

THE WILL OF GOD, Week 4

Living a Life according to God's Heart and Will

Scripture Reading: Acts 13:22, 36; Eph. 1:9-11; 3:9-11; Heb. 10:5-10; Rom. 12:1-21

Acts 13:22	And when He had deposed him, He raised up David for them as king, to whom also He testified and said, I have found David, the son of Jesse, a man according to My heart, who will do all My will.
Acts 13:36	Now David, having served his own generation by the counsel of God, did indeed fall asleep and was buried with his fathers and saw corruption;
Ephesians 1:9	Making known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself,
Ephesians 1:10	Unto the economy of the fullness of the times, to head up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth, in Him;
Ephesians 1:11	In whom also we were designated as an inheritance, having been predestinated according to the purpose of the One who works all things according to the counsel of His will,
Ephesians 3:9	And to enlighten all that they may see what the economy of the mystery is, which throughout the ages has been hidden in God, who created all things,
Ephesians 3:10	In order that now to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenlies the multifarious wisdom of God might be made known through the church,
Ephesians 3:11	According to the eternal purpose which He made in Christ Jesus our Lord,
Hebrews 10:5	Therefore, coming into the world, He says, "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me.
Hebrews 10:6	In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You did not delight.
Hebrews 10:7	Then I said, Behold, I have come (in the roll of the book it is written concerning Me) to do Your will, O God."
Hebrews 10:8	Saying above, "Sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You did not desire nor delight in" (which are offered according to the law),
Hebrews 10:9	He then has said, "Behold, I have come to do Your will." He takes away the first that He may establish the second,
Hebrews 10:10	By which will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.
Romans 12:1	I exhort you therefore, brothers, through the compassions of God to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, well pleasing to God, which is your reasonable service.
Romans 12:2	And do not be fashioned according to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and well pleasing and perfect.
Romans 12:3	For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think, but to think so as to be sober-minded, as God has apportioned to each a measure of faith.
Romans 12:4	For just as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function,
Romans 12:5	So we who are many are one Body in Christ, and individually members one of another.
Romans 12:6	And having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;
Romans 12:7	Or service, let us be faithful in that service; or he who teaches, in that teaching;
Romans 12:8	Or he who exhorts, in that exhortation; he who gives, in simplicity; he who leads, in diligence; he who shows mercy, in cheerfulness.
Romans 12:9	Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good.
Romans 12:10	Love one another warmly in brotherly love; take the lead in showing honor one to another.
Romans 12:11	Do not be slothful in zeal, but be burning in spirit, serving the Lord.
Romans 12:12	Rejoice in hope; endure in tribulation; persevere in prayer.
Romans 12:13	Contribute to the needs of the saints; pursue hospitality.
Romans 12:14	Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.
Romans 12:15	Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep.
Romans 12:16	Be of the same mind toward one another, not setting your mind on the high things but going along with the lowly; do not be wise in yourselves.
Romans 12:17	Repay no one evil for evil; take forethought for things honorable in the sight of all men.
Romans 12:18	If possible, as far as it depends on you, live in peace with all men.
Romans 12:19	Do not avenge yourselves, beloved, but give place to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Lord."
Romans 12:20	But "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in doing this you will heap coals of fire upon his head."
Romans 12:21	Do not be conquered by evil, but conquer evil with good.

To Have a Body for the Enlargement and Expression of Christ, the Embodiment of the Processed Triune God

God's heart and will in His New Testament economy, God's good pleasure, the counsel of His will, and His purpose are **to have a Body for the enlargement and expression of Christ, the embodiment of the processed Triune God** (1:9-11, 22-23; 3:9-11). A person's body is his enlargement. The church as the Body of Christ is the enlargement of Christ, and this enlargement of Christ is Christ's expression. As a man, I am fully expressed through my body; you may know me through my body. By seeing only my head without my body, you cannot know what kind of man I am. When I speak, my body is acting and moving, and I am fully expressed. Sometimes I can recognize a brother simply by looking at him from the back. By looking at the way he walks and moves, I can know who he is. One's body is his enlargement, and this enlargement is his expression.

God's great will is first to have a Body for Christ's enlargement and expression. God created the heavens and the earth with many items, and eventually He created mankind in order to have a Body composed of human beings who are saved, regenerated, sanctified, renewed, and transformed into the image of the processed Triune God. God wants to have such a Body for Christ, who is the very embodiment of the processed Triune God. The processed Triune God is embodied in Christ, and this Christ today needs a Body for His enlargement and His expression. **We all are here as a part of this enlargement. Therefore, we are a part of Christ's expression. This is God's great will.** Through this Body, God makes known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself, according to the purpose of the ages made in Christ, according to the counsel of His will (1:9, 11; 3:11). There is no mystery in whether one should buy a pair of shoes in the morning or in the afternoon. The divine will is something that has a mystery.

God's heart and will is also to have a church to be the organic Body of Christ for the manifestation of His multifarious wisdom (vv. 9-10). Today the church as the Body of Christ is an organism to make God's multifarious wisdom known to all men. This is what God wants to have according to His eternal will. God created the heavens for the earth, and He created the earth for man's existence. The heavens are for the earth, the earth is for man, man is for the producing of the church, and the church is the enlargement and expression of the processed Triune God. This is God's will. Whether we live in one place or another does not matter much. We do not need to pray much for that. Instead, we should focus our entire being on God's will to have the church, which is the Body of the embodiment of the processed Triune God. **Through this church the processed Triune God is enlarged and expressed.** This is the first aspect of God's will.

(The Practical and Organic Building Up of the Church, chapter 1, section 1)

Day 1

- I. The Old Testament contains a portrait of David—a **man according to God's heart, who did the will of God and served his own generation by the counsel of God** (Acts 13:22, 36); it was in David's heart to build a house for the name of Jehovah the God of Israel; today God is blessing us in every way for the fulfillment of His economy to build up the Body of Christ (1 Sam. 13:14a; 1 Kings 8:17; 1 Chron. 22:7; 28:2; Matt. 16:18; Eph. 2:20-22; 4:16).
- II. God's great will in His New Testament economy, God's good pleasure, the counsel of His will, and His purpose are **to have a Body for the enlargement and expression of Christ, the embodiment of the processed Triune God**—1:9-11, 22-23; 3:9-11:
 - A. The heavens are for the earth, the earth is for man, man is for the producing of the church, and the church is the enlargement and expression of the processed Triune God; **God's great will is to have a Body composed of human beings who are regenerated, sanctified, renewed, and transformed into the image of the processed Triune God**—Zech. 12:1; John 1:12-13; Eph. 5:26; 2 Cor. 4:16; 3:18.
 - B. God's great will is also to have a church **to be the organic Body of Christ for the manifestation of His multifarious wisdom**—Eph. 3:9-10.
 - C. Each chapter of the book of Ephesians unveils the mystery of God's will (1:9), **the mystery of the Body of Christ as the organism of the Triune God**, from a particular point of view:
 1. **Ephesians 1** reveals that the **Body of Christ** is the **issue of the dispensing of the processed Trinity and the transmitting of the transcending Christ**.
 2. **Ephesians 2** reveals that the **Body of Christ** is the **masterpiece of the Triune God as the new man**—vv. 10, 15-16.
 3. **Ephesians 3** reveals that the **Body of Christ** is the **fullness of the Triune God by our being supplied with the riches of Christ and by Christ's making His home in our hearts**—vv. 8, 14-19.
 4. **Ephesians 4** reveals that the **Body of Christ** is the **mingling of the processed Triune God with the regenerated believers and that this one Body is built up by the one ministry**—vv. 4-6, 11-16.
 5. **Ephesians 5** reveals that the **Body of Christ** is **composed of the children of light to be the bride of Christ for the satisfaction of Christ**—vv. 8-9, 25-27.
 6. **Ephesians 6** reveals that the **Body of Christ** is the **corporate warrior of the Triune God for the defeating of God's enemy**—vv. 10-20.

Day 2

- D. God has blended the Body together (1 Cor. 12:24); the word **blended** also means "adjusted," "harmonized," "tempered," and "mingled":
 1. In order to be **blended** in the Body life, **we have to go through the cross and be by the Spirit**, dispensing Christ to others for the sake of the Body of Christ.
 2. **Blending** means that when we are about to do something, **we always stop to fellowship with others**.
 3. The **blending** is for the building up of the universal Body of Christ (Eph. 1:23) to consummate the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:2) as the **final goal of God's economy according to His good pleasure** (Eph. 3:8-10; 1:9-10).

Day 3

III. God's great will is to have **Christ as the replacement for all the sacrifices and offerings in the Old Testament so that we may enjoy Him as our all in all—Heb. 10:5-10; Psalms 40:6-8:**

- A. As the unique sacrifice of the new covenant, **Christ is the factor that enacts God's New Testament economy** (Matt. 26:28) so that He may be its **centrality and universality** for the producing and building up of the church as His organic Body, which will consummate in the New Jerusalem.
- B. Christ's replacing of all the Old Testament offerings, taking away all the Old Testament types and establishing Himself as everything to us, is **God's great will**; hence, **Christ has changed the age for the consummating of God's new creation out of God's old creation** (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15); His changing the age is greater than the creation of the universe mentioned in Genesis 1:
 - 1. The Old Testament predicted in Isaiah 53 that Christ would come to be the sacrifice for sin in order to replace and terminate the Levitical sacrifices (vv. 6, 11-12); **God prepared a body for Christ so that He could offer Himself to God to replace all the offerings** (Heb. 10:5).
 - 2. Christ took away "the first," the sacrifices of the old covenant, that He might establish Himself as "the second," the **sacrifice of the new covenant**—v. 9:
 - a. As "the second," **Christ is everything**—v. 9.
 - b. By this will we have been **sanctified through the offering of Christ's body once for all so that we may enjoy and partake of Him as our everything**—v. 10.

Day 4

- C. **Christ is the reality of the offerings** so that we may **worship God in spirit and truthfulness** (the divine reality becoming our genuineness and sincerity for the true worship of God)—John 4:23-24:
 - 1. The **burnt offering**, which was wholly for God's satisfaction, typifies **Christ as God's pleasure and satisfaction**, the One whose **living on earth was absolutely for God**—Lev. 1:3; Num. 28:2-3; John 7:16-18.
 - 2. The **meal offering** typifies **Christ in His perfect humanity as food** for God and for those who have fellowship with God and serve Him—Lev. 2:1, 4; John 7:46; 18:38; 19:4, 6.
 - 3. The **peace offering** typifies **Christ as the Peacemaker**, the One who became the peace and the fellowship between us and God by dying for us, enabling us to enjoy Christ with God and to have fellowship with God in Christ for our mutual satisfaction with God—Lev. 3:1; Eph. 2:14-15; John 12:1-3; 20:21.
 - 4. The **sin offering** typifies **Christ as the One who was made sin for us** and who died on the cross to deal with the sinful nature of our fallen being—Lev. 4:3; 2 Cor. 5:21; Rom. 8:3; John 1:29; 3:14.
 - 5. The **trespass offering** typifies **Christ as the One who bore our sins in His own body** and was judged by God on the cross to deal with our sinful deeds that we might be forgiven in our sinful conduct—Lev. 5:6; 1 Pet. 2:24; 3:18; Isa. 53:5-6, 10-11; John 4:15-18.
 - 6. The **wave offering** typifies **Christ as the resurrected One in love**—Lev. 7:30; 10:15.
 - 7. The **heave offering** typifies the **powerful Christ in ascension and exaltation**—7:32; Exo. 29:27; Eph. 1:21.
 - 8. The **drink offering** typifies **Christ as the One poured out as wine before God for His satisfaction** and also as the **One who saturates us with Himself as heavenly wine** to be poured out for God's enjoyment and satisfaction—Lev. 23:13; Exo. 29:40; Num. 28:7-10; Isa. 53:12; Phil. 2:17; 2 Tim. 4:6; Judg. 9:13.
- D. **We need to live a life according to God's heart and will by daily enjoying Christ as the reality of all the offerings for the divine goal of the Triune God, which is to bring us all into Himself that we may take Him as our dwelling place and allow Him to take us as His dwelling place for His universal, enlarged, divine human incorporation**—John 14:23; Rev. 21:3, 22.

Day 5

IV. God's great will is to have the believers in Christ **practice the Body life, that is, **to have the living of the Body of Christ**—Rom. 12:1-21:**

- A. We are "one Body in Christ," having an organic union with Him; this **union makes us one in life with Him and with all the other members of His Body**—vv. 4-5:
 - 1. Two words from Romans 12:5 indicate the **organic union—in Christ**; in Christ always implies the thought or the fact that **we are organically one with Christ**.
 - 2. The actuality of the Body is the remaining in the organic union with Christ; this is why John 15 charges us to abide in Him; **to abide in Him simply means to remain in the organic union**.

Day 6

- B. For the church life, the life of the Body of Christ, to be realized, **our entire being is needed**; a **presented body**, a **transformed soul**, and a **burning spirit** are indispensable to a proper church life—Rom. 12:1-2, 11:
 - 1. We need to present our bodies as a **living sacrifice** for the church life:
 - a. Bodies in Romans 12:1 is **plural**, and sacrifice is **singular**; this indicates that although many bodies are presented, they become one sacrifice, implying that **although we are many, our service in the Body of Christ should not be many individual services, separated and unrelated**.
 - b. All our service should constitute **one whole service**, and this service must be unique because it is the **service of the one Body of Christ**.

Do Not Be Conformed to This Age

Romans 12:2 says, “*And do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind, that you may prove by testing what the will of God is, that which is good and well-pleasing and perfect.*” Paul tells us not to be “conformed to this age.” **We should not be molded by this age.** What is this age? The age is the present, practical world life, which is the opposition to and substitute of the church life. **The entire world is a Satanic system, a system constituted by Satan.** The Greek word for world, cosmos, denotes an organization, a system. Satan has systematized every person and every item of human life. This world system is composed of many ages. Just as the universal church is composed of many local churches, so the world is composed of many ages. Every local church is a part of the universal church, and every age is a part of the world. Each age has its modern fashion. The English word “modern” is an equivalent of the Greek word rendered “age.” The Greek words translated as “Do not be conformed to this age” may be translated as, “Do not be modernized.” Hence, to be modernized means to be fashioned, conformed according to the present age. Since an age, being the present, practical world life, is a part of the world system, you cannot be in the world without being in one of the ages. You cannot touch the world unless you touch one of the ages. Therefore, in order to forsake the world you must also forsake the age.

The changes in the age of the world system can be illustrated by the changes in ladies’ hairdos. Sixty years ago, especially in the Western world, it was common for women to arrange their hair into a high tower, the higher the better. I became familiar with this because the Western ladies purchased hairnets that were imported from North China where I lived as a boy. Suddenly the orders began to specify small hairnets. I wondered about the reason for the change. Eventually I learned that the age had changed and that the modern style had altered. Each age has its fashion and style. Sixty years ago the Western ladies fashioned their hair into a high tower. Later short hair became common, and the so-called “bobbed hair” became popular. In recent years the young people have adopted the so-called “hippie type” hairdo of this age. If a young man allows his hair to grow long, it proves that he has been modernized.

The world opposes the church, and the ages oppose the churches. **If we mean business to have the church life, we must give up the age.** Since the present age opposes the church life, **we cannot follow the age and be fashioned according to it and still truly experience the Body life.** A person who is possessed by the modern age may attend the Sunday meetings, but he cannot practice the church life. If we want the Body life, the practice of the church life, we must not follow this age nor be conformed to it. This is the reason that Paul told us not to be conformed to this age.

Be Transformed by the Renewing of the Mind

We should not be conformed to the age, but transformed by the renewing of our mind (Eph. 4:23; Titus 3:5). To be conformed to the age means to adopt the modern fashions outwardly; to be transformed is to have an organic element wrought into our being to produce a metabolic change inwardly. We need to be transformed by the renewing of our mind. The mind in Romans 12 is different from the mind both in Romans 7 and Romans 8. In Romans 7 the mind was alone, acting independently. In Romans 8 the mind was dependent, being set on the spirit. However, I doubt that the mind in Romans 8 has been transformed or renewed. Simply to set our mind on the spirit is inadequate. The mind should not only be dependent, but also renewed. Romans 12:2 tells us that we need a renewed mind. The mind is renewed not only by outward teachings, but by the element of Christ being added to it. **When the Lord Jesus spreads Himself from our spirit into our mind, our mind will be renewed.** By the renewing of our mind our soul is metabolically changed. In this way we experience transformation in our soul, a necessity for the church life. If we intend to practice the church life, we need to experience such a transformation in our soul by the renewing of our mind.

To Test and Prove the Will of God

We need the renewal of our mind and the transformation of our soul that we “may prove by testing what the will of God is, that which is good and well-pleasing and perfect.” What is the will of God? **The will of God is to have the Body life, the church life.** Do not apply the mention of the will of God in 12:2 to your personal human situation, to the matters of marriage, employment, or housing. Some people pray, “O Lord, I am going to buy a new house. What is Your will? How many bedrooms and bathrooms should it have? How much should I pay for it? Lord, I want to know Your will.” Forget about praying in this manner, for the more you pray and seek the Lord’s will in this way, the more you will find yourself in darkness and out of His will. The will mentioned in 12:2 is to have the **church life**. The house that you purchase, the job that you have, and the person that you marry should all depend on the church life. Even the clothes that you wear should depend on the church life. **If you are right with the church life, you will know what you must do. Everything must be for the church life, for to have the church life is the unique will of God.** This is good, well-pleasing, and perfect. And this is for the Body life. The presenting of our bodies, the transforming of our souls, and the renewing of our minds are all for the Body life.

(Life-Study of Romans, chapter 25, section 4)