND APPLICATION

Begin listing the absolutes in Scripture that assist in decision-making, and then find corresponding principles in the Word that amplify and apply those absolutes to your life:

ABSOLUTES	CORRESPONDING PRINCIPLES
Jesus is Coming Acts 1:11	1- Principle of Readiness (II Peter 3:11) 2- Principle of Rewards (Matthew 16:26, 27)
Thou Shalt Not Commit Adultery	1- Principle of Divorce (Mark 10:9) 2- Principle of Lust of the Eye (Matthew 5:27)

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