

## KNOWING THE WILL OF GOD

We now come to the lesson of knowing the will of God or the leading of the Lord. This lesson is closely related in experience to the teaching of the anointing. The purpose of the anointing is to anoint the substance of God into us that we may reach the goal of the mingling of God with man..., [I]f we want to know the will of God, we must have the experience of obeying the teaching of the anointing.

### **The Will of God Is His Heart Desire**

When we speak of God's will, we must trace it to **the desire of His heart**... To attain His pleasure, He has **a plan** which He **purposed** to fulfill to reach His goal. This purpose is His will. Therefore, God's will and His heart desire are the same. Anything not touching God's heart desire is not His will. For example, the Bible reveals that God's heart desire from eternity is a group of people as the companions of His Son. To reach this goal, God planned the creation of heaven, earth, and man according to His pleasure. Then He created everything according to His plan. At that time creation became His will.

### **The Will of God Is the Mingling of God with Man**

A thorough study of the Bible will help us discover the amazing fact that God in eternity planned according to His heart's desire to attain the goal of **mingling Himself** with man. God in the universe has this one will: to work Himself into man and to mingle Himself with man. His creation, redemption, sanctification, and all other aspects of His work are for this one purpose... Without this mingling, no matter how good or praise-worthy the situation may be, it is not God's will. This is a strict measurement! Before we see the plan of God, though He is in charge of our affairs and our living, we are only under God's providential care, not under His will. When we have seen God's plan, we dare not use the term "God's will" in a light manner. We will not carelessly refer to trivial situations as being God's will. We can only speak of these matters in general as God's care for us.

## THE MEANS OF KNOWING THE WILL OF GOD

### **Creation**

First, we need to know God's will through His **creation** of all things, including matter, nature, and mankind. Revelation 4:11 says that *all things were created according to*

*His will.* Everything that exists in the universe speaks forth a measure of God's will. All things in heaven and on earth are certain components which enable us to know the will of God. Therefore, to know God's will, we must take note of all things which He created in the universe. They are like a book for us to study; hence, we must search out and discover why God needed to create all things in heaven and on earth. What was His purpose in creating man? Why is the human race distributed as it is on the earth? If we thoroughly study the matter of creation, the magnitude of God's will in this universe will be understood to a certain degree.

## **The Bible**

The second means of knowing God's will is the Bible. God's creation is only a piece of God's work; it is not sufficiently clear in revealing His will. **The Bible as God's Word** tells us thoroughly and clearly what God desires to do in the universe and what His purpose is. Therefore, the Bible is the clearest revelation regarding God's will... Actually the Bible itself is closely linked with all things in the universe. In the beginning, we read about God creating the heavens and the earth, and at the end about the new heaven and new earth. All of God's works and will as revealed in the Bible are largely related to the universe. Therefore, **the universe** should first be studied that **our heart** may be **enlarged**; then **the Bible** should be studied that our **view** may be **broadened**. Thus, we will become one who has a clearer understanding of the will of God. This category of study also includes spiritual literature, messages, spiritual fellowship, words of encouragement, testimonies of the saints, etc. These all originate from the Bible and serve as a means by which God reveals His will.

## **The Environment**

The third way we know God's will is by our environment. When speaking of God's creation, we emphasize the sun, moon, stars, all things in heaven and on earth, and the vastness of His creation. But when we speak of environment, we are referring to **our immediate surroundings**, including people, things, and circumstances **which affect our lives**. In order that we may understand and obey His will, God arranges and changes our environment. Therefore, we need to study both God's will and His guidance in our environment.

## **The Heart, Spirit, and Mind**

God created these organs mainly for us to understand His will. If we were like a chair, without a heart, spirit, or mind, we would still not understand His will, even though God had prepared all things in the universe, including the environment about us, and had given us the Bible. When we speak of these three organs, we are referring to the parts of the new creation. Since the heart is a **new heart**, it inclines toward God, loves Him, seeks after Him, and chooses Him. Because the spirit is a **new spirit**, it can contact God and fellowship with Him. Since the mind is a **renewed mind**, having a **renewed understanding**, it can comprehend and interpret the feeling it obtains while in fellowship, and thus understand the will of God. If our heart is not new, our spirit is not keen, and our mind is not clear, we will be greatly hindered in the understanding of God's will. The men whom God has greatly used throughout the generations are those in whom these three organs have been renewed, made keen, and made clear.

## **The Holy Spirit**

[A]ll the previous four means by which we understand God's will are entirely dependent upon the working of the Holy Spirit. If the Holy Spirit does not inspire us from within, even though our heart, spirit, and mind are in perfect condition, we still cannot understand the will of God through creation and environment. Neither will we understand the revelation God has given in the Bible. Creation, environment, and the Bible are the material means by which God reveals Himself, but **it is the Holy Spirit who makes them meaningful to us...** There are no other means through which we understand the will of God than the five mentioned above. Dreams and visions mentioned in the Bible are included in the category of the Holy Spirit and will not be listed separately.

## **THE PATHWAY OF KNOWING THE WILL OF GOD**

### **Present Yourself as a Sacrifice**

When a person has not yet presented himself as a sacrifice, he himself is the center of his life and the motivating factor of all his behavior and activities. He naturally thinks of himself and loves himself; even his slightest pursuing in the spiritual realm is for his own pleasure and enjoyment, or for his future reward... Apparently, he

seems to be seeking God's will but actually he is wishing that God's will would fulfill his **own satisfaction**... These people can only understand their own will and not the will of God; much less can they understand His lofty and eternal will. Therefore, if one desires to know God's will, he must **first put himself and his all on the altar** as a consecrated sacrifice to God. He is **not for himself**, but for God. He lays down his own career and enters into God's economy. In this way it is possible for him to know God's will. The altar is the only place and the only ground upon which man can understand God's will.

### **Deny the Self**

To be a sacrifice is to **solve the problem of living for ourselves**. To deny the self is to solve the problem of living according to ourselves. If we are merely a sacrifice and have not denied ourselves, even though we are living for God, we are still living according to our own opinion and ideas. As such, we cannot understand His will. Therefore, the denying of self is also a basic requirement for knowing the will of God.

### **Train the Mind**

After having contacted God and obtained the feeling in our spirit, we still need our mind to interpret and apprehend His will practically. Otherwise, the feeling in our spirit is but an unknown burden, and it is not meaningful to our understanding...For example, if we listen to a speech given in a foreign language, we hear the voice, but if our mind has little training in that language, we can neither interpret the meaning nor understand the mind of the speaker. Thus, **the interpretation by the mind** is an indispensable factor in the understanding of God's will...

### **Study the Environment**

To know God's will more fully we need to study the environment. Remember the environment is also a means by which God reveals His will. When God leads and guides us according to His will, **He usually arranges the appropriate environments for this purpose**. For example, after Jacob remained twenty years with his uncle, Laban, God wanted him to return to his father's house. Hence, He caused the sons of Laban to utter words against Jacob, which resulted in Laban changing his countenance toward him (Gen. 31:1-3). Through this, God proved His will to Jacob.

The environment is always a means by which God reveals His will and is also a proof of His will. Therefore, if we are to know God's will, we need to observe the environment which He arranges for us. Environment is **practical** and is comprised of many phases; therefore, we need to seek out the spiritual meaning and God's will from the many phases. The practical environment includes the people about us and the existence of situations with their manifold variations...

## **CONCLUSION**

Beginning with obeying the teaching of the anointing, the spiritual experience of a Christian gradually progresses to a higher ground. When we come to the experience of knowing God's will, its requirement of spiritual growth and strict dealing with the self surpasses all the previous lessons.