

Living and Loving the Will of God

by Dennis Rupert

Do you have a prejudiced view of the will of God?

I was reading Romans 12:2 for my quiet time and was struck by how Paul describes God's will: "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will."

What is God's will? The will of God is "what God intends to do in and through your life for His glory." Most of God's will is revealed in the Scriptures. We can call that the general will of God. Another part of the will of God is personal for each individual: "I want you to be a mother. I want you to be a missionary. I want you to be the best Air Force pilot you can be."

Most of us don't greet the Lord's will with open arms. Here are some emotions that I wrote down about the ways I have reacted to God's general and individual will at one time or another. I've:

- been irritated with it.
- lived in fear of it.
- submitted to it.
- been overwhelmed before it.
- ignored it.
- been anxious about it.
- rejoiced in it.
- felt cheated under it.
- been critical against it.
- grudgingly accept it.
- grown angry towards it.
- been absolutely perplexed by it.

As you can see, not many of these are positive! After looking at my list I decided that I have a prejudiced view of the will of God!

Romans 12 tells us that God's will is "good." Do you think of the Lord's will as good? Isaiah put it beautifully: "I am the Lord, your God, who teaches you what is best for you!" (Isaiah 48:17). The word "good" is profound in the Greek language. It means, "excellent, superior in its nature, honorable in its essence." God really wants the best for us when He gives us His will. You're on to something good when you find the will of God for you!

Secondly, God's will is called "pleasing". It's enjoyable, not something to be feared. Never miserable or life denying, but rather life enhancing and life expanding. Romans 8:32 is a promise: "He who did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all ? how will He not also along with Him graciously give us all things?" God's desire is to please us! God delights in pleasing us, when we delight in pleasing Him: "Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart!" (Psalm 37:4). An 88-year-old preacher stood up one morning at a conference and began his message this way: "I am an old man. But I am a happy old man!" God's will makes us glad!

Thirdly, God's will is "perfect." This word has the idea of "completeness, total fulfillment." Nothing in a Christian's life is outside the will of God. Nothing is secular to a Christian. More questions than you think are answered in the Bible. God speaks to every aspect of our lives from purchasing cars to raising children to brushing teeth to living in love with your relatives. I estimate that 99% of life's decisions are clearly stated in the Bible, whether by negative commands, positive decrees, or by principle. The Westminster Confession of Faith says, "The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture." God's will is complete.

Life would be simpler for all Christians if we simply studied the Word of God to discover that all of life's guidelines are very clearly set forth there. If we knew and followed the general will of God revealed in the Bible, then God will direct us in the will of God that is individual and specific to us ? that's the heart of Proverbs 3:5-6: "In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your paths." God's will is perfect. It is a total plan for a successful life.

I have often resisted and wrestled with Romans 12:1-2, about surrendering my life, my will to God. I realize that I have been prejudice toward the will of God. I have decided that I must appreciate what God says is true, that His will truly is "good, pleasing, and perfect." If I don't believe that, then I cannot believe that God is a

good God and I will resist His will.

I have children whom I love and who love me. Would I think of assigning any of my children the absolutely most unpleasant, distasteful task that I could possibly think of? Is this what a father who loves his children would do? Of course not! The will of God comes from the heart of a loving heavenly father and therefore it cannot be anything but "good, pleasing, and perfect" for you and for me.

At the end of my quiet time I prayed, "Lord, make me think about your will the same way you do!" I want to love the will of God, relish the will of God, embrace the will of God. "Lord, make it so!"

Appreciating the will of God is the necessary first step to "Living and Loving the Will of God."