

HOW TO FIND GOD'S WILL

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Golconda Crossroads
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In the Bible those who do not understand what is God's will for them are called fools according to Eph. 5:17. As believers it is our highest privilege to know the will of God and do it, and if anyone questions us as to this we can say that our chief desire and right is to find God's will and do it. Our enjoyment depends upon it, also our usefulness and our service to God.

In the beginning of my Christian life I did not know what it was to find God's will and to do it. It took me two years to learn that lesson. Even though I was reading the Bible every day and attending meetings I used to say casually, "Lord, let Thy will be done". One morning in Canada, somebody called me on the phone and asked me, if I could speak at a certain meeting. I asked him to wait for a few minutes, and looked into my diary to see if I was free and then told him that I could go for the meeting. A friend in my room overheard me and said "Don't you pray and decide before accepting an invitation to go anywhere?" I said, "I need not pray, I am not going on my personal work for my own benefit. I am going on God's work only". I was offended with my friend for asking me that question, and did not even wish him good morning for two weeks. Afterwards I came to my senses and started thinking, "Do I know how to find God's will? Perhaps, after all I do not." Thus I was put to shame. So I said to myself, "I will not go anywhere till I learn how to find God's will". For two weeks I went to the seaside and prayed, "Lord teach me how to find Thy will." Now I want to share with you what the Lord has taught me.

I want you to keep three things in your mind. First of all, the sevenfold importance of knowing God's will; Secondly, the sevenfold conditions for finding God's will; and thirdly, the sevenfold evidences of having found God's will.

1

The sevenfold importance of knowing God's will

It is very necessary to know the importance of knowing God's will, so that you will not treat it lightly. If you go to any Government Office you will find files with a red label, marked "Urgent", meaning that the paper in that file should be attended to quickly. In the same way the sevenfold importance of finding God's will should be recognised by you as very important.

(1) FOR REVEALING THE LIFE OF OUR LORD JESUS

The whole life of the Lord Jesus Christ was lived in doing God's will. (John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38; 8:29; Matt. 26:39). He obeyed the will of God, even in small matters. At the marriage feast in Carta, His mother said, "They have no wine" and he answered, "Woman ... Mine hour is not yet come". Yet after a few minutes He performed the miracle of changing the water into wine, because He did it when it was God's will. We too have the same privilege.

(2) FOR KNOWING THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

(John 7:17) Our understanding of the purposes of God and His full plan of salvation depends on doing the Father's will. Even though the Lord did many miracles and wonders before the people, yet those people failed in finding God's will. The Lord told them that unless they did the will of God, they would not be able to know Him and His works. We also will be able to understand more and more the deep mysteries in the Word of God and will be able to enjoy them only if we find and do God's will.

(3) FOR OUR PRAYER LIFE

(1 John 5:14) An effective and a fruitful prayer life depends on knowing and doing God's will. By doing the will of God, we will be saved from much loss and will get much joy and boldness in the presence of God. Otherwise our prayer time will be burdensome and tiresome.

(4) FOR THE ENJOYMENT OF GOD'S LOVE

(Matt. 12:48-50) The enjoyment of God's love and affection depends on knowing and doing God's will. When the brothers and sisters of the Lord Jesus Christ came to see Him, they sent Him a message that they had come to see Him. He replied "Who is my mother and Who are my brethren? ... Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother and sister and mother." When we move in God's will, we feel and experience His love in a deeper way and also enjoy His presence.

(5) FOR GROWING INTO SPIRITUAL MATURITY

(Rom. 8:14) In this chapter the apostle Paul uses two words for believers,— "sons" and "children". "Sons" refers to mature believers. Our spiritual growth depends on doing God's will; We do not grow spiritually by our knowledge or activity but by doing God's will.

(6) FOR ENJOYING THE POWER OF GOD

(Psa. 29:3-9) By hearing the voice of God, we find the power of God. In these days many people boast of receiving the power of God. Our receiving the power of God depends on our ability to hear God's voice. We will find mountains flowing away before God's presence, because we know we are in God's will. That is why, daily, we have to go on our knees to hear His voice (1 Kings 19:12). Elijah was a man of God, a prophet, a man of prayer and full of faith. Yet he was discouraged, because of the wicked queen Jezebel. He thought God would punish Jezebel by fire.

But it did not happen so. Therefore being greatly discouraged, he went and sat under a juniper tree. God took him to a mountain. The Lord passed before him and a great and strong wind followed, then an earthquake and lastly fire. But he did not hear God's voice through any of them. At last he heard a still small voice. It was the voice of God. Then he found that he had no need to be discouraged because God had preserved seven thousand people who had not bowed to Baal. He was greatly encouraged. There is power in hearing God's voice.

(7) FOR LEADING A FEARLESS LIFE

(Isaiah 46:10) By knowing God's will we are freed from fear and anxiety. If we know God's mind about our future, we will have no fear of the future, because He knows the end from the beginning. That is why we have to go to God for everything.

2

Seven Conditions to be fulfilled before we can find God's will

Now we shall see the seven conditions which have to be fulfilled before we can find God's will.

(1) WILLINGNESS TO LEARN

(Psa. 143:10) We must be willing to learn how to find God's will. God will not force us and push us to do His will. God has given free will to all. So we must say with faith, "Lord, teach me to find Thy will".

(2) WILLINGNESS TO DIE TO ONE'S OWN WILL

(Matt. 26: 39) We must be willing to die to our own will. Many times we make up our mind about something and then go to God for sanction. In many offices, clerks write everything and take it to the officer who gives formal sanction, sometimes without even looking into the matter. In the same way many people have their minds already made up, and then they pray: "Now Lord, this is my idea, please fulfill it". No, we have to say, "Lord, not my will, but Thy will". For that purpose we have to receive into us daily, the power of His death. We need to appropriate His death, by receiving into us the power of that death, and so die to all our own desires and plans.

(3) DELIGHT IN DOING GOD'S WILL

(Psa. 40: 8) We must be willing to do God's will joyfully and wholeheartedly, not half-heartedly. God's plan is the best plan for us, and there is no reason why we should accept it half-heartedly. For example, the apostle Paul wanted to go to Asia, but God did not allow him (Acts 16:6). Then the Lord told him very clearly, to go to a far-off place. Paul did not say, "It is very far, and it will take time for me to get ready". He obeyed willingly and immediately. Another example is that of Philip. God asked him to go to the desert (Acts 8: 26). At that time, he was very very busy, yet he left his work and obeyed God joyfully, not half-heartedly.

(4) NO CONFIDENCE IN ONE'S OWN UNDERSTANDING

(Prov. 3: 5) Lean not unto thine own understanding. We cannot depend on our own understanding. We have to say, "Lord, you are my wisdom. I am not depending on my own wisdom". We can do so by strong faith. If we want to find God's will and do it, we must leave all our understanding and depend on His divine wisdom.

(5) PERFECT CONFIDENCE IN GOD'S WILL

(Prov. 3:6) Acknowledge Him in all your ways. Even for very small things we must go to God. We may think "This is a small thing; Why should we ask God about doing that?" But this verse says that we have to acknowledge Him in all our ways. Before making any plan for buying or selling or doing any other work, we must get His permission. In many cases, money jumps in the pockets, as if it were saying, "I want to go, I want to go to the market". The wife says, "My friend bought a new saree, so I also want to buy". If we want to grow spiritually, even in small matters we must find, God's will, because we are not our own (1 Cor. 6:19,20). We are purchased by our Lord With a great price. Our time, energy and money belong to Him alone. We have no claim over anything. Even if we have to buy a cake of soap, we should take His permission. We should ask Him "Lord, can I use this money for soap?" So also regarding our time, and all other things.

(6) WILLINGNESS TO KEEP OUR BODIES CLEAN

(Rom. 12:1, 2) We should keep our bodies clean and unspotted from sin of all kinds. Then it will be acceptable as a living sacrifice. We should not imitate worldly people in dress, haircut or conversation, nor can we give ourselves to worldly books or worldly music, for they bring in-defilement. We are a heavenly people and must live a life of separation. Our body is the temple of the Holy spirit. According to Matt. 5: 8 and Heb. 12:14 unless we are holy and pure, we will not be able to see God.

(7) WILLINGNESS TO HAVE A RENEWED MIND

(Rom, 12:2) If we want to know God's will, we must have a renewed mind. We should not be persistent in having our own way. For example, the children of Israel wanted a king. The prophet Samuel warned them what they would have to undergo after getting a king. Still they persisted in having a king, and God gave them what they wanted. If we insist on having something, God will give it to us but we will be the losers in the end. We should have a renewed mind, because our natural mind is stubborn and self-willed.

Sevenfold evidences of having found God's will

There are seven evidences by which we can know that we really know the will of God.

(1) PEACE

(Isa. 32:17) Our God is the God of peace (Heb. 13:20, 21). Whenever God reveals His will to us first there should be a sense of the inward peace in our hearts multiplying and flowing like a river. After praying over any matter in the morning, midday or evening we must watch to see if the peace multiplies. If it does so, then we can be sure of His will. Only believers can find God's will because they have obtained the peace of God, and peace with God. That peace grows as we continue to be in God's will. Unbelievers cannot find God's will.

(2) THE WORD OF GOD

(Psa. 119:105) We must have the witness of the Word of God. While reading our Bible, from our daily portion, God will give a fragment of a verse or a full verse to confirm His will.

(3) WITNESS OF FELLOW-BELIEVERS

(Dan. 2:17-19) By praying with other believers, we get further witness. As Daniel and His friends prayed together God revealed to Daniel the dream and its meaning. So, as we pray together with one mind, God will reveal His will to us. Definite prayer with fellow believers will bring more confirmation to the already revealed will of God. For our safety's sake, we must have the registration of other believers also.

(4) BOLDNESS

(Acts 21:10-14) We will get very strong faith, free from fear and anxiety, for doing a thing, if it is in the will of God. The Lord spoke clearly to the apostle Paul to go to Jerusalem. On the way prophet Agabus took Paul's girdle and bound his own hands and feet and said, "Thus saith the Holy Ghost, so shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles". Having heard that, the believers began to weep. The prophet did not ask Paul not to go, but the believers requested him not to go, because they needed him. But Paul replied that God had told him to go, and he was willing even to lay down his life in doing God's will. He had no fear because he knew he was in the will of God and had strong faith. If we are in His will, we shall have no fear, no doubt, no worry. God will supply all our needs and fill us with His strength.

(5) FULFILMENT OF A SIGN

(Gen.24: 10-14) Sometimes we can appoint some sign and ask the Lord to fulfill it. However this is not always necessary. Eleazer put forth a peculiar sign before God to be sure of choosing the right bride for his master's son. He himself did not know how he would be able to get the right

person. But he undertook the long journey and stopped in God's time. Then he put a very difficult sign before God, but God fulfilled it and confirmed His will in the choice.

In April 1938, the Lord spoke to me while I was at Poona, and told me to go to the south. So I prayed, "Lord, I have thirty invitations from North India. Now if you want me to go to south, let me get a letter from Madras." That very day I received a letter from Madras as an evidence of His will for me to move to the south.

(6) GLORY TO GOD

(Heb. 13:21) God's name must be highly magnified and glorified through the work or matter for which you are praying. You should say, "Lord, I want only your name to be magnified in this matter". We must desire God's glory and not our own comfort, name or fame.

(7) BLESSING TO OTHERS

(Acts 26:16-19) When Paul was obedient to God's will and plan he was used to bring blessing to others. He became a witness of God to all people. Even so when we do anything in the will of God it will be a source of blessing to many people. It will strengthen them and bring edification to the whole Church.

We cannot learn all this in a day. As we practice day by day, we will learn. For instance we do not learn cooking in one day. In the beginning while cooking, we refer to the recipe book again and again and yet there may not be much taste in the food we have cooked. It is only as we cook day by day that by practice we will learn to make tasty dishes.

Now I can say as my own testimony, that I made it a principle not to go anywhere without finding God's will in the matter. May God help you to make this your practice also.

May the Lord teach us all how to find His will and help us to become wise in His sight according to Eph. 5:17.