

Putting God's Will First

- I. Introduction:
 - a. **(Mark 8:34)** “Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.”
 - b. **(Matt 10:38)** “And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.”
 - c. Paul taught Felix
 - i. **(Acts 24:24-25)** “And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ. And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come...”
 - d. Taking up the cross and denying ourselves is to deny the pleasures of this world
 - i. **(Titus 2:11-12)** “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.”
 - ii. **(1 Peter 4:1-2)** “Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the **same mind**: for he that hath suffered in the flesh **hath ceased from sin**; That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but **to the will of God**.”
 - e. One cannot follow Christ unless we first deny ourselves and put God's will first!
- II. Man Has His Own Way
 - a. **(Prov 14:12; 16:25)** “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.”
 - i. Man has his own idea of how he ought to live and conduct his life
 - b. Man's thinking differs greatly from the thinking of God
 - i. His ways are higher and greater than man's
 - ii. **(Isa 55:9)** “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”
 - c. Examples:
 - i. Naaman
 - 1. Was told by a man of God to dip seven times in Jordan
 - 2. **(2 Kings 5:11-12)** “But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, **Behold, I thought**, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the LORD his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper. **Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel?** may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage.”
 - a. He thought that God would think as him.
 - ii. In the days of the judges “every man did that which was right in his own eyes.” **(Judges 21:25)**

- iii. Paul lived in good conscience while he was persecuting the church
 - 1. (**Acts 23:1**) “And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all **good conscience** before God until this day.”
 - 2. (**Acts 26:9-11**) “I verily **thought with myself**, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities.”
 - a. Paul with good conscience put followers of Christ to death.
 - b. Thought he was doing the will of God
- iv. Israel replaced the will of God with their own
 - 1. (**Rom 10:1-3**) “Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.”
- d. We have our own way but if we want to be correct we must submit to God's will
 - i. (**Prov 3:5-8**) “Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. **Be not wise in thine own eyes**: fear the LORD, and depart from evil. It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones.”

III. God's Will Is Revealed In His Word

- a. The mind of God has been revealed by the Spirit to the apostles and prophets
 - i. (**1 Cor 2:9-13**) “But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. **Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth;** comparing spiritual things with spiritual.”

- b. We can now read and understand what God's will is
 - i. **(Eph 3:3-5)** "How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit."
 - ii. **(Eph 5:17)** "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is."
 - c. Not only can we read and understand God's will, we must 'Put it First'
- IV. We must Accept God's Will and Put It First
- a. If we're going to serve God we must suppress our own will and submit to His.
 - i. **(Matt 7:21)** "Not every one 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."
 - b. If we're in the church we are subject to Christ
 - i. **(Eph 5:24)** "Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing."
 - 1. 'subject' – military term mean "line up under"
 - a. First principle taught in the military – 'chain of command'
 - 2. We are 'soldiers' for Christ
 - a. **(2 Tim 2:3)** "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."
 - 3. We are in spiritual warfare
 - a. **(1 Tim 1:18)** "This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare."
 - b. **(1 Tim 6:12)** "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses."
 - 4. With spiritual armor
 - a. **(Eph 6:16-17)** "Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."
 - 5. We have a captain
 - a. **(Heb 2:10)** "For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings."
 - 6. In having a captain, we have a chain of command
 - a. Must submit to him

- c. Repentance that God requires for us becoming his children involves us putting God's will before ours
 - i. (Acts 2:38) – Repentance is essential to the forgiveness of sins
 - ii. Repentance is a change of mind
 - 1. (Matt 21:28-29) “But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went.”
 - a. He repented and done the will of his father
 - iii. If we are truly converted to the Lord, we will put the Lord first
 - 1. (1 Pet 3:15) “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts...”
 - 2. We not only submit to the will of the Lord in becoming a Christian, but accepting it in “everything”
 - a. (Col 3:17) “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.”
 - i. Everything we do must be by his authority
- V. Reasons For Putting God's Will First
 - a. God is smarter than we are.
 - i. (Isa 55:8-9) “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”
 - ii. (Rom 11:34) “For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counselor?”
 - b. Our way leads to death.
 - i. (Prov 14:12) “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.”
 - c. God's will is for our good.
 - i. We don't always see how some command or restriction that God has laid upon us can be for our good.
 - 1. All His commands are for our good.
 - ii. (Deut. 6:24-25) “And the LORD commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as it is at this day. And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the LORD our God, as he hath commanded us.”
 - d. If we don't submit to God's will, we are against God.
 - i. (Matt 12:30) “He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.”
 - e. Man is not qualified to be his own guide.
 - i. (Jer 10:23) “O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.”
- VI. Are you putting God's will first?
 - a. (Mark 8:34) “Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.”

- b. If your not taking up your cross – make the resolution today
 - i. (2 Cor 6:2) “...behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.”
 - ii. Today is the day to become a Child of God
 - iii. Toady is the day to take up your cross – submit to God’s will