

# THE WILL OF GOD



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## Seek the will of the Lord above all

To follow the will of the Lord is of utmost necessity. And this also pertains when we seek the Lord in prayer and in supplications. We love to quote John 14: 13 And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.” And with this, we also stand upon Luke 11:10-12: 10 For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. 11 “Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? 12 Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion?”

Based upon these Scriptures, we are under the impression that we can simply ask ANYTHING of God, even if it is out of His will or plans and purposes of the Lord to exalt the Self and our own selfish agendas and desires. We, however, forget “Matthew 6: 33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” and also “Luke 9:23: Then he said to them all: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.”

Jesus teaches us how to pray in Matthew 6: 9 “This, then, is how you should pray: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, 10 your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”

Let us then connect the dots, because so often we love to take Scripture out of context to support our own doctrine or ideas. After all, we have made God into Father Christmas who must simply give whatever we want! If we consider Mathew 6 verse 9-10 and 33, along with Luke 9, we see that Jesus also teaches about submission and yielding to the will and purpose of the Lord. He talks about denying the self [our desires, plans and purposes and old nature] to follow the Lord to His Glory.

Therefore, if we truly follow the Lord and thus obey Him, His Kingdom will become our highest priority. If we truly follow Him, then our character and nature will come into alignment with God’s nature and order.

If we, however, say we follow the Lord but still follow our own agenda, plans and purposes, thus exalting our own will, then we are not really following the Lord as His disciple. If we then are truly following Him, we will deny ourselves and seek His Truth above all. What will then be the result?

If we then ASK, according to John 14 and Luke 11, we will be ASKING according to His will, plan and purposes to and for His Glory. And then what we ASK will be to His Glory shall also be granted, for it will then be to glorify the Lord. But we make err if we think we can simply ask and demand from the Lord if we are strangers to Him, instead of serving Him as His obedient children who seeks His Kingdom above our own. So yes, let us ASK for we shall receive, IF our intentions and motivations are conformed to God’s Kingdom, His values and truth.

And yes, let us also ASK in faith and trust, but this is far removed from the modern day teachings of “name it and claim it” notion where we ASK and RECEIVE even if do not deny ourselves, if we seek Him not above all and if we simply seek our own glorification and exaltation.

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God cannot be fooled or mocked, and He knows who His true children are. He knows our motives and intentions, so let us earnestly seek His will.

When it comes to walking in God's will and seeking His will, we need to consider the life of Hezekiah. There are a number of lessons to be learned. In Isaiah 38 New King James Version (NKJV) we read how the king wept for God to extend his life as he faced imminent death due to a sickness. God granted his plea, extending his life by 15 years. This of course shows God's mercy and kindness, but was Hezekiah in God's perfect will to pray and ask for his life to be prolonged?

First, let us consider his life before his prayer was answered. In the first month of his reign, Hezekiah immediately got to work and smashed down all the pagan altars and wooden images throughout the hills of Judah. He thus sought after the Lord. He also began to clean out and repair the temple and restored temple worship. The temple had been neglected for many years to the point where the rooms were full of junk and rubbish, including idols in the sanctuary.

In 2 Kings 18:5-7 we are told, "He (Hezekiah) trusted in the Lord God of Israel, so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor who were before him. For he held fast to the Lord; he did not depart from following Him, but kept His commandments, which the Lord had commanded Moses. The Lord was with him; he prospered wherever he went"

Hezekiah thus was a man who truly sought God and His Will. But then came the sickness, and seeking God to be healed. Was Hezekiah seeking God's will or merely his own will? In 2 Kings 20:12-19 we see that Berodach-Baladan, son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah, and the Bible says that Hezekiah was responsive to this attention. So much so that Hezekiah welcomed him without regard to intent or purposes, and readily showed him everything he had in his treasury house, his entire armory, and all within his dominion. In fact, there was nothing that he did not show Berodach-Baladan.

We read in 2 Chronicles 32 of Hezekiah's wealth but also his pride. 27 Hezekiah had very great riches and honor. And he made himself treasuries for silver, for gold, for precious stones, for spices, for shields, and for all kinds of desirable items; 28 storehouses for the harvest of grain, wine, and oil; and stalls for all kinds of livestock, and folds for flocks. 29 Moreover he provided cities for himself, and possessions of flocks and herds in abundance; for God had given him very much property.

Remember the Babylonian envoy would not have visited Hezekiah if the king had remained ill and had abided in God's will. Instead, Hezekiah was recovering from his sickness and obviously it was not a wise thing to do to show the envoy all his riches. Hezekiah got caught up rather naively in thinking that the king of Babylon and his son meant well and wanted to bring gifts as part of genuine concern for his health and well-being, and to show kindness and peace.

It would appear that Hezekiah was caught in a weak moment of pride while abundance and peace prevailed. God allowed for Hezekiah to be tested so he would know exactly all that was in his heart. In 2 Chronicles 32:25-26 we are told that Hezekiah's heart was lifted up and that wrath was impending over him, Judah and Jerusalem. But "then Hezekiah humbled himself for the

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pride of his heart, he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the Lord did not come upon them in the days of Hezekiah.”

When Isaiah confronted Hezekiah by asking what the visitors had seen in his house, Hezekiah responded truthfully and told him that not one thing was held back from their sight. Isaiah then declared from the word of the Lord that everything Hezekiah and his fathers had accumulated until this time would be carried off to Babylon. Not only that, but some of Hezekiah’s sons would become eunuchs in the king of Babylon’s palace.

Hezekiah’s prayer for healing serves as a lesson that there are always consequences to each and every decision we make, especially if it is not at all times in the will of God. After all, Hezekiah wanted to live longer, and now was faced with such a prophecy of doom. Indeed God chose not to punish Hezekiah directly because of his repentant attitude, but the consequences would be put onto the forthcoming generations. And such consequences is most likely the result of Hezekiah not allowing God’s will for his life to take its course.

But this was not the only consequence of Hezekiah’s prolonged life. The last son to be born to him was Manasseh. This child was born during the king’s prolonged 15 years. The biblical account of Manasseh is found in 2 Kings 21:1–18 and 2 Chronicles 32:33–33:20. He is also mentioned in Jeremiah 15:4, where the prophet Jeremiah predicts "four forms of destruction" for the people of Judah because of the evil done by Manasseh in Judah. Manasseh re-instituted polytheistic worship and reversed the religious changes made by his father Hezekiah, for which he is condemned by several biblical texts.

After a reign of 55 years, the longest in the history of Judah, he died in c. 643 BC and was buried in the garden of Uzza, the "garden of his own house" (2 Kings 21:17–18; 2 Chronicles 33:20), and not in the City of David, among his ancestors. It was therefore a reign of more of five decades of wickedness, which all flowed directly from Hezekiah praying for God to grant him more years. So what would have happened if Hezekiah has succumbed to the illness, and Manasseh was not born? Makes you think and again realise there are consequences to our actions.

Hezekiah reminds us how in the post-modern world mankind still loves to be in control of his own destiny and fate, labouring daily to build his own empire or kingdom. We also pray and seek God for things, but many times it is not His will but our own will. We can only find our true purpose, peace, security, hope and future in the will of the Lord. No matter how intelligent, wise or clever we think we are we will cause greater wear and tear to our spirit, soul and body when we keep walking in our will and not the will of the Lord.

Now, consider the life of Paul and the lessons we can learn from God’s Will. Remember the apostle’s third missionary campaign ended in Jerusalem, as he, along with other brethren (cf. Acts 20:4), brought to the holy city a contribution for the poor of that region (cf. Acts 24:17). In Acts 20 we read what Paul says of this pending journey: 22 And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, 23 except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me. 24 But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

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So here Paul feels he is compelled to go to Jerusalem. Paul was of course not afraid to suffer for the Gospel, as we read in 2 Corinthians 11. But was it truly God's will for him to be imprisoned and to go to Jerusalem?

We read for example in Acts 21 New King James Version (NKJV): 21 Now it came to pass, that when we had departed from them and set sail, running a straight course we came to Cos, the following day to Rhodes, and from there to Patara. 2 And finding a ship sailing over to Phoenicia, we went aboard and set sail. 3 When we had sighted Cyprus, we passed it on the left, sailed to Syria, and landed at Tyre; for there the ship was to unload her cargo. 4 And finding disciples, we stayed there seven days. **They told Paul through the Spirit not to go up to Jerusalem.** 5 When we had come to the end of those days, we departed and went on our way; and they all accompanied us, with wives and children, till we were out of the city. And we knelt down on the shore and prayed. 6 When we had taken our leave of one another, we boarded the ship, and they returned home. 7 And when we had finished our voyage from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, greeted the brethren, and stayed with them one day. 8 On the next day we who were Paul's companions departed and came to Caesarea, and entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him. 9 Now this man had four virgin daughters who prophesied. 10 And as we stayed many days, a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. 11 When he had come to us, he took Paul's belt, bound his own hands and feet, and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit, 'So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'" 12 Now when we heard these things, both we and those from that place pleaded with him not to go up to Jerusalem. 13 Then Paul answered, "What do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." 14 So when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, **"The will of the Lord be done."**

So in Acts 20 we find that Paul felt he needed to go to Jerusalem, yet in Acts 21 he was warned not to go. So was Paul following his own will, and would his own will get him into trouble despite his good intentions? And because Paul still wanted to go to Jerusalem, we can clearly see the consequence was his imprisonment. Despite the prophet also telling Paul that he would be bound, Paul simply said he was ready to die for the Gospel. And so everybody present decided this is now the will of the Lord. But was it really? Was it God's intention for Paul to be imprisoned and suffer even more, or was Paul's good intentions serving his own will and agenda?

Remember, prisoners in the ancient world were rarely sent to prison as punishment. Rather, prisons typically served as holding cells for those awaiting trial or execution. We see this throughout Scripture. Mosaic Law made no provision for incarceration as a form of punishment. Joseph languished in an Egyptian prison for two years, presumably awaiting trial before Pharaoh on a charge of rape (Genesis 39:19–20; 41:1). Jeremiah was imprisoned under accusation of treason (Jeremiah 37:11–16) but was transferred to the temple guardhouse after an appeal to King Zedekiah, who sought to protect the prophet (37:17–21). And though Jeremiah was later thrown into a cistern, the purpose was to kill him, not imprison him (38:1–6). So Paul could have escaped lengthy imprisonment, but it seems he chose to put a chain of events into motion.

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Paul was of course first happily embraced by the brothers in Jerusalem, but they presented him with a problem. His reputation had preceded him. The report had spread abroad that the apostle was antagonistic to the Jewish system. In order to disarm a volatile situation, Paul agreed to submit to a ceremonial “cleansing” in the temple as was the custom for Jews who had traveled among the Gentile lands (Acts 21:26). This act of benevolence hardly appeased the Jews. Paul had already been seen in the city with Trophimus, a Gentile from Ephesus. So a rumor quickly spread that the apostle had taken Greeks into the temple and defiled it (Acts 21:28), which was a capital offense. Before long, the city was aflame with the lynch-mob mentality. Paul’s life was saved only when Roman officials intervened and removed him to safety.

Eventually, under heavy guard (Acts 23:23), the apostle was taken to Caesarea over on the coast, where he was confined in Herod’s palace. Over some period of time, Paul was subjected to a series of interrogations. Finally, after two years had elapsed and it appeared that “justice delayed is justice denied,” the noble preacher concluded that he would never receive a fair hearing under the present circumstances. And so, exercising his right as a Roman citizen, he appealed his case to Caesar (Acts 25:11-12). The harrowing voyage to Rome is graphically detailed by Luke in Acts 27:1-28:16. This is the most remarkable account of ancient sea navigation in the annals of history.

Thus, in summary, during Paul’s first imprisonment, he awaited trial before Roman governors Felix and Festus (Acts 24–26). He then was under house arrest in Rome for two years (28:30), awaiting an appearance before Nero. Scholars believe Paul was released sometime in AD 62 because the Jews who had accused him of being “a real pest and a fellow who stirs up dissension” (24:5) didn’t press their case before the emperor. However, during Paul’s second imprisonment in the Mamertine dungeon, he had apparently received a preliminary hearing and was awaiting a final trial (2 Timothy 4:16). He didn’t expect acquittal. Paul writes in “2 Timothy 4: 6 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.”

Despite ending up in prison in Rome for about three years, Paul had fought the good fight. He had endured on the course. Seven letters in the New Testament were credited to Paul on the assumption that he wrote them while a prisoner in Rome. These include 1 and 2 Timothy, Philippians, Philemon, Colossians and Ephesians.

As a prisoner himself, Paul reiterated the power of the Gospel in overcoming sociological barriers. He didn’t defend slavery, nor was he directly attacking it in either. Paul instead spoke to the power of forgiveness and the impact of grace, both of which had life-changing effects on society and the individual. Paul’s letter to Philemon demonstrated, as his Prison Epistles also confirmed, that a Christian’s place in the kingdom of God are not determined by their physical circumstances. In many of his letters, Paul often referred to himself as a “prisoner of Christ” (Ephesians 3:1, Philemon 1:1, 9), a position he willingly embraced. Even while imprisoned, Paul still carried the authority of Jesus Christ and ministered to those he was called to. Whether in

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person or via letter, Paul's ministry was purposeful and profound, and his writings are just an impactful and instructional for the global church today.

So while God used Paul still mightily to teach, to preach, to encourage and to edify, even in prison, was his final imprisonment truly God's will? Remember when Paul wrote his epistle to the Romans, he expressed hope that he would visit the church in that city as soon as arrangements could be made following his journey to the city of Jerusalem. The visit to Rome was delayed for about three years, but when he finally reached the city, he arrived as a prisoner awaiting trial before the court of the emperor. So yes, Paul really wanted to visit Rome, so did he by any chance choose to hasten his imprisonment or was it truly the will of the Lord?

This is why we need to listen so closely to God and what the will of the Lord is for our life. Many times our will may seem to be God's way, but maybe it is only our agenda and desires coming to the fore. At the end of the day, when we walk in the will of the Lord we walk in His footsteps and we therefore walk along a path made straight and the rough ways smooth. The Lord will go before those who follow His will and seek His glory. He knows what is best for us. He must be in control to keep us straight on our course through life. We, however, have to submit and come under His complete sovereignty and authority.

REMEMBER!!! NOT KNOWING and DOING the WILL of God - Mat 7.21 will land you in MAT 7.23; ETERNAL SEPARATION from God!!!

The enemy will never want you to come to the core KNOWLEDGE of the WILL of God.



## Abiding in His Commanded and Sovereign Will

Matthew 6: 9 Pray, therefore, like this: Our Father Who is in heaven, hallowed (kept holy) be Your name. 10 Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

This is a prayer that we have heard and said many times, but it remains an amazing fact that we have become casual and nonchalant when repeating these words, not grasping at all the true meaning of this prayer. Let us pause for a moment – because these days it seems that the Lord is asking us more and more to pause, reflect, consider and ponder deeply upon our walk with Him – what is Jesus really asking us to pray? He is not just giving us a simple form of a prayer to recite blindly and without any passion or love - He is asking us to pray the ultimate prayer of deceleration regarding our faith, our hope, our obedience, our willingness, our faithfulness, and our desire to serve Him.

Jesus is asking us to live a life where our relationship with Him and our relationship with each other reflect the state which exists right now in heaven. Are we grasping this? We are praying for His will to be done on earth as it is heaven, meaning that in heaven there is love, there is truth, there is holiness, there is honesty, there is fairness and there is unity among all. How the Lord is longing for His people to grasp the essential truth that He wants His will, settled in heaven, to be reflected in us and governing us.

And there is no greater testimony of our desire to follow Him as His children than by the prayer of asking the Lord that His will be done and not ours. And that “will” in the Greek language speaks of desire, purpose and intent. Therefore, Jesus instructs us to pray that the will of the heavenly Father - that same Sovereign Lord of Isaiah 61 – be done, and we are to seek, pursue and desire that God’s purpose, desire, intent and desire for us all in this world be done, and not our own.

Can we truly look in the mirror and can we truly look deep into our hearts and honestly say that we are seeking the will of the Lord? Are we truly living a life according to His will that reflects the glory of heaven and therefore His complete love? For it is all about the will of God. From the beginning to the end it has always been the will of the Lord. For this reason Revelations 1 reads: 8 “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.”

The will of the Lord – His intent, purpose and desire – existed at the beginning and will exist at the end, always pure, always true, always perfect, always real and never wavering. From the beginning until now and until forever it has always and will always and shall always be about God and about His will for our lives – we who are the master piece of His creation. And His will is so designed and so exists to prosper us, to protect us, to make us joyous and blessed.

And now we may ponder what the will of the Lord is. The long and the short of it is that for every individual the Lord has desired a certain path be walked – and that this journey becomes a journey of spiritual discovery and revelation as we seek Him, pursue Him and desire Him.

The long and the short of it in broad strokes is that the Lord has called us all to be set apart unto Him – set apart in His love, truth, holiness, purity, life and light. We have been called to love Him

and to love each other as He loves us. Above all, the will of the Lord is for us to walk in the realisation that we are born to be His sons and daughters, here on earth and for all eternity. It is only when we allow ourselves to follow His will – therefore seek His ways and purposes and delights above our own – that we truly learn to be children of the Most High.

It is only when we come to the realisation that it is all about God and that when we seek Him above all, as Jesus urged as to do in Matthew 6 that His perfect and complete and beautiful will for our lives will be consecrated to His glory and to our eternal profit.

So, let us then pause and consider that when we pray that His will be done, that we indeed allow God to guide and lead us as His children of light in a world of darkness to the honour and glory of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Let us truly seek for His will to be done in our lives to reflect His will and way, as it is in heaven.

Hebrews 5:8-10 (Amplified Bible): 8Although He was a Son, He learned [active, special] obedience through what He suffered. 9And, [His completed experience] making Him perfectly [equipped], He became the Author and Source of eternal salvation to all those who give heed and obey Him, 10Being designated and recognized and saluted by God as High Priest after the order (with the rank) of Melchizedek.

It is all about the will of God – His Sovereign and commanded Will. It is all about God. It is all about His desire, His purpose, His intent, His delight and His wish.

God is indeed the Alpha and the Omega – and to walk in the will of the Lord requires us to walk in fear and in the love of God. That is after all the will of God – to love Him and to love each other as we should. And as we have seen, we cannot do so unless we have learned to walk in the fear of God, to cultivate a holy consciousness and be aware of His holiness and His will.

In order to demonstrate God's will we cast our eyes towards the drama playing out in the desert through which Israel wandered for 40 years. The players are Moses, Aaron and the Israelites.

Before God had even set Israel free from the yoke of slavery, Moses had a very good understanding of the Sovereign Will of the Lord. The Will of the Lord was to lead the people out of slavery into the Promised Land, so that they make take hold of the land of Canaan and become a people set aside unto holiness and purity in the image of the Living God. Moses understood that by the covenant made with Abraham that the Lord's Sovereign Will was for God to set the people up in their own land and there be set apart to serve God. Moses began comprehending when He stood before the Burning Bush when the Lord said I Am who I Am, which simply implies that God's Sovereign Will shall be done in the end.

And so Moses watched as God raged against Egypt, even though what was happening to Egypt – the death and the plague and the famine – was against His nature, it still needed to occur in order for God's Sovereign Will for Israel to materialise. Moses watched as the Red Sea parted and he watched as the Lord turned bitter water into sweet and he watched as the Lord sent manna and quail to feed the people. All of this was done according to God's Sovereign Will for Israel, because He needed them to get to the Promised Land.

But now, something astonishing happens. Moses goes up Mount Sinai and received the 10 Commandments after 40 days of fasting. What happened? No longer did Moses understand

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God's Sovereign Will, he now understood God's Commanded Will, which meant adhering to God's laws and commandments when it came to living, behaving and acting for His glory in accordance to His glorious nature [we will shortly get to the teaching on Sovereign and Commanded Will].

No longer did Moses understand that it was the Lord's Sovereign Will for the people to be set apart in the Promised Land, but he now understood that the Lord's commanded will according to the 613 Laws, was to live a spiritual, practical and moral life of love, holiness and purity. And he now understood that God's Sovereign Will shall never be altered, but also that mankind would have the choice to follow God's commanded will or not.

And lo and behold, as Moses came down the mountain, he was faced with a rebellion (Exodus 32). Aaron had allowed the people to build a golden calf. Moses, who came down with the 10 Commandments that encapsulates the 613 Laws, came to show the people the commanded will of the Lord but instead found a people who were not walking in the will of the Lord by their idolatry and rebellion!

For their punishment there was death in the camp against those who stood not with Moses, and so again we see how God's Sovereign Will prevailed even though death and murder went against His Commanded Will. But His Sovereign Will needed to prevail for the Israelites were destined to be God's people from whom the Messiah would come and God would not allow a rebellious people, full of idolatry, to enter the Holy Land.

For many more years, we watch as Moses leads the people through the desert. We must remember that God's Sovereign and Commanded Will was engraved and engrained in Moses' spirit and soul – he knew exactly what God expected of them and where God was leading them to.

Moses was the vision carrier of God's Sovereign Will, but for 40 years the people simply kept on rebelling against God's Commanded Will by not obeying His Laws and Commandments, and so we read of an account of many deaths along the way, such as those found in Numbers 25 when 24 000 Israelites were slain by God's hand.

Again, these deaths went against God's Commanded Will, but it needed to be done to uphold His everlasting and real Sovereign Will.

Can we imagine what it must have been like for Moses? He was wandering the desert full of God's vision and with God's will engraved into His being, but he had to endure the same wandering with the other Israelites. How things would have been different if the people had only listened to Moses! They would have followed God's Commanded Will and would have walked far quicker into God's Sovereign Will. But it didn't happen that way because they refused to follow God's Commanded Will, even though it didn't change His Sovereign Will which is established and settled in heaven.

Why did God allow the wandering for 40 years? The answer is simple – even though the people understood it was God's Sovereign Will to lead them to the Promised Land, they had yet to learn to obey and be faithful out of love and not mere duty, to the Commanded and Blessed Will of the Lord. They knew the Sovereign Lord of the Will but they had not learned to walk in the

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Commanded Will of the Lord, which speaks of love, faith, holiness, purity and kindness (Galatians 5 – Fruits of the Spirit).

And so today, we too are a part of the plan, we who know the Sovereign Will of the Lord which speaks of all those who believe will know eternal life. We know it is God's Sovereign Will for those redeemed by the Blood to walk in His Image so that they may prosper and benefit in this life in spirit, soul and body. The problem however remains that we have forgotten what it means to walk in the Commanded Will of God, which means to uphold and adhere to His truths, to His ways, to His commandments and to all things sacred.

Let us then first pay close attention to the difference between the Sovereign and the Commanded Will of the Lord.

There are two clear and very different meanings for the term "will of God" in the Bible. In fact, knowing the difference between these two meanings of "the will of God" is crucial to understanding one of the biggest and most perplexing things in the entire Bible, namely, that God is sovereign over all things and yet disapproves of many things. That is, he forbids some of the things he brings about while he commands some of the things he hinders. Or to put it most paradoxically: God wills some events in one sense that he does not will in another sense.

In one case, there is God's Will of Decree, or Sovereign Will. One of the clearest illustrations of God's Sovereign Will is the way Jesus spoke of the will of God in Gethsemane when he was praying. He said, in Matthew 26:39, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will."

What does the will of God refer to in this verse? It refers to the sovereign plan of God that will happen in the coming hours. Acts 4:27-28 says this: "Truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place." So the "will of God" was that Jesus should die. This was his plan, his decree.

There was no changing it, and Jesus bowed and said, "Here's my request, but you choose which is best." That's the sovereign will of God.

And don't miss the very crucial point here that it includes the sins of man. Herod, Pilate, the soldiers, the Jewish leaders—they all sinned in fulfilling God's will, that his Son be crucified (Isaiah 53:10). So be very clear on this: God's will comes to pass, even though sometimes he hates what needs to be carried out.

Here's an example from 1 Peter where Peter writes, "It is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil." In other words, it may be God's will that Christians suffer for doing well. He has in mind persecution. But persecution of Christians, who do not deserve it, is sin. So again, God sometimes wills that events come about that include sin. "It is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will."

Paul gives a sweeping summary statement of this truth in Ephesians 1:11: "In him [Christ] we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who

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works all things according to the counsel of his will.” The will of God is God’s sovereign governance of all that comes to pass.

And there are many other passages in the Bible that teach that God’s providence over the universe extends to the smallest details of nature and human decisions. Not one sparrow falls to the ground apart from our Father in heaven (Matthew 10:29). “The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord” (Proverbs 16:33). “The plans of the heart belong to man, but the answer of the tongue is from the Lord” (Proverbs 16:1). “The king’s heart is a stream of water in the hand of the Lord; he turns it wherever he will” (Proverbs 21:1).

That’s the first meaning of the will of God: it is God’s sovereign control of all things. We will call this his “sovereign will” or his “will of decree.” It cannot be broken. It always comes to pass. “He does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, ‘What have you done?’” (Daniel 4:35).

And in Scripture and experience, the fear of God is also closely linked to the revelation of His sovereignty. Job 23:13-16 (NIV) "But he stands alone, and who can oppose him? He does whatever he pleases. He carries out his decree against me, and many such plans he still has in store. That is why I am terrified before him; when I think of all this, I fear him. God has made my heart faint; the Almighty has terrified me."

The second will is God’s will of Command. His will is what he commands us to do. This is the will of God we can disobey and fail to do. The will of decree we do whether we believe in it or not. The will of command we can fail to do. For example, Jesus said, “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 7:21). Not all do the will of his father. He says so. “Not everyone will enter the kingdom of heaven.” Why? Because not all people follow God’s will.

Paul says in 1 Thessalonians 4:3, “This is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality.” Here we have a very specific instance of what God commands of us: holiness, sanctification, sexual purity. This is his will of command. But, oh, so many do not obey.

Then Paul says in 1 Thessalonians 5:18, “Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” There again is a specific aspect of his will of command: give thanks in all circumstances. But many do not do this will of God.

One more example: “And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever” (1 John 2:17). Not all abide forever. Some do. Some don’t. The difference is that some do the will of God. Some don’t. The will of God, in this sense, does not always take place.

So we talk about God’s will of decree (or his sovereign will) and the other we can call God’s will of command. His will of decree always comes to pass whether we believe in it or not. His will of command can be broken, and is every day.

And corresponding to these two wills are the two things you need in this situation: one is a God who is strong and sovereign enough to turn it for good; and the other is a God who is able to empathize with you. On the one hand, Christ is a sovereign High King, and nothing happens apart from his will (Matthew 28:18). On the other hand, Christ is a merciful High Priest and

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sympathizes with our weaknesses and pain (Hebrews 4:15). The Holy Spirit conquers us and our sins when he wills (John 1:13; Romans 9:15-16), and allows himself to be quenched and grieved and angered when he wills (Ephesians 4:30; 1 Thessalonians 5:19). His sovereign will is invincible, and his will of command can be grievously broken.

We need both these truths—both these understandings of the will of God—not only to make sense out of the Bible, but to hold fast to God in suffering.

And this helps us to understand how the Lord works in our lives – He has a Sovereign plan and it will come to pass for His Will is Sovereign, but we have to realise that within the realm of the Sovereign Will we also have a free will to follow God's commanded will. And here we stumble and fall – and there are clear and certain repercussions when we fail to adhere to God's commanded will, for His commanded will protects us, prospers us, guides us and leads us to the health in spirit, soul and body.

So let us then understand the following – even though for the believer God's Sovereign Will is to bless and to prosper, there are spiritual and natural consequences when we fail to follow His will. This then causes us to encounter all kinds of pitfalls.

It, however, remains simple according to Deuteronomy 28 - if we choose to follow God and His commandments, therefore obeying His commanded will, then blessings will come upon us and overtake us. Yet, it also says that if we fail to obey His commanded will, and then a curse will come upon us and overtake us. It is not God's Sovereign Will to curse His creation, for that goes against His nature, but a curse does come upon us because of natural and spiritual laws that are at play.

The matter of God's Sovereign and Commanded Will is also demonstrated in Matthew 21:17-19 (New International Version): 17 And he left them and went out of the city to Bethany, where he spent the night. 18 Early in the morning, as Jesus was on his way back to the city, he was hungry. 19 Seeing a fig tree by the road, he went up to it but found nothing on it except leaves. Then he said to it, "May you never bear fruit again!" Immediately the tree withered. It is after not God's Sovereign Will to see His own creation cursed, just like He doesn't wish for a curse to come upon us, but in a sense the fig tree found itself overcome by a curse because it wasn't bearing any fruit. To bear fruit was after all the natural process of the fig tree, so when it failed to do so, it was in the process of functioning unnaturally, therefore against God's will, and so allowed for the curse to come upon it. Do we grasp this?

God's Sovereign Will is not for mankind to suffer because of plague, drought, famine and war – Four Horses of the Apocalypse – but the earth has come under such a curse because it had failed to heed God's commanded will and so have operated and function in accordance to unnatural principles and laws. This speaks of rebellion, idolatry and iniquity and so this has then caused God's truth to be exchanged for one's own truth (Romans 1).

In the story of Adam and Eve, they ate from a tree that was not according to God's will – they therefore acted according to their own will which was unnatural to the laws and the principles of God – and so they found themselves ashamed of their natural state of being. So, as soon as we walk out of God's Will and so function according to unnatural laws and principles, then the

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natural laws and principles abounding in God's Will became estranged to us and even unnatural. Are we grasping this? Whatever is therefore natural and pure becomes unnatural and impure if we exchange God's truth for our own and we walk according to the dominant will of the Self instead of God's will.

The story of the fig tree reminds one of John 15 (Amplified Bible): 1I AM the True Vine, and My Father is the Vinedresser. 2Any branch in Me that does not bear fruit [that stops bearing] He cuts away (trims off, takes away); and He cleanses and repeatedly prunes every branch that continues to bear fruit, to make it bear more and richer and more excellent fruit. 3You are cleansed and pruned already, because of the word which I have given you [the teachings I have discussed with you]. 4Dwell in Me, and I will dwell in you. [Live in Me, and I will live in you.] Just as no branch can bear fruit of itself without abiding in (being vitally united to) the vine, neither can you bear fruit unless you abide in Me.

Let us then understand that just as the fig tree was cursed, bearing no fruit, just so we stop bearing fruit when we fail to abide in Him. It is only when we dwell in Him that we follow His perfect and complete will, otherwise we find ourselves like the fig tree cut away and walking beyond the presence of God. How we need to abide in God and He in us so that we may be true vines that bear much fruit.

And so, John 15 speaks about those who abide not in His perfect will, therefore those who will function and operate unnaturally – for it is unnatural for the branch not to bear fruit. So when Jesus speaks about a branch not bearing fruit, He was alerting to the fact that such a state of existence was unnatural and not according to His laws and principles. It is unnatural for the branch not to bear fruit but it will be so if the branch is not rooted or grafted into the vine itself. Just so, we cannot function and operate spiritually and physically according to the natural laws and principals of God if we are not rooted in God.

If we fail to abide in Him and dwell in Him, then we are bound to be given over to the lusts and cravings of this world as mentioned in Romans 1 and 8, for the simple reason that as soon as one operates and adheres to and upholds unnatural principals and laws then truth becomes quickly obscured and one's spiritual complexion darkens.

It says in Romans 1: 23And by them the glory and majesty and excellence of the immortal God were exchanged for and represented by images, resembling mortal man and birds and beasts and reptiles. 24Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their [own] hearts to sexual impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves [abandoning them to the degrading power of sin], 25Because they exchanged the truth of God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, Who is blessed forever! Amen (so be it). 26For this reason God gave them over and abandoned them to vile affections and degrading passions. For their women exchanged their natural function for an unnatural and abnormal one, 27And the men also turned from natural relations with women and were set ablaze (burning out, consumed) with lust for one another--men committing shameful acts with men and suffering in their own bodies and personalities the inevitable consequences and penalty of their wrong-doing and going astray, which was [their] fitting retribution.

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Do we comprehend? It is because they exchanged God's truth for their own that God gave them over to vile affections and abnormal desires. The term "gave over" is the same concept of Deuteronomy 28 that speaks of a cursing coming upon and overtaking when not abiding in God's commanded will. Indeed, it is the natural outcome to walk unnaturally when we are not in God's will and so, we read according to chapter 27 how men also turned from natural relations with women and were set ablaze (burning out, consumed) with lust for one another.

It is very clear that such relations are seen to be unnatural, and it is unnatural because it is not God's commanded will or the truth of His laws or principals.

It says in 1 Corinthians 10:12-14: 12 So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! 13 No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

Again, we are reminded that a curse will also come upon us and overtake us, like temptation does, but only a temptation that is common, therefore, known by mankind. Paul is therefore saying here that we become the authors of our own downfall if we adhere to the temptations of the world that seek to lure us away from God's perfect will.

Take note of James 1:1-3: 2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. James is talking here about trials, because trials and not temptations come from the Lord for they do test our faith and obedience.

Such consequences can be seen in the days of Jeroboam when he built two golden calves. For it says in 1 Kings 12: 25 Then Jeroboam fortified Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim and lived there. From there he went out and built up Peniel. 26 Jeroboam thought to himself, "The kingdom will now likely revert to the house of David. 27 If these people go up to offer sacrifices at the temple of the LORD in Jerusalem, they will again give their allegiance to their lord, Rehoboam king of Judah. They will kill me and return to King Rehoboam." 28 After seeking advice, the king made two golden calves. He said to the people, "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt." 29 One he set up in Bethel, and the other in Dan. 30 And this thing became a sin; the people came to worship the one at Bethel and went as far as Dan to worship the other. 31 Jeroboam built shrines on high places and appointed priests from all sorts of people, even though they were not Levites. 32 He instituted a festival on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, like the festival held in Judah, and offered sacrifices on the altar. This he did in Bethel, sacrificing to the calves he had made. And at Bethel he also installed priests at the high places he had made. 33 On the fifteenth day of the eighth month, a month of his own choosing, he offered sacrifices on the altar he had built at Bethel. So he instituted the festival for the Israelites and went up to the altar to make offerings.

We have to remember that the idea of building a golden calf stemmed back to Exodus 32 when Aaron the high priest built a golden calf when Moses was up on the mountain. The people had disobeyed God's commanded will by committing idolatry. The repercussions were short term and also long term. On a short term level, many of those who had rebelled and were killed. On a long term level, this act contributed to Israel having to go through the desert for 40 years in



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order to learn God's commanded will. However, the even longer repercussions were found hundreds of years later when Jeroboam built two golden calves, using them to lure the people into following a pseudo religion, just as Aaron had tried to lure the people into a religion that smacked of idolatry.

1 Kings 12 reminds us that our disobedience can have devastating short term and long term consequences and repercussions. We can never take our disobedience for granted – there are spiritual and natural laws in place and we follow them when we follow God's will, but when we disobey them, we allow ourselves be cursed.

For example, it is not God's commanded will for men to have unnatural relations with another man, neither for a woman with a woman. It is unnatural because it goes against God's natural laws. The repercussions are sicknesses and diseases that poison and kill, such as Aids and HIV.

We cannot go against God's natural and spiritual laws, because they were birthed and created according to His will. We have been given a free will, but the consequences and repercussions of following our own free will and not according to God's will, is likened to being under a curse.

And indeed, Jesus died on the cross to take the curse of all things unnatural upon Himself, so that by the Covenant with God we follow His will that cleanses and purifies us.

God cannot and shall not be mocked and so we cannot say it is God's Sovereign Will that all people are loved and will be saved yet all the while His commanded will is disobeyed. God's Sovereign Will dictates a heart of faith and obedience that seeks to walk in His commanded will; otherwise we walk in rebellion, idolatry and iniquity.

We also see Jesus' resolute desire to keep walking in His Father's will, no matter what, in the story of the temptation: Matthew 4: 1THEN JESUS was led (guided) by the [Holy] Spirit into the wilderness (desert) to be tempted (tested and tried) by the devil. 2And He went without food for forty days and forty nights, and later He was hungry. 3And the tempter came and said to Him, If You are God's Son, command these stones to be made [loaves of] bread. 4But He replied, It has been written, Man shall not live and be upheld and sustained by bread alone, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God. 5Then the devil took Him into the holy city and placed Him on a turret (pinnacle, gable) of the temple sanctuary. 6And he said to Him, If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down; for it is written, He will give His angels charge over you, and they will bear you up on their hands, lest you strike your foot against a stone. 7Jesus said to him, On the other hand, it is written also, You shall not tempt, test thoroughly, or try exceedingly the Lord your God. 8Again, the devil took Him up on a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory (the splendor, magnificence, preeminence, and excellence) of them. 9And he said to Him, These things, all taken together, I will give You, if You will prostrate Yourself before me and do homage and worship me. 10Then Jesus said to him, Be gone, Satan! For it has been written, You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him alone shall you serve.

Jesus counters Satan's temptations by what is written and what is written is God's Will. It is God's will that we shall live by His Word, and not only by bread. It was also not God's will at the time to

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turn the stones into bread. How we need to know God so that we may know His perfect and complete will!

Is it therefore clear that there is one great task of the Christian life, which is to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. We need new hearts and new minds. Make the tree good and the fruit will be good (Matthew 12:33). That's the great challenge. That is what God calls us to do. We can't do it on our own. We need Christ, who died for our sins. And we need the Holy Spirit to lead us into Christ-exalting truth. This is illustrated by God's word in Ezekiel 18: 30 "Therefore, you Israelites, I will judge each of you according to your own ways, declares the Sovereign LORD. Repent! Turn away from all your offenses; then sin will not be your downfall. 31 Rid yourselves of all the offenses you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit. Why will you die, people of Israel? 32 For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Sovereign LORD. Repent and live!

Give yourself over to this. Immerse yourself in the written Word of God; saturate your mind with it. And pray that the Spirit of Christ would make you so new that the spill over would be good, acceptable, and perfect—the will of God.

## **A prophetic understanding: Let God's will as established be done in in your life**

The Lord's Prayer of Matthew 6 is well known, for we are taught to pray the following: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

There is something, however, very important to understand about praying God's will to be done as it is on earth as it is in heaven. At times we do not always understand the significance within a personal context. Prophetically, the following we need to understand and grasp: God's plan for our lives, which includes our calling, our mandate, the path we must travel and the purpose of such a path is already established and decreed and ordained in heaven.

Before we were even born, God had determined our path. And yes, we have free will, and yes we have choices, but God has a plan for us individually, and such plan and purpose connects with His Kingdom plan of bringing all to the throne room of grace. For this reason Jesus died on the cross so that all may be saved (John 3:16). Granted, we need to understand and grasp what is the Kingdom, and God's Sovereign and Commanded Will regarding His Kingdom as it relates to His Creation as defined in Scriptures, but we need to also know what is God's will for our lives, and how His plan and purpose is so ordained for us to be a blessing unto the Lord, unto the Kingdom and so many others in the natural who do not even know God.

The plan God has for us is the BEST plan. This is important to understand. His plan, His purpose and His path for us will deliver the greatest result of blessing, fruitfulness and wholeness to the glory of God and for our own lives. So we need to understand what God has declared and ordained over your life is ALREADY established in heaven. It is already safely manifested in the Kingdom. What needs to happen is that what has been ordained and declared for your life needs to become a reality and a manifestation in the natural.

God has already written the blueprint of our life. It is established in heaven. You have been created in a certain way, with a unique personality, character and set of skills, abilities and talents. You are uniquely made to serve God, His Kingdom and to fulfil the Great Commission. Yes, God wants us to be joyous, happy and contend, leading a life of abundant life and hope and love, but then we need to walk in His will, according to His path and plan. For He knows what is best for us, and thus a Spirit-filled life, full of purpose and of incredible meaning.

And so we pray, "Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven". So what are we praying? We are saying Lord, we are seeking Your Will, therefore Your will for my life that is already ESTABLISHED in heaven, and Lord, let Your will, Your plan and purpose for my life BE on earth as it is ALREADY in heaven.

In Revelations 21:2 it says "I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband". The New Jerusalem is already in heaven. It has already been prepared. It will not be created. It is already been established. At the right time it will be manifested, coming from heaven. This is also true with our ordained and declared purposed and plans. God has already prepared everything regarding our lives, it is just a matter of connecting and aligning ourselves with God's blueprint to walk in

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the blessed path of what He has declared and established in our lives. Thus, we pray God let Your will be done on earth (in my life) as it is in heaven. And yes, this is all part and parcel of God's masterplan, His blueprint for all Creation and His Kingdom as determined before the world was even made.

Are we grasping this? In heaven is the blueprint for your life which entails what God wants you to do, and the path your life will follow, but it needs to become a reality on earth as it is in heaven. And how does this happen? Simple. WE COME INTO ALIGNMENT WITH GOD'S WILL. But this is tricky, because we have a free will, and we can make our own choices, and man in general is stubborn, and full of pride. Our ego many times leads us away from God's path, as we fashion our own way and then we wonder why God's perfect plan is not working for our lives.

How many people these days do not rebel how God has made them? They rebel against their gender, against how they look, how they appear, and they rebel against God's plans and they rebel against His Kingdom. Such rebellion is the manifestation of pride and our arrogance coming to the fore. And rebellion is like the sin of witchcraft. Day and night across the globe millions of people refuse to connect and align with God's established plan and will for their lives, rather seeking a path of self-destruction as they rebel and they seek to carry their own crows while building empires and kingdoms of sand.

Israel often rebelled against God. Thus His perfect will. Yet God had a perfect established plan for Israel, as settled in heaven. When they connected with the purpose and plan, they were blessed. They just had to obey the Lord and submit. Yet so often they rebelled, and defied God. Yet, God's counsel prevailed, and so Jesus was born in the town of Bethlehem to be the Saviour of the world. God's plan and purpose of Israel is not yet done, as many perceive, for it is still established in heaven and shall be manifested and be revealed at the right time to the glory of God.

And let us understand the purpose of the Lord's Prayer is not about self-glorification or self-enlightenment, because this is the path of carnal man. Fallen man seeks to be puffed up and to become demi-gods of power. Yet the path of God is one of humility, of being a servant and of a disciple, always seeking the will and the way of Jesus. The path of God is for His glorification and the exaltation of the Kingdom, to the benefit of all and for the manifestation of those who are still lost.

So as we pray Lord let your Will be done on earth as it is in heaven, we are praying that whatever God has ordained shall be the reality of our life.

You see, our life is already determined in heaven, and God wants us to follow that path and purpose. The problem is coming into alignment with the will of God to follow such an ESTABLISHED plan and purpose. It requires submission, to yield and to bow the knee before the Lord.

It also requires walking in the wisdom of God. We need to therefore discern and to know God's will for our lives. It says in John 3 that we will "see" the Kingdom of God when we are reborn in the Spirit. To "see" is the manifestation of God's Kingdom, and such manifestation will also thus be seen in one's life. This means God's blueprint and purpose.

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Isaiah 11 speaks of the Spirit of wisdom, of knowledge, of power, of understanding, of counsel and might. When we therefore are led by the Spirit of God, we shall be led in wisdom, knowledge, counsel and understanding. For what purpose? In order to understand God's will, not just for nations or for His Kingdom corporately on earth, but for our lives and how our lives connect with the Kingdom. We need the Spirit of the Living God to guide and lead us in order to understand how to walk in the glory of God's purpose and God's established plan for our lives, so that we may be in fellowship with Him and so that only lives may also be a manifested glorification of the Kingdom.

In Deuteronomy 30 God declares the following: 11 "For this commandment which I command you today is not too mysterious for you, nor is it far off. 12 It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will ascend into heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' 13 Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' 14 But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it. 15 "See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil, 16 in that I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply; and the Lord your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess. 17 But if your heart turns away so that you do not hear, and are drawn away, and worship other gods and serve them, 18 I announce to you today that you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong your days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to go in and possess.

Let us understand, even today, we all have a choice – a choice of life or death. And such a choice entails either following God's blueprint for our lives which is already established in heaven, or we follow our own path. This is the choice between the narrow and the wide road. If we come into alignment with God's will, then we shall walk the path of God, which He has already ordained for us in heaven, and such a path is a path of life and goodness, and therefore the reality of the blessings of Deuteronomy 28.

Take note, the Lord told the Israelites that following God's will is not a great mystery, neither do they have to ascend to heaven to find it. This is also so true for us. Jesus died on the cross and ascended so that we abide in Him. It says in "John 15: 4 Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me." The veil has been torn in two. We have access to the throne room, and thus to walk by knowledge and understanding in God's plan for our lives.

A lot of esoteric teachings in the world today, including such teachings within the Christian faith, creates a mystery around access to divine knowledge and understanding. They claim only a few will find such knowledge. Yet Scriptures is clear the only mystery remained was the coming of Jesus as the Messiah, and once He died and ascended as the Son of God, there are no more mysteries. All is revealed and transparent. This includes God's will and plan for our lives, and God's general plan for His Kingdom. We must just connect to God through fellowship and by abiding in Him through the glorious indwelling presence of the Spirit.

Jesus now sits at the right hand of the Father, and as we abide in Jesus, whatever is ordained and declared for our lives is therefore not a mystery, or beyond our reach. We simply have to abide in

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Jesus, and we have to follow Him, yield and submit to His everlasting and perfect will. And this is the problem isn't it? We struggle to abide in the will of God to walk in the already established path of life as God has already proposed for us. We follow not His counsel, or His wisdom of His will, for still we seek our own path, our own wisdom and thus end of lost and confused.

It says in Revelations "13:8 All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world". This passage speaks of people worshipping the Beast of the Sea, yet it also speaks of those who have not worshipped the Lamb **THAT WAS SLAIN FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD.**

The crucifixion of Jesus and His ascension was not a plan B by God the Father. It was already ordained and declared even **BEFORE** the earth was formed! This was always God's intended masterplan. The devil just couldn't stop it, because it was established in heaven and thus the gates of hell cannot prevail against it.

So when Jesus came to earth, God the Father's plan, purpose and mandate for His only begotten Son, even though God Himself, was already established in heaven! And it was established even before the foundation of the world was settled. So Jesus as the Son of God walked in the perfect will of His Father, which is the perfect path as determined and declared before man breathed and lived.

It says in "Matthew 4:23 And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people." You see, Jesus preached the Gospel of the Kingdom, thus the already established blueprint of God's masterplan for His Creation and how such a Creation must reconnect and serve the Great I AM. Jesus only preached and taught Kingdom, for in the Kingdom is the Truth as established in the heavens and the Way of life determined and ordained.

So all that Jesus did was to walk in the will of the Father, thus walk in the already established plan and purpose as established in heaven. What He saw in heaven and what He knew as the Son of God, yet God Himself, He simply fulfilled on earth. He did so by obeying the will of the Father. Jesus followed the will of the Father and so **WHAT WAS ALREADY ESTABLISHED IN HEAVEN BECAME A REALITY ON EARTH.** All that Jesus saw in the Kingdom He did on the earth, because the Truth is in the Heavens and the blueprint for our lives is settled in the Kingdom.

In Matthew 26 we read of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane: 39 He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will." Jesus sought the will of the Father, and as He did so, He sought the perfect plan for His life on earth as it is already declared in heaven! Can we grasp this importance, even for our own lives?

Like Jesus, we must also seek the will of the Lord. We must pursue it, and once we know it, yield to it no matter the cost. Because in the will of God is life, and purpose, and the authority to fulfil our mandate on earth.

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Jesus taught the following in Matthew 6: 19 “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

The devil cannot destroy what it already established in heaven! Let us pause and consider this truth. The enemy cannot manipulate it, steal or, corrupt it, or trample upon it. It is already established in the Kingdom. He has no right to touch such treasures, for as Matthew 6 declared: “For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen”. Unto God belongs all the power. What God has ordained and declared shall be, it cannot be manipulated.

All that the devil can do is to try and keep us away from God’s blueprint. He constantly distracts us, and he keeps us busy with things of the world, and the things of religion, and of tradition. In the end, we hardly spent time with God in real fellowship, and we become so busy we fail to listen to the Holy Spirit. So the devil wants us to become DISCONNECTED WITH THE WILL OF GOD. This is important to understand. Before salvation, we are disconnected. Yet, sadly, so many believers once they find Jesus they are still not connected to God’s will or His purposes or plans because we still want to hold onto our crowns, and we still want to hold onto our kingdoms. It is time to be connected with what God has in store and to understand in the wisdom of the Spirit what God has called us to do and how to do it.

Matthew 6 is thus the declaration by Jesus that we must seek the will of the Father so that we can walk in the established plan and purpose of God in heaven, and that plan and purpose will never be destroyed, or be covered by rust. To be covered by rust speaks of a process of erosion and decay, yet what is already ESTABLISHED in the Kingdom cannot erode or decay! It is sealed by the Blood of the Lamb. The Blood never decays or fades away.

And so, as we continue to abide in Jesus, we then abide in the will of the Father, and we thus walk in the treasured purpose and plan that God has laid out for our lives as established in the Kingdom. And if that becomes our highest and greatest treasure, then indeed we live in the reality of Matthew 12:35 A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things.

Matthew 6: 33 also declares: “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you”. All these things speaks about all that we need to be sustained, to be fruitful, to be productive and to be blessed and to be a blessing to the glory of God as taught by Jesus in the same chapter.

Yet, in order for us to walk in such life, purpose and blessing, we need to walk in the established plan and purpose for God in our lives. And therefore, it says FIRST SEEK HIS KINGDOM AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS, which takes us back to the Lord’s Prayer of seeking the Lord’s will to be done on earth as it is in heaven! Thus, seek God’s plan for your life as it is established in the Kingdom.

Therefore, as we seek His will, thus His Kingdom, then His plan and purpose for our lives as it is already in heaven will be a reality here on earth. Glory to God. And such a plan and purpose is

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one of goodness. Therefore the reality of Romans 8:28: And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

Consider also how in Isaiah 53 it speaks of Jesus and how He was wounded for our transgressions, and how He was bruised for our iniquities, and how the chastisement for our peace was upon Him and how by His stripes we are healed. And considering Jesus now is at the right hand of the Father (Acts 7:55-56, Romans 8:34, Ephesians 1:20) then all that was fulfilled on earth, therefore our healing, our deliverance and our salvation was a mere manifestation of what was already declared in heaven.

In heaven, thus the Kingdom, is our healing, our deliverance and salvation. When Jesus died on the cross and rose from the grave then we find all that was in heaven became a reality on earth! So when we walk in the will of God, and when we obey and first seek His Kingdom – therefore a life of relationship in Spirit and truth – we walk in the reality of heaven that became a reality of earth by the New Covenant.

And such reality is that healing and salvation and our redemption was always in heaven, we just needed to be reconnected to it by the Blood of the slain Lamb. Therefore, we ARE healed and we ARE saved and REDEEMED when we continue to abide in the Lamb that walked in the will of the Father. And because He stayed true to the will of the Father and thus the established blueprint for His life on earth, the blessed reality in heaven of healing, and redemption and salvation became a blessed reality in the lives of all believers.



## God's Way, God's Will and God's Path: A lesson from Israel's history

Jesus said He is the Way, the Truth and the Life. This is something that we have read many times, and many times it has been preached. Yet, do we understand that when Jesus says He is the Way that it means that we need to follow His Way, meaning His path, all the time? It means following His Will. It means abiding, and resting in His Glory.

It says in Psalm 37:23: "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way." David, whom God called "a man after mine own heart" (I Samuel 13:14, Acts 13:22), had seen God's direction in his life. The Scripture in Psalm 37 shows that God has given directions as to the way his people should walk in this world. God's Word is our road map for the Christian life. Everything God wants us to know is found within its covers. Every situation you can think of God has given direction as to how we should respond and deal with them.

Consider Psalm 119 which says: "Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path." A lamp only provides light a couple of meters ahead of you as you walk in the dark. This is similar to our walk with God – we must trust God's plan, will and path as He leads us even though we cannot see the entire picture or landscape ahead of us. We need to be led step by step, for he will keep us from stumbling if we continue to yield, submit and obey His will and way. It says in "2 Timothy 2:15: Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth". So if we will follow the Scriptures we will then allow God to order our steps, and this is the testimony of a "good man."

Matthew 16:24 shows us the path to delighting God: "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." To deny ourselves is to yield our will and our dreams to Christ. Taking up our cross is to not just say that we are Christians but to show it by gladly assuming the shame and reproach of that cross. When we do this we will follow Christ's example. We will truly be a Christian meaning Christ-like. This is what God delights in. Today many of us walk in pride. This is listed in Proverbs 6:16-19 with six other things that God hates. Let those of us that truly know Jesus Christ as our Saviour hang that pride on the cross, yield ourselves to his directions and follow Him!

It says in "Exodus 13:21: By day the LORD went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night." Apart from providing them with light, ultimately what God was doing was to order their footsteps! By sending them a pillar of cloud and fire, God was making sure they stayed on the right path and they followed where God led them. He was thus governing their very footsteps – step by step. And still today this is how God wants to lead us – step by step all the way to His Glory!

More than ever we need to allow God to order our way and path, thus how we live, what we do daily, where we even go daily so that we are in step with God's will. Galatians 5: 16 says: "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17 For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. 18 But if you are led

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by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Indeed, we need to follow the Spirit to keep to the path of the Lord and abide in His will.”

Indeed, we can truly only know the way of the Lord and walk in such ways by the Spirit of God. Take a look at Acts 16 which says: “6 Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia. 7 After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them.” Forbidden or permitted are strong commands, but Acts 16 demonstrates how sensitive we must be to the guidance of the Spirit. You see, the Spirit didn’t give them His opinion or advice, it was a command. Just so, we need to be completely and utterly led by the Spirit in order to remain in step with God and to remain in His will.

Also consider Israel’s sojourning. If we study the first three chapters of Deuteronomy, it may seem like a long account of Israel’s travels. But it reminds us of the importance of following God’s way, which can only be done when we obey and yield. Moses spoke to the people after their 40 year journey, thus reflecting on their disobedience for not following God’s way. Remember, the journey from Horeb by the way of mount Seir unto Kadeshbarnea was only 11 days, yet because they did not trust in God’s way they had to endure 40 years.

We read in chapter 1: 19 “So we departed from Horeb, and went through all that great and terrible wilderness which you saw on the way to the mountains of the Amorites, as the Lord our God had commanded us. Then we came to Kadesh Barnea. 20 And I said to you, ‘You have come to the mountains of the Amorites, which the Lord our God is giving us. 21 Look, the Lord your God has set the land before you; go up and possess it, as the Lord God of your fathers has spoken to you; do not fear or be discouraged.’ 22 “And every one of you came near to me and said, ‘Let us send men before us, and let them search out the land for us, and bring back word to us of the way by which we should go up, and of the cities into which we shall come.’ 23 “The plan pleased me well; so I took twelve of your men, one man from each tribe. 24 And they departed and went up into the mountains, and came to the Valley of Eshcol, and spied it out. 25 They also took some of the fruit of the land in their hands and brought it down to us; and they brought back word to us, saying, ‘It is a good land which the Lord our God is giving us.’ 26 “Nevertheless you would not go up, but rebelled against the command of the Lord your God; 27 and you complained in your tents, and said, ‘Because the Lord hates us, He has brought us out of the land of Egypt to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us. 28 Where can we go up? Our brethren have discouraged our hearts, saying, “The people are greater and taller than we; the cities are great and fortified up to heaven; moreover we have seen the sons of the Anakim there.”’ 29 “Then I said to you, ‘Do not be terrified, or afraid of them. 30 The Lord your God, who goes before you, He will fight for you, according to all He did for you in Egypt before your eyes, 31 and in the wilderness where you saw how the Lord your God carried you, as a man carries his son, in all the way that you went until you came to this place.’ 32 Yet, for all that, you did not believe the Lord your God, 33 who went in the way before you to search out a place for you to pitch your tents, to show you the way you should go, in the fire by night and in the cloud by day.”

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We read specifically how the Lord led them “in all the way”. Yes, they were led by God, and God governed and ordered their steps to the Promised Land. And then? They failed to continue pursuing God’s will. Suddenly, after being led by the Lord out of Egypt and through the Red sea, they simply could not continue following in God’s way. God’s will for them was to continue in His way, but they rebelled against His Will. God after all reminded that He will fight for them and therefore they do not need to be afraid. Indeed, God will fight for us and we do not need to be afraid to follow God’s will. We must simply trust, believe and have faith in an Almighty God. In His will there is peace, hope, strength, joy and hope for He is in control.

And then we read about the penalty for Israel’s Rebellion: 34 “And the Lord heard the sound of your words, and was angry, and took an oath, saying, 35 ‘Surely not one of these men of this evil generation shall see that good land of which I swore to give to your fathers, 36 except Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to him and his children I am giving the land on which he walked, because he wholly followed the Lord.’ 37 The Lord was also angry with me for your sakes, saying, ‘Even you shall not go in there. 38 Joshua the son of Nun, who stands before you, he shall go in there. Encourage him, for he shall cause Israel to inherit it. 39 ‘Moreover your little ones and your children, who you say will be victims, who today have no knowledge of good and evil, they shall go in there; to them I will give it, and they shall possess it.”

We then read: 40 But as for you, turn and take your journey into the wilderness by the Way of the Red Sea.’ 41 “Then you answered and said to me, ‘We have sinned against the Lord; we will go up and fight, just as the Lord our God commanded us.’ And when everyone of you had girded on his weapons of war, you were ready to go up into the mountain. 42 “And the Lord said to me, ‘Tell them, “Do not go up nor fight, for I am not among you; lest you be defeated before your enemies.” ’ 43 So I spoke to you; yet you would not listen, but rebelled against the command of the Lord, and presumptuously went up into the mountain. 44 And the Amorites who dwelt in that mountain came out against you and chased you as bees do, and drove you back from Seir to Hormah. 45 Then you returned and wept before the Lord, but the Lord would not listen to your voice nor give ear to you. 46 “So you remained in Kadesh many days, according to the days that you spent there.

Again, from verse 40 we read how the Israelites were told not go up the mountains, for that was not the way of the Lord. Did they obey His will? No. They again rebelled. Yes, for their rebellion for not following God’s ways and His will, they were left defeated and weeping before God! There are consequences to our rebellion. If we resist God’s will, and we follow our own agenda and path, then we do walk in His peace, victory and glory. The devil wants us to follow our own will, and to go astray. He wants us to listen to our other voices of influence, instead of trusting primarily upon God’s guidance. For God knows what is best for us, and in that we need to trust and have faith.

Take a look at Deuteronomy 2 New King James Version (NKJV): The Desert Years: 2 “Then we turned and journeyed into the wilderness of the Way of the Red Sea, as the Lord spoke to me, and we skirted Mount Seir for many days. 2 “And the Lord spoke to me, saying: 3 ‘You have skirted this mountain long enough; turn northward. 4 And command the people, saying, “You are about to pass through the territory of your brethren, the descendants of Esau, who live in

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Seir; and they will be afraid of you. Therefore watch yourselves carefully. 5 Do not meddle with them, for I will not give you any of their land, no, not so much as one footstep, because I have given Mount Seir to Esau as a possession. 6 You shall buy food from them with money, that you may eat; and you shall also buy water from them with money, that you may drink. 7 “For the Lord your God has blessed you in all the work of your hand. He knows your trudging through this great wilderness. These forty years the Lord your God has been with you; you have lacked nothing.” 8 “And when we passed beyond our brethren, the descendants of Esau who dwell in Seir, away from the road of the plain, away from Elath and Ezion Geber, we turned and passed by way of the Wilderness of Moab. 9 Then the Lord said to me, ‘Do not harass Moab, nor contend with them in battle, for I will not give you any of their land as a possession, because I have given Ar to the descendants of Lot as a possession.’” 10 (The Emim had dwelt there in times past, a people as great and numerous and tall as the Anakim. 11 They were also regarded as giants, like the Anakim, but the Moabites call them Emim. 12 The Horites formerly dwelt in Seir, but the descendants of Esau dispossessed them and destroyed them from before them, and dwelt in their place, just as Israel did to the land of their possession which the Lord gave them.) 13 “ ‘Now rise and cross over the Valley of the Zered.’ So we crossed over the Valley of the Zered. 14 And the time we took to come from Kadesh Barnea until we crossed over the Valley of the Zered was thirty-eight years, until all the generation of the men of war was consumed from the midst of the camp, just as the Lord had sworn to them. 15 For indeed the hand of the Lord was against them, to destroy them from the midst of the camp until they were consumed. 16 “So it was, when all the men of war had finally perished from among the people, 17 that the Lord spoke to me, saying: 18 “This day you are to cross over at Ar, the boundary of Moab. 19 And when you come near the people of Ammon, do not harass them or meddle with them, for I will not give you any of the land of the people of Ammon as a possession, because I have given it to the descendants of Lot as a possession.’” 20 (That was also regarded as a land of [h]giants; giants formerly dwelt there. But the Ammonites call them Zamzummim, 21 a people as great and numerous and tall as the Anakim. But the Lord destroyed them before them, and they dispossessed them and dwelt in their place, 22 just as He had done for the descendants of Esau, who dwelt in Seir, when He destroyed the Horites from before them. They dispossessed them and dwelt in their place, even to this day. 23 And the Avim, who dwelt in villages as far as Gaza—the Caphtorim, who came from Caphtor, destroyed them and dwelt in their place.) 24 “ ‘Rise, take your journey, and cross over the River Arnon. Look, I have given into your hand Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his land. Begin to possess it, and engage him in battle. 25 This day I will begin to put the dread and fear of you upon the nations under the whole heaven, who shall hear the report of you, and shall tremble and be in anguish because of you.’

This entire chapter details the sojourning of Israel for more than three decades. While this serves as a historical account of their journey to the Promised Land, ultimately it is a demonstration of how God should order our steps. Constantly throughout their journey the Lord spoke to Moses where to go, what to do and how to do it. God was constantly leading and guiding according to His Will. Indeed, this sojourning of Israel should be a reflection of our spiritual journey, where we are constantly guided by the Lord’s will, so that He governs our every step along the way.

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This theme of guidance and Moses following God's will continues in the same chapter with the story of King Sihon's defeat: 26 "And I sent messengers from the Wilderness of Kedemoth to Sihon king of Heshbon, with words of peace, saying, 27 'Let me pass through your land; I will keep strictly to the road, and I will turn neither to the right nor to the left. 28 You shall sell me food for money, that I may eat, and give me water for money, that I may drink; only let me pass through on foot, 29 just as the descendants of Esau who dwell in Seir and the Moabites who dwell in Ar did for me, until I cross the Jordan to the land which the Lord our God is giving us.' 30 "But Sihon king of Heshbon would not let us pass through, for the Lord your God hardened his spirit and made his heart obstinate, that He might deliver him into your hand, as it is this day. 31 "And the Lord said to me, 'See, I have begun to give Sihon and his land over to you. Begin to possess it, that you may inherit his land.' 32 Then Sihon and all his people came out against us to fight at Jahaz. 33 And the Lord our God delivered him over to us; so we defeated him, his sons, and all his people. 34 We took all his cities at that time, and we utterly destroyed the men, women, and little ones of every city; we left none remaining. 35 We took only the livestock as plunder for ourselves, with the spoil of the cities which we took. 36 From Aroer, which is on the bank of the River Arnon, and from the city that is in the ravine, as far as Gilead, there was not one city too strong for us; the Lord our God delivered all to us. 37 Only you did not go near the land of the people of Ammon—anywhere along the River Jabbok, or to the cities of the mountains, or wherever the Lord our God had forbidden us."

Again, Moses provided great detail regarding their adventures, but it is done with a purpose. For God's will is detailed, and we must follow His will in detail and be obedient to His will completely and utterly. We must therefore be very sensitive to His will, and make sure that we listen, discern and obey all the time. With Israel, God constantly kept them moving, and there were constant instructions. Moses had to listen to God ALL THE TIME so that he and the people remained in God's will, for if they did so, they would prosper.

Take note of Moses also spoke of what "God had forbidden" in verse 37, because ultimately we do not follow God's will because it an option or it is something pleasing to do, but because it should be a commanded order. Thus if we fail to follow God and we follow our own path and our own will beyond His approval, then such a path you most likely will find is forbidden. And forbidden is a strong word meaning that is something is banned from being done. Yet daily so many believers follow their own will, thus they engage in ways and paths that are actually banned and forbidden to tread and wander. Any wonder why we constantly get into trouble, as we suffer 'defeat' in life? Yes, we need to listen to God and only be led by the Lord and nothing else, for it is the path which is not forbidden, thus a path of blessing and life.

Moses for example continued to provide further details in Deuteronomy 3 regarding the defeat of King Og: 3 "Then we turned and went up the road to Bashan; and Og king of Bashan came out against us, he and all his people, to battle at Edrei. 2 And the Lord said to me, 'Do not fear him, for I have delivered him and all his people and his land into your hand; you shall do to him as you did to Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt at Heshbon.' 3 "So the Lord our God also delivered into our hands Og king of Bashan, with all his people, and we [a]ttacked him until he had no survivors remaining. 4 And we took all his cities at that time; there was not a city which we did not take from them: sixty cities, all the region of Argob, the kingdom of Og in Bashan. 5

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All these cities were fortified with high walls, gates, and bars, besides a great many rural towns. 6 And we utterly destroyed them, as we did to Sihon king of Heshbon, utterly destroying the men, women, and children of every city. 7 But all the livestock and the spoil of the cities we took as booty for ourselves. 8 “And at that time we took the land from the hand of the two kings of the Amorites who were on this side of the Jordan, from the River Arnon to Mount Hermon 9 (the Sidonians call Hermon Sirion, and the Amorites call it Senir), 10 all the cities of the plain, all Gilead, and all Bashan, as far as Salcah and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan.

You will often find in this accounts words like “we turned” and “went” because they were guided and led not by their own will but by the hand of God. This must be the same for our lives. We must allow God to guide and move us, so that we turn when He says turn or go when He says go or we must rest when He commands. How sensitive are we then to God’s guidance and His will?

Remember the story of Moses and the rock? It says in Numbers 20: 2 Now there was no water for the community, and the people gathered in opposition to Moses and Aaron. 3 They quarreled with Moses and said, “If only we had died when our brothers fell dead before the Lord! 4 Why did you bring the Lord’s community into this wilderness, that we and our livestock should die here? 5 Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to this terrible place? It has no grain or figs, grapevines or pomegranates. And there is no water to drink!” 6 Moses and Aaron went from the assembly to the entrance to the tent of meeting and fell facedown, and the glory of the Lord appeared to them. 7 The Lord said to Moses, 8 “Take the staff, and you and your brother Aaron gather the assembly together. Speak to that rock before their eyes and it will pour out its water. You will bring water out of the rock for the community so they and their livestock can drink.” 9 So Moses took the staff from the Lord’s presence, just as he commanded him. 10 He and Aaron gathered the assembly together in front of the rock and Moses said to them, “Listen, you rebels, must we bring you water out of this rock?” 11 Then Moses raised his arm and struck the rock twice with his staff. Water gushed out, and the community and their livestock drank. 12 But the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, “Because you did not trust in me enough to honor me as holy in the sight of the Israelites, you will not bring this community into the land I give them.”

In Deuteronomy 3 we read of the consequences of Moses’ failure to trust in God, and thus to abide and obey God’s will: 23 “Then I pleaded with the Lord at that time, saying: 24 ‘O Lord God, You have begun to show Your servant Your greatness and Your mighty hand, for what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do anything like Your works and Your mighty deeds? 25 I pray, let me cross over and see the good land beyond the Jordan, those pleasant mountains, and Lebanon.’ 26 “But the Lord was angry with me on your account, and would not listen to me. So the Lord said to me: ‘Enough of that! Speak no more to Me of this matter. 27 Go up to the top of Pisgah, and lift your eyes toward the west, the north, the south, and the east; behold it with your eyes, for you shall not cross over this Jordan. 28 But command[f] Joshua, and encourage him and strengthen him; for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which you will see.’

Striking the rock twice may seem like such a trivial matter, but there are consequences to our disobedience. When we disobey God’s will, we are rebellious, and we then only land in hot water. Simply put, if we do what we please and according to our own will, we step away from God’s

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plan for our lives, and we step into unknown territory of potential dangers and pitfalls. Moses' disobedience reminds us that we need to remain so sensitive to God and His will. For in His will is our life, hope and the way of peace.

In Deuteronomy 8, Moses speaks of remembering God at all times: 1 "Every commandment which I command you today you must be careful to observe, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land of which the Lord swore to your fathers. 2 And you shall remember that the Lord your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not."

Yes, we must always remember the Lord, and how He leads us according to His will. God has a plan and purpose for our lives, but we need to yield and submit unto Him. We love to be in control, and we love to follow our own desires and needs, but we need to allow God to govern our steps and we need to allow God to guide us constantly, day and night. And in all things, no matter what we do and where the Lord guides, we must honour Him, thus give Him praise and worship. So trust in God, for then we remain in His pure and perfect will.

## In Alignment with His Will

Wheel alignment is important to the health of your car or truck. If you for example hit a massive pothole, you might bump your suspension out of the carefully calculated locations that the components have been set.

All of the elements that make your car go straight are called alignment. The inclusive term "wheel alignment" involves three main measurements of caster, camber, and toe. If your vehicle's alignment is out, you will cause gradually wear and tear to the tyres and the suspension.

If we similarly are out of alignment with the will of the Lord then we will also over time begin to suffer wear and tear to our three main measurements, which is our spiritual man, our soul and physical body.

For those who have driven a vehicle with an alignment that is out will know that as time passes, due to the wear on the tyres, the vehicle will veer more and more either to the left or right. We will then fail to stay on course.

It is the same concept of an airplane that takes off and sets a certain path. But if the calculations of its flight plan are only slightly out, the plane will find itself hundreds of miles off course as it travels further. This is because "small miscalculation" in time become far more severe in error.

There are many things in life that acts as potholes that causes our alignment to go out of measurement, and so in time we will find ourselves drifting further and further away from the will of the Lord, from His voice, from His presence, His light and truth.

And it doesn't take a lot for us to get out of the will of the Lord. We can for example choose to lead a lifestyle where we know we are entertaining "small miscalculations" when it comes to living a holy and pure life, but very soon we may be finding ourselves terribly lost and far from our destination.

In the post-modern world mankind loves to be in control of his own destiny and fate, labouring daily to build his own empire or kingdom. But sadly as man keeps to his own will, he will gather treasures that rust. We can only find our true purpose, peace, security, hope and future in the will of the Lord. And so Jesus called us to seek first the Kingdom of God and then all things will be added.

No matter how intelligent, wise or clever we think we are we will cause greater wear and tear to our spirit, soul and body when we keep walking in our will and not the will of the Lord.

Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane in His time of anguish cried "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."

We are called to follow Jesus, for we are His disciples, so we too must in all things seek the will of the Lord above our will.

Luke 3 (New International Version) 4As is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet: "A voice of one calling in the desert, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him. 5Every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill made low. The crooked roads shall become straight, the rough ways smooth. 6And all mankind will see God's salvation.



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Indeed, when we walk in the will of the Lord we walk in His footsteps and we therefore walk along a path made straight and the rough ways smooth. The Lord will go before those who follow His will and seek His glory. He knows what is best for us. He must be in control to keep us straight on our course through life. We however have to submit and come under His complete sovereignty and authority.

Jason Upton, the prophetic singer, sang in his song Will of the Lord the following: "I'm tired of living in this world of sin. And the world may think I'm crazy when I don't run with them But it's just plain idolatry, when God can't have all of me. I want to live for the will of God Oh Lord; I want to follow with all of my mind, all my heart and all my soul I want to follow you Oh Lord."

Lord, may we follow hard after You and may we endeavour, desire, seek and yearn to stay in Your will. Lord, bring us into alignment, correct our miscalculations, and bring us back on the right course and path as we bring our spirit, soul and body under Your full and complete authority. Let not our will be done but let Your will be done, for so Jesus has taught us to pray. Amen.

## Persisting in God's Will

Isaiah 3: 10 tell the righteous it will be well with them, for they will enjoy the fruit of their deeds.

Have we however considered that the truest and noblest ambition that we should be seeking is for our actions, deeds and nature to bring greater glory and honour to the Lord? Have we considered that the greatest change that we should be making is to become more like Jesus in character and nature? Let us continue to seek to draw closer to God, as we with persistence and perseverance resolve to bring glory to our Lord in all that we do and say throughout the day, be it at work or at home. This is His will – for us to persevere in drawing closer unto Him.

To persevere means to adhere to a course of action, a belief, or a purpose with steadfastness. Persistence is refusing to give up or let go - to endure. We need to therefore endure on the course of action of living a life that brings glory to God. We must endure in our faith and we must endure in our purpose to be the light and the salt of the world.

2 Peter 1: 5 For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; 6 and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; 7 and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. 8 For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us persist in doing good, let us persist in walking in love, let us persist in being in nature kind, gentle, caring, forgiving and let us keep on seeking to uplift, encourage and to edify. Let us resolve to walk in goodness, in His knowledge, in godliness and in hope. It says in James 5:11 that those who persevered are blessed for truly the testing of our faith develops perseverance. Let us therefore endeavour to be true ambassadors of God on earth and let us persevere in doing well and being a light shining brightly. Let us rather be the solution than the problem. And indeed, we can persist and we can persevere for the Lord is with us and He smiles upon those who seek Him and who shares His love with this world.

Let us then take a moment and consider that the greatest change we can make is in choosing to actively seek Him, His will, His glory and His majesty. For then we shall be carried in His arms, and when the storms rage we can take shelter under His shadow and when the mountain quake, then we shall not fear. Let us trust and have faith in God for He is and will forever be in control. Let us be still and know He is God and the righteous shall prosper.

## Life in Walking in our Mandate

We all know the well-known Scripture of Romans 12: 4 For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, 5 so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. 6 We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your[a] faith; 7 if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; 8 if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

It is so easy these days to be something different than what one truly am or to be someone different. This is the same problem in churches. Believers want to preach like someone else, or they want to teach like someone else, or they want to move in gifts they see in other people, or they want to copy the ministry of someone else or they want to sound like someone else when ministering and so the list of mimicking goes on.

If one adopts this kind of mind-set then you heading for great disaster. We need to understand God has called each and every believer for a specific purpose, to function according to specific gifts, while functioning in a specific office according to an ordained mandate. All of this will be to enhance and build the Kingdom of God on earth. God is a God of order and He has placed within a believer order to fulfil a mandate.

Here what the Lord is saying today: stop trying to be like others and be true unto the Lord and be true unto yourself. Only then will we begin to truly move in God's life and power! Here is a newsflash - when we want to be like someone else, it means that person has become an idol or worship. We then engage in witchcraft for idolatry is rebellion against God. We cannot want to be like someone else - we need to only be like God!

God has ordained us to fulfill a certain task according to our natural gifts and abilities coupled with our spiritual gifts that flow hand in hand with our personality and design. Yet we keep on abandoning who we are because we have this impression it is not good enough so let us rather be someone else. We also at times think our ministry is not good enough, or we allow our pride and ego dictate our path and purpose. Instead, just be humble, seek the Lord and obey Him and not your own carnal nature or the fallen world!

Again, the Lord tells us to stop thinking like we need to be someone else - we need to renew our mind and we need to find out WHO WE ARE (INDIVIDUALLY) IN THE LORD.

It is just amazing how people keep jumping from one ship to the next when it comes to ministering. One of the greatest deceptions is to believe there are "seasons" of movements of a certain office, such as the season of prophecy. When such a supposed season arrives, everyone wants to prophesy! All the offices and gifts function in fullness in believers - you will only find seasons within an individual as the Lord works.

Because of this strange desire to be someone else, you find the Church is in a mess because there are people proclaiming to be prophets but they are not, there are pastors who have been called not into that office, you find apostles who have been called for something else and you find people trying to even mimic or fake spiritual gifts!

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You cannot be a missionary until God has really sent you, and neither can you be a wandering evangelist unless it has been birthed in you. The Church is out of order because we have defied God's path for us as we have chosen a different path.

The devil constantly tries to get people to become distracted and to abandon their true path as God has ordained. He knows that when someone finds their true path and purpose in God they are then functioning in the will of God and when that happens then you find the manifestation of God's Glory!

So often people are led astray through false prophecies, false confirmations, false notions and they are driven astray by their own ideas, imagination, needs, desires and also by the pressure of the world.

You see, God has given us a mandate (each believer) to fulfill and such a mandate is our mission - our purpose. Such a mission works towards fulfilling the Great Commission has set out by Jesus. God gives us the ability both natural and spiritual to fulfill that mission. If we remain true to our mission and our mandate, then nothing can stop it from coming to pass! It is like being given a stamp of approval from the King of kings to fulfill your mandate no matter what man or hells says or does to stop you! The mandate carries the highest authority and approval. It carries life!

Yet as the Lord once showed, many believers carry with them numerous scrolls (mandates) because they are very confused to what they are called to do, what their mission is or how to fulfill it. So we find a church globally with people running around not sticking to their ordained mandate, therefore trying to fulfill missions and purposes that do not carry God's approval! No wonder believers are burning out, or becoming discouraged or succumbing to the enemy's trick or going astray! They are not true to their true mission!

A perfect example is Moses and Joshua. For 40 years Joshua watched how Moses operated. He watched Moses use a staff and he watched how Moses talked to God and with the people. Joshua could have easily tried to mimic the prophet when Moses died. But he did not. He did not pick up the staff but he picked up the sword. He was a different man to Moses. He had a different calling and a different mission. He was to lead the people into the Promised Land through warfare. If he tried to be like Moses he would have failed.

Or what about David when he faced Goliath? He could have tried to be like Saul and tackle the giant with human armour and strength. Yet he would have failed. Instead he dropped the armour and did what came naturally - he picked up a slingshot and defeated Goliath.

Stay true to yourself! It is time for believers to really come to the Lord and ask the Lord if they are doing what they are called to do. Only we operate according to our mandate shall we walk in His Life and Glory!

## Abiding in God's Will to Walk in Life

There is a shocking revelation for the end of time days regarding the spiritual apostasy of the Church, as described in 2 Timothy 3. Alas, we often read of this "prophecy" as one that is only pertinent towards a lawless and disordered world, instead of the church itself.

The shocking reality is that 2 Timothy 3 speaks not of the condition of the world but of the prevailing lawlessness, rebellion and iniquity of the Church. Let us keep in mind the epistle to Timothy was written by Paul to address believers. This epistle outlines and highlights what it means to be a believer, how to behave and how to be one approved in action and word and deed.

Before warning Timothy of the end-times in the Church, he says the following in Timothy 1:13 Hold fast and follow the pattern of wholesome and sound teaching which you have heard from me, in [all] the faith and love which are [for us] in Christ Jesus. 14 Guard and keep [with the greatest care] the precious and excellently adapted [Truth] which has been entrusted [to you], by the [help of the] Holy Spirit Who makes His home in us.

Against this backdrop Paul writes: 2 Timothy 3 (Amplified Bible): But understand this, that in the last days will come (set in) perilous times of great stress and trouble [hard to deal with and hard to bear]. 2 For people will be lovers of self and [utterly] self-centered, lovers of money and aroused by an inordinate [greedy] desire for wealth, proud and arrogant and contemptuous boasters. They will be abusive (blasphemous, scoffing), disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy and profane. 3 [They will be] without natural [human] affection (callous and inhuman), relentless (admitting of no truce or appeasement); [they will be] slanderers (false accusers, troublemakers), intemperate and loose in morals and conduct, uncontrolled and fierce, haters of good. 4 [They will be] treacherous [betrayers], rash, [and] inflated with self-conceit. [They will be] lovers of sensual pleasures and vain amusements more than and rather than lovers of God. 5 For [although] they hold a form of piety (true religion), they deny and reject and are strangers to the power of it [their conduct belies the genuineness of their profession]. Avoid [all] such people [turn away from them]. 6 For among them are those who worm their way into homes and captivate silly and weak-natured and spiritually dwarfed women, loaded down with [the burden of their] sins [and easily] swayed and led away by various evil desires and seductive impulses. 7 [These weak women will listen to anybody who will teach them]; they are forever inquiring and getting information, but are never able to arrive at a recognition and knowledge of the Truth. 8 Now just as Jannes and Jambres were hostile to and resisted Moses, so these men also are hostile to and oppose the Truth. They have depraved and distorted minds, and are reprobate and counterfeit and to be rejected as far as the faith is concerned. 9 But they will not get very far, for their rash folly will become obvious to everybody, as was that of those [magicians mentioned].

Note, it says in verse five: 5 For [although] they hold a form of piety (true religion), they deny and reject and are strangers to the power of it [their conduct belies the genuineness of their profession]

Are we grasping what Paul is saying? Paul says that in the last days those who are lovers of self, self-centred, lovers of money and aroused by an inordinate [greedy] desire for wealth are those

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who are the ones who will appear godly and religious yet their actions belie their faith and the reality of their spiritual condition.

Let us pause and consider this seriously and truthfully ... against the backdrop of reminding Timothy what a true and real Christian is, Paul warns the young servant of the Lord about the flip side of the coin – ergo, those Christians who are merely follow a religion. And Paul warns that those who follow a religion – seemingly so pious instead of a true faith - are those in the last days who will drift to the Self and away from God. They will therefore become more Self-conscious than God conscious.

Paul speaks about a distortion of the truth in verse eight: Now just as Jannes and Jambres were hostile to and resisted Moses, so these men also are hostile to and oppose the Truth. They have depraved and distorted minds, and are reprobate and counterfeit and to be rejected as far as the faith is concerned. When we are not walking 100 per cent in God's will then we are walking in rebellion. And indeed, religion gives birth to rebellion, for religion dictates the will of man and not the will of God.

Paul also warned about such distortion of the truth in Romans 1: 21 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles. 24 Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. 25 They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen. 26 Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. 27 In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their error.

Indeed, in the last days more people will exchange God's truths and laws for their own, opening up the doorway for impurity, lawlessness, immorality and depravity. Thus death.

He mentions such a corrupt and unlawful situation in 1 Corinthians 5 (from verse 11): But now I have written to you not to associate intimately, if any man called a brother and is either a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one not to eat. For what is it to me to also judge those who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside? But God judges those who are outside. Therefore put out from you the evil one. And also in Titus 1: 10 For there are many rebellious people, full of meaningless talk and deception, especially those of the circumcision group. 11 They must be silenced, because they are disrupting whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach—and that for the sake of dishonest gain. 12 One of Crete's own prophets has said it: "Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons." 13 This saying is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, so that they will be sound in the faith 14 and will pay no attention to Jewish myths or to the merely human commands of those who reject the truth. 15 To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are

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corrupted. 16 They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good.

A deception and an apostasy are reflected in the writings of Jude. 5 Though you already know all this, I want to remind you that the Lord] at one time delivered his people out of Egypt, but later destroyed those who did not believe. 6 And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their proper dwelling—these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day. 7 In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire. 8 In the very same way, on the strength of their dreams these ungodly people pollute their own bodies, reject authority and heap abuse on celestial beings. 9 But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not himself dare to condemn him for slander but said, “The Lord rebuke you!” 10 Yet these people slander whatever they do not understand, and the very things they do understand by instinct—as irrational animals do—will destroy them. 11 Woe to them! They have taken the way of Cain; they have rushed for profit into Balaam’s error; they have been destroyed in Korah’s rebellion. 12 These people are blemishes at your love feasts, eating with you without the slightest qualm—shepherds who feed only themselves. They are clouds without rain, blown along by the wind; autumn trees, without fruit and uprooted—twice dead. 13 They are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame; wandering stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever.

How shocking and what a sobering truth is the reality painted by Paul regarding the end of days. Indeed, we will find those who have stayed true to God as workman approved, therefore those who are reborn in the Spirit, but we will also find those who have fallen into the traps of religion and the philosophy of the faith, therefore those who are not reborn.

And those who are ultimately not reborn yet are only a Christian in name denies the power of the faith and the reality of having an intimate relationship with God.

And it is those people – those who are religious and pious as “believers” – who end up being lovers of themselves and who show signs of pride, arrogance, boasting, abusiveness, disobedience and who will walk in profanity. They will be slanderers, uncontrolled and fierce.

Indeed, they will be lovers of sensual pleasures and vain amusements more than and rather than lovers of God. That is the reality and truth of those who are not reborn in Spirit but only follow the philosophy or the religion of Christianity.

Paul wasn’t speaking about the world to Timothy; he was speaking about what will happen within the Church! He was speaking about “believers” who are merely going through the routine of being a Christian, thereby following a religion. How shocking and how true!

Shall we forget the words of Jesus in Luke 13: 24 Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. 25 When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are: 26 Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast

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taught in our streets. 27But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.

Jesus was addressing those who were in His presence and who taught the Gospel, therefore they were believers! Jesus reminds us that it is one thing to be a true follower, as punned by Paul in his letter to Timothy, while it is another thing to be merely following a religion. Romans 1 makes it clear that those who follow a religion follow the Self and so exchange God's truth for their own, allowing for spiritual apostasy as described in 2 Timothy 3.

Importantly, let us look at a famous Scripture in John 8: 31So Jesus said to those Jews who had believed in Him, If you abide in My word [hold fast to My teachings and live in accordance with them], you are truly My disciples. 32And you will know the Truth, and the Truth will set you free.

Take note, it is alluded here that it not per se the truth that sets us free. After all, someone who smokes excessively, and also an alcoholic and a drug user, will be very mindful of the truth – and such truth is that substance abuse leads to death and destruction. But the truth has not set them free. This Scripture is therefore many times quoted incorrectly. What sets us free is abiding in truth, which means a persistent, forceful, determined, calculated and unwavering commitment to heed the truth, to abide by it, to walk in it and to uphold it. For when we walk according to God's truth, then only will we truly be set free. And such a deliverance does not necessarily manifest because of some supernatural power, but is it simply because we will be doing the right thing according to God's laws and principles, and many times doing the right thing has practical implications upon us physically and in the soul.

So therefore if someone will stop smoking, stop drinking, stop sleeping around, stop using drugs, stop eating unhealthy, then in the short and long run they will become healthier and be delivered from the destructive nature of abuse and exploitation.

It says in Ephesians 3: 14For this reason [seeing the greatness of this plan by which you are built together in Christ], I bow my knees before the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15For Whom every family in heaven and on earth is named [that Father from Whom all fatherhood takes its title and derives its name]. 16May He grant you out of the rich treasury of His glory to be strengthened and reinforced with mighty power in the inner man by the [Holy] Spirit [Himself indwelling your innermost being and personality].17May Christ through your faith [actually] dwell (settle down, abide, make His permanent home) in your hearts! May you be rooted deep in love and founded securely on love, 18That you may have the power and be strong to apprehend and grasp with all the saints [God's devoted people, the experience of that love] what is the breadth and length and height and depth [of it]; 19[That you may really come] to know [practically, through experience for yourselves] the love of Christ, which far surpasses mere knowledge [without experience]; that you may be filled [through all your being] unto all the fullness of God [may have the richest measure of the divine Presence, and become a body wholly filled and flooded with God Himself]!

The prayer of Paul is for a spiritual awareness and awakening to the need of the Bride to truly dwell and abide in God so that God will abide in us. And by that indwelling, we are founded securely on love, and we are strengthened by the inner working of the Spirit who sanctifies us by all truth (John 16). It is all about abiding ... we need to abide in God and therefore in the Spirit



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and therefore in truth lest we fall into spiritual corruption, for it is in the state of abiding and indwelling where we walk according to God's Commanded and Sovereign Will. And such a walk becomes possible because the Spirit of Power and Might (Isaiah 11) is at work within us, giving us the fortitude and boldness and strength and power to walk in truth, to follow the light, to make the right decisions, to have the wisdom required and to be discerning of all the traps and deceptions and pitfalls as posted by Satan.

How we need to indwell and abide in God, so that the power and might of the Spirit can work within, so that truly we will walk in the revelation and living might of the Word – for only when we walk in such a manner will the Word produce what it has promised! Ah, and such might and power strengthens us in the times of trials and tribulations and when we are faced with the dictates of the flesh and the desires of the world.

The letters to the seven churches in Revelations also highlights spiritual adultery, immorality, idolatry and sexual impurity within the Church. And so it is written in Revelation 3:15 (Amplified Bible): 15I know your [record of] works and what you are doing; you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were cold or hot! To follow a religion, or the Self or the philosophy of the religion leads not to a passion for God but leads to a self-righteous and self-centered state of existence, and such an existence caused Jesus to show away the “believers” for they were workers of iniquity.

2 Thessalonians 2 speaks of the days of iniquity and the falling away from the truth – and this is happening more and more within the Church! 7For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: 9Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, 10And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: 12That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Do we understand the implications of Paul's words? In the last days, which is surely now, there will be such a state of existence among “believers”, which speaks of a prevailing state of religion in the Church rather than a true state of faith. It says in Matthew 7: 15Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. 16Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? 17Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. 18A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. 19Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. 20Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. 21Not 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.

Indeed, in the last days, we will know the workman approved by God by their fruits, which are the fruits of the Spirit as mentioned in Galatians 5, while those who have drifted away from God, even though professing to be Christians are those whose fruits will reveal their true colours.

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And this is exactly what Paul was referring to in 2 Timothy 3. He was showing Timothy that in the last days that there will be “believers” who follow a religion but by their fruit of the Self and of want and need and greed will show who they truly are. Paul however writes to Timothy to show him what a true workman of the Lord looks like: 2 Timothy 3:15 Study and be eager and do your utmost to present yourself to God approved (tested by trial), a workman who has no cause to be ashamed, correctly analyzing and accurately dividing [rightly handling and skillfully teaching] the Word of Truth. 16 But avoid all empty (vain, useless, idle) talk, for it will lead people into more and more ungodliness. 17 And their teaching [will devour; it] will eat its way like cancer or spread like gangrene. So it is with Hymenaeus and Philetus, 18 Who have missed the mark and swerved from the truth by arguing that the resurrection has already taken place. They are undermining the faith of some. 19 But the firm foundation of (laid by) God stands, sure and unshaken, bearing this seal (inscription): The Lord knows those who are His, and, Let everyone who names [himself by] the name of the Lord gives up all iniquity and stands aloof from it. 20 But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also [utensils] of wood and earthenware, and some for honorable and noble [use] and some for menial and ignoble [use]. 21 So whoever cleanses himself [from what is ignoble and unclean, who separates himself from contact with contaminating and corrupting influences] will [then himself] be a vessel set apart and useful for honorable and noble purposes, consecrated and profitable to the Master, fit and ready for any good work. 22 Shun youthful lusts and flee from them, and aim at and pursue righteousness (all that is virtuous and good, right living, conformity to the will of God in thought, word, and deed); [and aim at and pursue] faith, love, [and] peace (harmony and concord with others) in fellowship with all [Christians], who call upon the Lord out of a pure heart. 23 But refuse (shut your mind against, have nothing to do with) trifling (ill-informed, unedifying, stupid) controversies over ignorant questionings, for you know that they foster strife and breed quarrels. 24 And the servant of the Lord must not be quarrelsome (fighting and contending). Instead, he must be kindly to everyone and mild-tempered [preserving the bond of peace]; he must be a skilled and suitable teacher, patient and forbearing and willing to suffer wrong. 25 He must correct his opponents with courtesy and gentleness, in the hope that God may grant that they will repent and come to know the Truth [that they will perceive and recognize and become accurately acquainted with and acknowledge it], 26 And that they may come to their senses [and] escape out of the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him, [henceforth] to do His [God's] will.

Let us again look at the parable of the weeds as found in Matthew 13: 24 Jesus told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. 25 But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. 26 When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared. 27 “The owner’s servants came to him and said, ‘Sir, didn’t you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?’ 28 “An enemy did this,’ he replied. “The servants asked him, ‘Do you want us to go and pull them up?’ 29 “No,’ he answered, ‘because while you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. 30 Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.’”

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Jesus in this parable was referring to a weed called a "darnel", which looks exactly like wheat in its young stages and, in fact, only the expert can distinguish some species of this darnel from true wheat. Later on, the differences are remarkable. The darnel has far smaller seeds than wheat, and it is claimed that these seeds, when ground to flour, are poisonous, due perhaps to a particular fungus which develops in the seed itself.

We therefore can't be so gullible to presume that all the members of the "church" are children of God; nor even presume that all the members of particular churches in the New Testament were all children of God.

It is to be understood by the parable of the wheat and the weed that it is not so easy to identify or distinguish between children of God and children of the devil when they are still in infancy. Jesus is discouraging people from inferring that if one is a member of church then such a person must be a child of God. Nor can you simply go back and infer from a single event, of "praying to receive Christ" or getting baptized, must mean that the person is a child of God.

Thus, it becomes easier to distinguish a true believer when they grow to maturity and produce fruits. Paul writes: "Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you-- unless, of course, you fail the test?" 2 Corinthians 13:5

And how do you test yourself? By examining the outworking of your faith. 1 John 3:9-10: "No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God. This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother."

Indeed, though the distinctions may be subtle at one stage, they will be clear in the judgment. A weed may be growing next to a stalk of wheat and think it has a common destiny with the wheat. But its end is destruction. The weed is also harmful to the wheat, its roots trying to starve the wheat from its source. False brethren can even become institutional leaders and bring much harm to the maturity of the believers. In his final farewell, Paul speaks to the elders of the church at Ephesus. Acts 20:29-30: "I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them."

When we therefore look closely at the writings of Paul to Timothy, he was advocating the maturity of Christians – those who are growing up in Christ, therefore those who are not following a religion and staying immature in their faith.

In Ephesians 4 we read: 10 He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) 11 So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, 12 to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. 14 Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. 15 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the

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mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. 16 From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Paul was referring here to mature believers, who will not be deceived by all kinds of wrong teachings. It is so easy today for us to be deceived by false teachings, which is bred by the spirit of religion.

Paul also continues in his writings in Ephesians 4, like he did with Timothy, to explain what a true believer looks like and behaves: 17 So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. 18 They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. 19 Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed. 20 That, however, is not the way of life you learned 21 when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. 22 You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; 23 to be made new in the attitude of your minds; 24 and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. 25 Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. 26 "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, 27 and do not give the devil a foothold. 28 Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need. 29 Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. 32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

So, after Paul warns Timothy of the reality of a falling way in the Church, he reminds him of the following: 2 Timothy 3: 13But wicked men and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and leading astray others and being deceived and led astray themselves. 14But as for you, continue to hold to the things that you have learned and of which you are convinced, knowing from whom you learned [them], 15And how from your childhood you have had a knowledge of and been acquainted with the sacred Writings, which are able to instruct you and give you the understanding for salvation which comes through faith in Christ Jesus [through the leaning of the entire human personality on God in Christ Jesus in absolute trust and confidence in His power, wisdom, and goodness]. 16Every Scripture is God-breathed (given by His inspiration) and profitable for instruction, for reproof and conviction of sin, for correction of error and discipline in obedience, [and] for training in righteousness (in holy living, in conformity to God's will in thought, purpose, and action), 17So that the man of God may be complete and proficient, well fitted and thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Paul therefore acted a true watchman and a teacher. He warned Timothy of impostors that will come, of a state of religion that will prevail, of those who live for the Self and not God and he

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also showed Timothy what it means to be a true workman approved by the Lord. Paul however continues to admonish Timothy to live for truth in the Spirit:

2 Timothy 4 (Amplified Bible): 1 I charge [you] in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, Who is to judge the living and the dead, and by (in the light of) His coming and His kingdom: 2 Herald and preach the Word! Keep your sense of urgency [stand by, be at hand and ready], whether the opportunity seems to be favorable or unfavorable. [Whether it is convenient or inconvenient, whether it is welcome or unwelcome, you as preacher of the Word are to show people in what way their lives are wrong.] And convince them, rebuking and correcting, warning and urging and encouraging them, being unflagging and inexhaustible in patience and teaching. 3 For the time is coming when [people] will not tolerate (endure) sound and wholesome instruction, but, having ears itching [for something pleasing and gratifying], they will gather to themselves one teacher after another to a considerable number, chosen to satisfy their own liking and to foster the errors they hold, 4 And will turn aside from hearing the truth and wander off into myths and man-made fictions. 5 As for you, be calm and cool and steady, accept and suffer unflinchingly every hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fully perform all the duties of your ministry.

And what is the result for those who are impostors and who pretend to follow God but only follow a religion or the Self, therefore denying the power of the reality of the faith? It says in 2 Timothy 3: 13 But wicked men and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and leading astray others and being deceived and led astray themselves.

Do we comprehend? Those who follow and pursue not the completeness and fullness of God, therefore allowing rebellion or iniquity in any form in their life, open themselves to a state of being deceived, going from deception to deception, thus death unto death!

Compare this to 2 Corinthians 3: 18 And all of us, as with unveiled face, [because we] continued to behold [in the Word of God] as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are constantly being transfigured into His very own image in ever increasing splendor and from one degree of glory to another; [for this comes] from the Lord [Who is] the Spirit.

Indeed, a true Christian grows from glory to glory (life to life), and not from deception to deception! Titus 1: 15 To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted. 16 They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good.

Why do we think we struggle so to do what the Lord has called us to do by healing the sick and delivering the tormented and preaching the Word? The answer partly lies in 1 Corinthians 2 (Amplified Bible): 1 AS FOR myself, brethren, when I came to you, I did not come proclaiming to you the testimony and evidence or mystery and secret of God [concerning what He has done through Christ for the salvation of men] in lofty words of eloquence or human philosophy and wisdom; 2 For I resolved to know nothing (to be acquainted with nothing, to make a display of the knowledge of nothing, and to be conscious of nothing) among you except Jesus Christ (the Messiah) and Him crucified. 3 And I was in (passed into a state of) weakness and fear (dread) and great trembling [after I had come] among you. 4 And my language and my message were not set

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forth in persuasive (enticing and plausible) words of wisdom, but they were in demonstration of the [Holy] Spirit and power [a proof by the Spirit and power of God, operating on me and stirring in the minds of my hearers the most holy emotions and thus persuading them], <sup>5</sup>So that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men (human philosophy), but in the power of God. <sup>6</sup>Yet when we are among the full-grown (spiritually mature Christians who are ripe in understanding), we do impart a [higher] wisdom (the knowledge of the divine plan previously hidden); but it is indeed not a wisdom of this present age or of this world nor of the leaders and rulers of this age, who are being brought to nothing and are doomed to pass away.

2 Timothy 3 (NIV) speaks of a having a form of godliness but denying its power. Paul wrote in his epistles to the church in Corinth that he came to do the Lord's work in the power of the Spirit and not in the power of religion! How then can we do the Lord's work – His supernatural and glorious work on earth – if we walk not in such power which comes by the Spirit?

1 Corinthians 4: For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power. What do you desire? Shall I come to you with a rod, or in love and the spirit of meekness?

But we will not walk in such power when we walk not in the Spirit, which happens when we follow our Truth and not God's Truth. For the Spirit is the one who sanctifies us by Truth and leads us in all truth to His glory and for ministry. So when we exchange His truth for our own, how then can we submit to the Spirit and how then can we walk in His power?

For this reason Paul alluded to the fact that there will be those who appear righteous and holy, but they will not walk in His power for they walk not in the Spirit! And as written in John 3, we are to be reborn in Spirit if we want to see the Kingdom of God. Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again." <sup>4</sup> "How can someone be born when they are old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother's womb to be born!" <sup>5</sup> Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. <sup>6</sup> Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. <sup>7</sup> You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' <sup>8</sup> The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."

We then discern that those who fail to walk in His power are those not reborn, which brings us back to the original argument of Paul that in the end of days some people will be true believers – ergo those who are reborn in Spirit and walk in truth - and those who are not reborn and who walk in religion.

And it is such people who are not reborn who fall prey to the lusts and temptations of the devil and the world, all to their own detriment and to their faith. And so the words of Paul also rings loud and clear about those who are therefore not walking in the Spirit and Truth when he says "have nothing to do with such people".

Indeed, those words of Paul should make us sit up and ponder and mediate in the Spirit ... for we are called to move away from those who certainly persist in their religion instead of making a full term commitment to the Lord.

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It is they after all who will continue to walk in rebellion until the cravings of the world envelops them as believers.

A believer who truly walks in iniquity and rebellion, therefore walking in his own truths and ways, can very easily cause another Christian to stumble and to fall.

Indeed, let us remain mindful and be wary that we play with spiritual fire when we mock God by not walking in His complete Truth, Will and Order.

For only then shall we walk in life, and not death.

## **Rest in God to draw strength and wisdom to follow His Will**

In this world of so much noise, more than ever we need to listen more and talk less. And this applies especially with our walk with God. We need to listen more to God, for it says in Psalm 46:10 that we must be still and know that He is God. He is the beginning and the end, and in Him lies all the answers, and our hope.

In the stillness, and not in the noise, we find our peace and our strength as we listen, as we abide and we rest in His almighty presence. So often we have forgotten what it means to rest. To rest speaks of resting from your own efforts, and seeking to pursue your own path and your own will. To rest and to abide speaks of placing your life in the hands of the Lord, and to allow God to move you, to guide and to lead you. Yet so often we would rather toil, instead of bowing the knee and trusting.

To abide and to rest in His Almighty Presence is like a leaf on the water. The leaf never resists where the water goes – it simply follows where the water leads. And just so we must be in the presence of God, allowing the Holy Spirit to lead. We must not resist the Lord, or His will, or His commands or His Truth, but we must be like that leaf that simply goes and follows. This is the prophetic imagery as presented to Ezekiel in chapter 1.

Ezekiel saw an image of the living creatures and the wheel. And so we read: 19 When the living creatures moved, the wheels beside them moved; and when the living creatures rose from the ground, the wheels also rose. 20 Wherever the spirit would go, they would go, and the wheels would rise along with them, because the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels. 21 When the creatures moved, they also moved; when the creatures stood still, they also stood still; and when the creatures rose from the ground, the wheels rose along with them, because the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels.

And so we must be, as we abide and rest in God. We go when the Commander of Heaven speaks. We move when the Spirit moves. After all, we are not here to follow the commands of man, or to follow the agendas, programmes or the will of man. We rest not in the efforts of man, or in our own efforts. We go and we follow, for this is the way of the disciple. And such a disciple abides, rests, and obeys the will of the Lord.

In our resting and abiding in the Lord, we consider the importance of Lord's Prayer. For as we pray the Lord's Prayer, we seek the will of the Lord, we seek His Kingdom, we seek His way, and we seek His Presence. Nothing more and nothing less, for as we abide and rest in His Glory, we then seek His Kingdom according to Matthew 6.

And so, in this world of so much chaos, anarchy, rebellion, and strife, it is important more than ever for the believer to know the will of God. For God's plan for the Church, and for our lives, individually, rests in heaven. And we must always seek to know such a will, and we must seek to follow it, and we must seek to rest and abide in His ways and truth.

And so, in the silence we know He is God, and as we come to the Lord, let us then listen, and let us rest in Him. And as we tabernacle with the Great I Am, in fellowship sealed with the Blood of the Lamb, as disciples we need to learn to pray for discernment and to know the will of the Lord.



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For it is all about His will perfect will – the commanded and sovereign blessing. For then we stay true to His path and the Kingdom.

For if you know and follow the perfect and complete will of the Lord, you shall find your rest, your joy, and your peace. Yet, this calls for us to abide, to rest in Him and to listen. And as we abide, we know He is God. And so, when it comes to the will of God, which is the crux of the Lord's Prayer, as disciples we need to therefore learn to seek wisdom how to walk in the will of the Lord. For to know the will of the Lord is one thing, but we require His guidance, knowledge and understanding how to follow His path, and to stay true unto God.

Therefore, as disciples, we need to also learn to seek strength to do the will of the Lord. For often what God calls us to do will not be easy, and it might confront our comfort zone, or it might challenge our own will and the path we seek to walk.

So often we speak of the power of the Holy Spirit to minister and to be witnesses unto the ends of the earth, but just as important is the inner power of the Lord to overcome, to persevere, to stand our ground, to keep following the right path and to love. For it is not easy to be a disciple, and it is not easy to seek the narrow road, and so in our quiet time with the Lord we need to listen, and we need to draw strength from the Father to know His will and to follow.

In speaks of Isaiah 11 of the Spirit of the Lord being the Spirit of wisdom, guidance, discernment, counsel, understanding and might. It also speaks of the fear of the Lord. You see, we need to yield and submit to the Holy Spirit, all throughout the day, always united and always submitting, for then we shall be led by the Spirit so that in the counsel, understanding, wisdom and might of God we shall know the will of the Lord. For the Spirit of the Lord is not just there to empower us to do, but also to empower us to obey, and to know and to follow. And more than ever in such times of darkness, we need to know the will of God, and how to walk in it, and how to understanding His will and how to yield. For the Holy Spirit comes not for our own enjoyment and self-edification, but to discern the way of the Lord, and to walk in the path of the Kingdom to the glory of the King of kings.

And in the process of seeking and walking in discernment, in wisdom and strength, we need to abide, and to abide implies having faith and trust. Faith to know God is still in control, and to trust that God is not only able but will also do. More than ever we need to simply be still, and abide. We need to come before the Lord and draw strength from Him, and to seek His will, His direction, His guidance and the courage to keep going. For it is not about us or the Self, but about the Kingdom, Therefore, we need to listen, and not always speak. For God knows the way, and so we need to draw close, and know His heart and know His will.

Jesus would often withdraw from the crowd. He would seek silence. Is this because he sought silence to speak to the Father? I would rather venture He sought silence to hear from the Father, and to draw strength, and to know the will of heaven and to pursue such a purpose. After all, the Lord knows our heart, our intentions, our plans, our hopes and dreams. What He desires is to fellowship, and to show us who He truly is, and the path he wishes us to follow. For this, we need to listen, and we need to abide – in peace, in tranquility, and in hope.

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After all, God desires for us to walk in peace, but then we must walk in the will of the Lord. For in the will of the Lord is peace, understanding, and hope. But we need wisdom to know the will of the Father, and the path to walk. And yes, we need the strength to pursue it, and we need the wisdom to follow it, and we need the character to run the course.

Jesus knew the will of the Father. He spend time with the Father, alone, listening and praying. He knew the path led to the cross. He knew He had to sacrifice Himself. So He would withdrew, be silent, and draw strength, and He would seek discernment, and the leading of the Spirit so that He may walk the path in ministry which led to Golgotha. Jesus as the Son of God sought only the will of the Father, and of the Kingdom. His character was refined, his resolve set and determined, for in the will of the Father he found the way and the truth. Even in the Garden of Gethsemane, before His crucifixion, Jesus prayed the following in Luke 22:42: "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done." Yes Lord, it is not about our cup, but let Your will be done, always and always, for unto You belong all the dominion and power!

The Apostle Paul knew the will of the Lord. His path ended eventually in imprisonment. Along the way as he preached the Gospel to the Gentiles, he was ridiculed, mocked, beaten, and faced many dangers. In the midst of all the noise of the time, as he faced tribulation and spiritual resistance, he drew his strength from God, and he sought the wisdom, and the courage to keep running the course. And he did finish the race, because he sought only the will of God. In the Presence of God we must abide, and to know He is God.

And so, as disciples, we must listen, and rest, and trust in His divine guidance. Thus, it remains so important that we must continue to abide. We must rest in the Lord, and know His will. And we need to seek strength, the wisdom and the courage to pursue it, and to allow God to change our heart, and to fortify our character and to strengthen our resolve. For truly, in His Presence, we learn to die to the Self and to gain Christ, who is the hope of our Glory.

And so let us continue to pray the prayer of Matthew 6: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, 10 your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. 11 Give us today our daily bread. 12 And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." Let us continue to seek, to be still, and to know He is God. Let us continue to abide, to rest and to listen. And let us continue to follow His divine plan and purpose, yielding and abiding in His will.

## **A Prophetic Word: Cast the net for the harvest as INSTRUCTED by the Lord**

Servants of the Lord, the following word has been placed on my heart. There is a well-known Scripture out of John 21:6 which says: “And He said to them, ‘Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some.’ So they cast, and now they were not able to draw it in because of the multitude of fish.” Before I share what God has placed in my spirit, allow me to first put in context this Scripture.

Let us first read verses 1-3 of John chapter 21: “After these things Jesus showed Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, and in this way He showed Himself: Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples were together. Simon Peter said to them, “I am going fishing.” They said to him, “We are going with you also.” They went out and immediately got into the boat, and that night they caught nothing.” The setting is post-resurrection, and we find seven of Israel’s 12 apostles—Simon Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, the sons of Zebedee (James and John; Matthew 4:21), and two unknown persons—are assembled in Galilee. Israel’s apostles go fishing on “the Sea of Tiberias,” the Gentile name for “the Sea of Galilee” (see John 6:1). Remember, Jesus Christ began His ministry there some three years earlier (Matthew 4:12; Luke 4:14).

Before we look further at John 21, we also need to keep in mind that just three short years prior to this event and at the same seaside, Christ had selected brothers Simon Peter and Andrew, fishermen, telling them, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men” (Matthew 4:18-20; Mark 1:16-18). Christ had also selected James and John sons of Zebedee, fishing partners of Peter and Andrew, and they too forsook their fishing business and followed Him (Matthew 4:21,22; Mark 1:19,20).

At that time, Jesus Christ, just beginning His earthly ministry, is teaching and preaching God’s Word near the Lake of Gennesaret (another name for the Sea of Galilee). He meets fisherman Simon Peter and tells him, “Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught [catch of fish]” (Luke 5:4). Simon answers, “Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net” (verse 5). Verses 6 and 7 explain: “And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake. And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink.” Verses 6 and 7 thus explains that once they obeyed Christ’s words, their net broke because of the many fishes! In Christ’s absence, the apostles caught nothing; when He arrived, their two boats literally began to sink with fish!

What is also interesting in Luke that Jesus told Peter in verse 10: “Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.” Right from the start of the disciples’ ministry, they were reminded that they will be fishers of men, and not just catching fish of the sea, and that no matter what happens, they must not fear. For they were supposed to remember that when God is present and when God

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instructs, all things are possible. Of course, Peter denied the Lord three times during a time when he was a fisher of men, and he allowed fear to overwhelm him. Yes, he forgot the Master's words of not fearing, and still today we must take heart and be encouraged to never to fear in the service of the Lord. Great will be the spiritual onslaught and persecution, as experienced by the Apostle Paul, but we must never fear for God is with us!

To come back to the fishing stories, we find therefore three years earlier that the disciples, toiling in their own strength, wisdom and might, tried to catch fish. Nothing happened. And then the Master came along, and gave them instructions on how to catch the fish – by launching out to the deep. And then, they caught so much the boat was overflowing! Before Peter even became an apostle, he learned from Jesus Christ that God's Word was the key to catching multitudes of fishes. In the case of his apostleship, God's Word, not fleshly efforts, was the key to catching multitudes of souls! This important and vital lesson they learned again in John chapter 21, which alludes back to Zachariah 4:6 that it is not by might nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord. It is also written in Matthew 4:4 the following: Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" There is life in the Word of God and it is written in "Isaiah 55:11: So is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it."

To recount, when Israel's apostles returned to their fishing businesses in John chapter 21, and without Christ, that night of fishing they caught nothing. Jesus Christ is absent, and after toiling all night, the apostles "caught nothing" (verse 4). Very similar as three years ago. Yes, the disciples returned to their old life of applying human wisdom and will, and in their own strength, they were unable to accomplish God's will for them.

John 21:3-5 also says: "They [the apostles] went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing. But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No." Israel's apostles did not recognize Christ standing on the shore (John 21:4). When He gave the word for them to fish, and the miracle of the enormous draught occurred, they remembered what happened when He originally called them. Remember, this is during this time of post-resurrection when Jesus also restored and re-commissioned His apostles who had fled at His arrest (Matthew 26:56; Mark 14:50). He reminded them therefore of their calling to be fishers of men.

Prophetically, what is the Lord saying? We all know that as disciples we are called to be fishers of men. Yet the Lord has again showed that for a long time the Church has been toiling and struggling to catch a bounty of "fish", thus bring in the harvest, despite the harvest being plentiful (Matthew 9:37). Yes, we toil day and night without catching much (the spiritual harvest). For the Lord says we toil without the Holy Spirit. We toil for we follow not the word and the instructions of God. We have been "fishing" as a church by our strength, according to our own will and our own ways. We continually cast the net, but the Lord is not present in our endeavours.

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Thus many labourers toiling and struggling, but the catch remains low even though the harvest is great. We fear, and we have grown tired. We have forgotten who the Lord is, and we hardly recognise Him anymore just as the disciples failed to know Him in John 21 verse 3 to 5. We fail to know Him for we fail in our relationship with Him. And so we blindly and in our own pride cast the net, yet we listen not to His voice, and we heed not His Spirit.

And so the Lord says we shall continue to cast the net, and we shall continue to toil and catch little, until we know Him as the Lord of the Harvest. Only when we begin to lay down our crowns and our “nets” of programmes and agendas and allow God to lead, guide and instruct, then only shall the net burst forth with the harvest and the “boat” of our labour and effort be rewarding. Only then shall the labourers catch the bounty, but we need to return to the Lord, and a life in the Spirit.

Yes, day and night we toil. We come up with all kinds of beautiful nets. We invent new mechanisms to catch the fish. We even come up strategies that seem so clever. We build big boats. Still we toil, forgetting that the Kingdom of God is one of Power. It is of the Spirit. It is eternal. It is not by our mighty, but by the might of God.

And so God says in this day, when shall we lay down our nets and begin to listen? When shall we heed Him and obey? When shall we cast into the deep by His instruction? When shall we begin to behold Him again, see Him, know Him and follow Him? For the disciples had forgotten to follow Him, and to obey and to listen. We are in the same boat – full of pride and full of fear. For great shall be the harvest says the Lord when we cast as He instructs, and when we yield and obey to His Word. Yet by the word of man we continue to cast our nets, and the Master is forgotten.

This is indeed all about God’s will. Shall we then obey His will and follow? When indeed shall the Church wake up, and begin to arise from her rebellion to truly listen, to take note, to pay attention and just do what God instructs? For in His will is life and hope. For this is the blueprint of Acts 2, for the Lord of the Harvest added to the Church because the disciples obeyed, they listened and they toiled not in their own strength, but by the power of the Spirit that was poured out in the Upper Room.