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# **On Earth as It is in Heaven**

**#1118-B**

**Series: The Will of God**

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INTO HIS LIKENESS RADIO

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Little Becky was an incorrigible teenager. Psychologists would say, “She has a mind of her own.” Theologians would say, “She has an unbroken will.” Her dad would say, “Both of the above.” Day after day she would try to manipulate her parents into doing what *she* wanted, simply by wearing them down. Her concept of obedience was to change the rules until they fit what she had already planned to do, so she could *then* obey.

So stubborn was she that finally her dad gave up trying to impose his will upon her and simply decided to let her reap the consequences of her own choices. From her perspective, he had finally come to see that she was bright enough to run her own life. From her father’s perspective, Becky was simply not interested in pleasing him, so he just decided to let her rebellion run its course.

While you’re sitting there condemning the child in your mind, try comparing her philosophy of doing her father’s will with yours. Don’t we, for the most part, pray piously for God’s will to be done, all the while informing Him of *what it is*? Don’t we, so often, come to God for instructions, giving Him a list of acceptable options, asking Him to choose between those things *we will be willing to do*, rather than simply laying ourselves at His feet for *anything He wants us to do*?

Beloved, the most important single thing we can learn about the will of God is that it is not a blank sheet of paper that God has mailed to us, so we can chart out our destiny and send Him back a carbon copy. The will of God is a specific, dynamic, perfect plan designed for you in eternity past by a Sovereign, Omniscient, Holy God, who cannot make a mistake. Our task, *should we choose to accept it*, is to give the entirety of our lives to finding that will, and doing it.

Becky missed the blessing of learning to obey and she missed the lesson of seeking to discern the heart of the one who is responsible for your life, so you can please them through obedience. Becky missed it. So often, so do we.

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It isn't because Jesus never told us otherwise. The whole of Scripture is a handbook on finding the will of God. It begins with the in-depth story of a woman named Eve who *knew the will of God*, but didn't want to do it. So she *pretended that God's plan wasn't in concrete*, and she slipped in a plan "B". But plan "B" wasn't acceptable to God...and the whole of humanity has been submerged in misery and pain ever since, because *one woman would not follow the will of God*.

Joseph's father had a plan for his favorite son's life. So he made him a coat of many colors, and no doubt had made arrangements for him to take over the family business. But that wasn't God's will. God's will was for Joseph to one day rule over an entire empire, a pagan empire, at that. To do that, God needed to place him geographically in a different place, and He needed to bring into his life an onslaught of "unfortunate" experiences to equip him for the task.

So the lad ended up in the bottom of a well. Too bad? No, it was the will of God. Later, he ended up in a dungeon. Too bad? No, it was the will of God. God had to test him to train him, and He had to train him to use him. His plan included a desert for Moses, a slight delay in family planning for Abraham, a life of imprisonment for Paul, a siege in exile for John, and of all things...a cross for His own Son. And all of it was...the will of God. Was it what they would have planned? Not on your life. But without the dungeon, Joseph would have missed the crown. Without the desert, Moses would have missed the ministry. Without the delay, Abraham would have missed the blessing. Without the imprisonment, Paul would have missed his calling to write the epistles. Without the exile, John would have never penned the Book of Revelation. Without the cross, the whole plan of God would have dissolved in an ocean of judgment, and you and I would be lost in our sins.

The will of God is a mystery. It is the incredibly deep, incredibly higher ways of our God as they are revealed to the heart of His children. Try to map it out using human reasoning or resources, and you will fail miserably. The will of God is not something you plan, it is something you seek. And *only as you seek it*, does God reveal it to you.

And so we continue our look at this wonderfully vital subject of finding the will of God. And today's lesson concerns itself

primarily with the relationship that prayer plays in finding God's plan for your life.

Today's study addresses the issue of how to pray for the will of God and what praying for the will of God really means.

### THE WORTH OF THE WORD

We have, in our study of God's will to this point, been primarily concerned with that aspect of decision-making that involved the actual steps we must take to:

- 1- get all of the information,
- 2- come to understand the Mind of God by learning His absolutes,
- 3- immediately eliminate any decisions that would violate those absolutes, and finally,
- 4- come to understand the purpose and the priorities of the Christian life so that we can weigh every decision accordingly.

In our last lesson, we analyzed that purpose, and determined that we are here for only one reason: *to glorify God*. Therefore, we have a clear-cut question against which to measure any and every choice we make. *Which decision will best bring glory to God?*

Then we looked at just what does *glorify God* mean, and we determined at least five priorities that give us a step-by-step set of guidelines in decision-making to see if we are fulfilling God's purpose:

- 1- How will this decision affect my walk with God?
- 2- Will this decision place me where God can best sandpaper my weaknesses with His strength?
- 3- How will this decision affect those for whom I am primarily responsible? (my family, etc.)
- 4- What decision will best honor my commitments to those *to whom* I owe respect? (employers, husbands, parents, etc.)
- 5- What choice best allows me to be placed on the mission field of life where a sovereign God wants me to be?

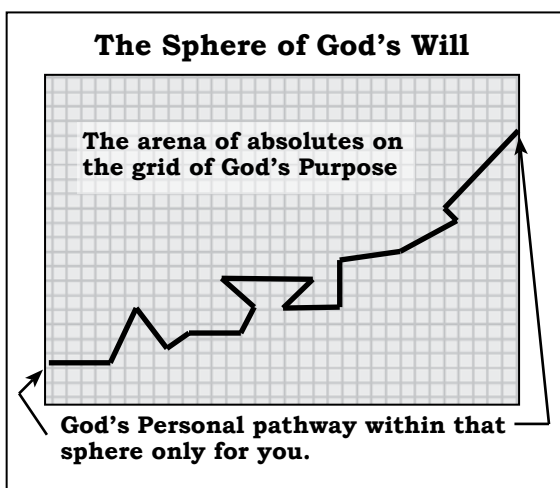
Those, you recall, were the priorities that were to replace the world's list of questions. It is a list which includes such self-centered issues as: "Will it make me happy?" "Will it make me successful?" "Will it give me security?" etc. Using the absolutes, and placing them against that grid of God's purpose, then, allows

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us to see our decisions in the light of the perspective of eternity, rather than through the lens of this world we live in, a world which is, in essence, passing away.

So what we have done to date is to see the “Worth of the Word” in the process of decision-making. It is of inestimable value. But Beloved, all the Word does for us is thread the pathway in God’s direction and eliminate the side trips off of the freeway of God’s best, so we won’t make an unscriptural mistake.

Finding the will of God, however, is a more personal thing than that. Once we are in the right pasture, so to speak, then God wants to lead us down a specific pathway, one that is so unique that in eternity past God designed it for no one else to walk down. It is His personal path of life for you.



God’s plan for you will never exceed the boundaries of His absolutes. And those absolutes will leave you the freedom to choose within the confines of God’s purpose. But it is there that your life and mine take slightly different turns. Because each of us has a different life message, and thus a different life ministry, each of us is taken down a slightly different pathway to Glory. One thing I can promise you: that road will not be the well-worn path the world takes.

God’s ways are too much higher. It took Elijah by a drying brook and to a widow’s upper room before he ever made it to Mount Carmel. And your pathway may well include what *appear*

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*to be detours* before you arrive at your destination. As stated earlier, Moses, Abraham, Paul, John, and especially Jesus, in the doing of God's will were taken down roads man never would have chosen. Then how do you know when you're on that road? How can you be sure, *once you know you are in harmony with the absolutes*, what God is specifically designing for you?

### IF YOU ASK...

Forgive me, Beloved, for seeming to oversimplify, but *you ask Him*. That's right. You ask Him. You must know the absolutes, and you must be committed to His purposes, or you will ask amiss, in which case, James says, "Forget it...you won't get anything you ask for." In other words, you'll never find God's will that way. You have to know the mind of God to find the will of God. But once your heart is saturated with His Word and committed to His will, and you have eliminated the world's side trips, you are still not there. Now you are in a position to come to the King for personal instructions, for you have a roadmap to show you whether or not they are *His* instructions. *You approach the throne and you ask.*

The hardest part of the Christian life is prayer. It is harder than scripture memory, harder than witnessing and harder than Bible study. Done properly, it requires more intensity than playing football, more concentration than studying mathematics, more emotional energy than preaching or teaching. Prayer, done God's way, takes the soul out of a man or woman and lifts it to heaven. Prayer, done God's way, releases the human will into divine Hands, and relinquishes control as it does. Those great drops of blood pouring from the brow of the Savior were not from injury, but from anguish; not from conflict with man, but from conflict with the host of hell. Prayer is the ultimate in spiritual warfare. It requires the armor of God to be in place, the heart of the saint to be cleansed and yielded, and the weapons of our warfare, which are "spiritual to the pulling down of strongholds", to be sharp and ready.

But prayer *is the answer* to finding the will of God. It is the answer, that is, provided three things exist. Those three things are:

...God's parameters for prayer (I John 5:14,15)

...God's preeminence in prayer (Matthew 6:10)

...God's perspective of prayer (Luke 22:42-44)

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God's parameters are His Word. And as we have already discussed, to pray about a matter without first searching out His Word, and meditating on His Word, is like turning on the radio without first plugging it in. You may hear some noise, but it's not coming from the source. God speaks *through His Word*. That's why I John 5:14 is so important. Memorize it. It is an essential in the game of life. It reads like this:

Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

(I John 5:14,15 NKJV)

This is the confidence we have. One translator words it: "This is the reason for our boldness." If we ask God *anything* that is in harmony *with His will*, He hears us, and He answers. How can we know that we are praying that way? We must pray *according to His Word*. Read the Old Testament prayers of Moses and Joshua and Abraham and others. They literally prayed back to God the promises and the provisions He had given them, thanking Him, and entreating Him to do what He had already said He would.

So praying for God's will involves praying God's word back to Him. You know what is *according to His will*, when you know His Word. Praying through the Word, asking God to make His will known, is like a child coming to his parents with an obedient knowledge beforehand of his parameters. The child is not allowed to stay out after 11. The child is not allowed to go to Tim's house. The child is not allowed to go out on school nights. So when he comes to his parents and asks, he is asking aright when he automatically assumes those things and asks them whether or not, *within those parameters*, he may go on Friday night to Bob's house, provided he gets home before eleven. He's not asking to stay out later than the rule allows. He's not asking to go where he's not supposed to go. He's not asking to go out on a school night. He already knows the pasture he's allowed to graze in. Now he needs to find the pathway he's supposed to walk in. That's asking *according to his parents' will*. It doesn't mean they'll say, "Yes". It does mean he's in harmony with their heart by asking. And the petition will be answered. The Living Bible concludes the verse:

Then we can be sure that He will answer us.

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But praying “according to His will” involves more than praying “according to His Word.” (Or through His parameters.) It involves praying *under His preeminence*. And here is the whole essence of prayer reduced to one basic principle.

That principle is found in Matthew 6:10. There, you remember, Jesus is *teaching us how to pray*. And once He has taught us to worship God for *who He is*, He invokes us to petition God for *what He wants*. What He wants is for us to want Him to rule our lives. Then we can be blessed, He can be glorified, and His Kingdom can manifest itself on earth, a reflection of its manifestation in heaven. The verse, you recall, simply says this:

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.  
(Matthew 6:10 NASB)

William Barclay, in his commentary on Matthew states, “From what we have already seen, it becomes clear that the most important thing in the world is to obey the will of God; the most important words in the world are the words: ‘Thy will be done.’” He then goes on to explain that the *saying of the words are not the issue*; our heart attitude as we say them is the key. But if there were to be two sentences that would epitomize the message of God’s Lordship in our lives, two sentences that would capture, in a nutshell, the issue of the will of God, it would have to be Matthew 6:10. It is more than an illustration of how to pray, though it is that, indeed. It is a portrait, painted upon the canvas of the human heart, of the kind of relationship man is to have with God, if God is to have His way with man.

That relationship is to involve two things: a desire for the Kingdom to come, and a desire for God’s will to be done. Now those sound almost trite on the surface. But beneath the surface there lies a whole treasure-house of insight on the mind of God. The Kingdom’s coming has three meanings in Scripture. The coming of Christ as Messiah (past tense), the Kingdom of the heart wherein God actually dwells in man (present tense), and the coming Kingdom wherein Christ rules and reigns forever and ever (future tense). But it is obvious from the context of this passage, that while both of the latter two are included, the thing for which we are to pray is for God’s Kingdom to have preeminence in our lives moment by moment, to such an extent that *we, in our hearts, begin to experience on earth, a foretaste of what we will experience*



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*for eternity in heaven.* When you pray, “Thy kingdom come,” you are clearly acknowledging to Almighty God that you live in two worlds. You live physically in this “present evil” world, inhabited by sin, and dominated by Satan; but you live spiritually in “the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ.” Your heart is inhabited by heaven, while your body inhabits earth.

Therefore, every breath you breathe, every step you take, every move you make, *every decision you make*, will, in essence, be the product of one kingdom or the other. It is Satan’s design to so “squeeze us into the mold of this world” that we try to mix the two, and deny God’s absolutes. It is the plan of God that we “be not conformed to this world, but rather transformed by the renewing of our minds.” So when you pray, “Thy Kingdom come... on earth as in heaven,” you are praying; “Lord, I don’t want to live for this world anymore. *I simply want to be inhabited by you, and be controlled by your Spirit. I want you to control my thoughts, my choices, my actions. I want to be a body indwelt by, and controlled by, Jesus Christ.*”

When you pray like that, you are relinquishing control of your life to God...in every facet of your being. And then, you must naturally conclude...*Thy will be done...on earth as it is in heaven.* That’s the prayer that will change the course of your life. Pray it every day and come increasingly to mean it every day, and your life will never be the same. You are saying, “Lord, I can’t live my life. You can. Here, take it and do it. Whatever You choose is best. *I place no limitations whatsoever on your choices.* If You want to send me away, send me. If You want to take me away, take me. If You want to draw me away, draw me. If You want to call me home, call me. Whatever You want, I want. I will no longer give You a multiple choice. “ ‘Thy will be done.’ From here on in, it will be ‘You fill in the blanks.’ ”

“On earth as it is in heaven.” If you and I learned to pray that prayer aright and learned to pray it continually, the issue of the will of God would no longer be a problem for us. For *as God takes control of us at our request*, and as we allow Him *without limitations*, to do His will, we can only stand in amazement and praise Him. But never will we stand in His presence and question Him.

In other words, the daily Lordship of Christ is the prerequisite for finding the will of God and continual prayer is the prerequisite

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for that Lordship to become reality. *If we ask, we'll receive.* If we ask God continually to be Lord, and if we *let Him*, He will. His Kingdom will come, progressively, inclusively, in our hearts as it is in heaven. And as we are yielded to it, and *stay yielded to it*, His will is going to be accomplished in our lives.

### THE VICTORY OF SURRENDER

Then, Beloved, the day-to-day decision-making becomes simply the day-to-day release of the divine authority of Jesus Christ in our lives, as He *according to the absolutes of His Word*, leads us through choice after choice; through situation after situation. But we aren't really *choosing*; we're *surrendering*. God has already made the choices for us. Once we prayed, "Thy will be done," with a conscious humility and conviction in our hearts, we are simply experiencing what God has already, in eternity past, designed for His Glory.

If choices emerge that would cause us to violate His absolutes, His Spirit within us, *assuming we have learned those absolutes*, simply, quietly, leads us to automatically reject that choice, for it is not of God. If choices emerge that would cause us to violate His purpose, *the glorifying of God on earth*, by neglecting our relationship with Him, our need to be changed, our commitment to our families, our responsibility to authority, or our call to His chosen field of witnessing, we will know immediately, and we will say, "No". No questions asked. If, however, *none of those things appear*, and we are still torn between two choices, we will quietly wait on God. We will walk with God, and keep praying, *until we know*. And as we wait, and as we pray, we walk. We do *whatever it is we are already called to do*, with the quiet confidence, that *because we have asked*, His will is going to be done. Maybe not our way. Maybe not in our timetable. But remember, we no longer have a way. We no longer have a timetable. We only have a sovereign Lord who now is in total control of our every breath. So we no longer need to worry over His will: it is being done, on earth as it is in heaven. We've asked Him...and we've asked aright; and we've asked *according to His will*. So He heard, and He's doing it. That's God's *perspective* of prayer.

Pray like that, and live like that, and I can promise you two things: life will be exciting, and warfare will be intense. Most of us like the first result, but not the second. Jesus prayed like that. And as He approached the great decisions of His life: the

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choosing of the twelve, the sending of the twelve, and the cross and all it meant, He stopped everything, went back to the Father, and agonized in prayer until He knew for certain that He was not in control, His Father was. And until we learn to pray like that *when the crosses of life loom on the horizon* we still will not have learned to pray. Because your daily surrender will be challenged by Satan in great spiritual conflicts, and you will be struggling within your soul whether or not to do the will of God.

So as you come to life's drying brooks, and you wonder, "Could this be the will of God?" You don't struggle. You pray. You pray as Jesus prayed. Listen how God, inhabiting man, prays when the choice that *appears to be His will*, appears from the world's vantage point to be a disaster.

"Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done."

(Luke 22:42 NKJV)

Jesus acknowledged His choices; quietly reminded the Father of the *natural choice of man*, (the removal of the cup of bitterness), and then He SURRENDERED! And *as He surrendered*, there came victory! The next verse:

Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him.

(Luke 22:43 NKJV)

Yield to the Father's will, and you receive the Father's strength to do His will. But Jesus didn't stop there. The angel strengthened Him so *He could continue to pray*.

And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

(Luke 22:44 NKJV)

If we are to be honest, few of us ever want God's will so badly that we pray like that. The spiritual struggle taking place at that instant represented the turning point of history for fallen man. For Jesus, wanting to do the Father's will completely, stayed in the Father's presence, surrendering, until He had the Father's strength to do the Father's will.

And then, He quietly got up, set His face to the cross and walked into the arms of Victory. Where was the victory won? On the cross? Yes and No. It culminated on the cross, but it was won in the Garden. It was won when Jesus, *showing us how to find and do the Father's will*, refused to leave His knees until He had the victory, the victory to let the Father do what the Father knew

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was best. What was best for us, you see, was always what was best for Jesus. He lived for us. He died for us. He rose for us. He intercedes for us. He, who knew no sin, *became sin for us*, that we might become the Righteousness of God in Him.

That's how to pray for the will of God. You pray as Jesus prayed. You continually, expectantly, yieldedly give every day and every hour over to His Lordship, specifically asking, therefore specifically believing, that *His will be done on earth as it is in heaven*. Then you rise from your knees and you walk this earth with the quiet confidence that "not your will, but His is being done." And when the crises come and the decisions face you that seem to have no "easy answers", you go apart and you pray, and you pray, and you pray. You pray, if need be, until the morning sun casts aside the night. Not pleading with God to do your will but surrendering to God so He can do *His will*, whatever that might be. Pray like that, Beloved, and angels will come in the night and strengthen you, *and as they do*, pray the more. Pray until your heart is so intertwined with God's, that to face a cross would be Glory, for *it would be His will*...In that moment, fresh from His Presence, that's all you will desire...*that His will be done*...

*...on earth, as it is in Heaven.*

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