
GOD'S WILL MADE SIMPLE

GOD'S WILL

A Different Perspective

God's will is not so much about **the decisions we make** as it is about the **life we live**.

PAUL'S PRAYER

A Different Kind of Prayer

Colossians 1:9-14

He asks for **knowledge of God's will**, not the **solution to life's problems**.

He wants us to know how to **please God**, not **where to live** or **what job to take**.

GOD'S WILL

Made Simple & Crystal Clear

Colossians 1:10-14

- ❶ Do **good deeds** that **bear fruit**.
Colossians 1:10/ Ephesians 2:10/ 1 Peter 2:11-12/ Matthew 5:16 & Matthew 6:1-21

- ❷ Get to know **God better**.
Colossians 1:10/ Philippians 3:7-16/ Ephesians 1:17-19/ 2 Peter 1:2-4

- ❸ **Toughen** up.
Colossians 1:11/ Acts 14:21-22/ 1 Peter 5:7-10/ Colossians 3:13-15 & 1 Corinthians 13:4

- ❹ Be **thankful**.
Colossians 1:12-14/ 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18/ 1 Corinthians 10:1-6 & 10/ Ephesians 2:1-5

Growth Group Homework

For the week of January 20, 2008

QUICK REVIEW: Looking back over your sermon notes from *God's Will Made Simple*, what was most challenging, helpful or interesting to you?

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

1. If you walked into your place of employment tomorrow and were given the afternoon off and a \$200 bonus that had to be spent that day how would you spend the time and money?

2. Can you think of a time when you thought you had a good idea of what God's will was for your life (or someone else's life) only to discover later that He had something very different in mind?

DIGGING DEEPER

1. In addition to the prayer we looked at this weekend, Paul also records similar prayers for people in the other churches he planted. As you read each passage, jot down what he prays for.

Passage	What Paul Prays For
Ephesians 3:16-18 I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, [17] so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, [18] may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, [NIV]	
Ephesians 1:15-19 For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, [16] I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. [17] I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. [18] I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, [19] and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working	

of his mighty strength, [NIV]	
<p>Philippians 1:9-11</p> <p>And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, [10] so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, [11] filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ-- to the glory and praise of God. [NIV]</p>	

What stands out to you most about how God wants us to live from these prayers?

Which of the things Paul prayed for would you most like others to pray for you to have or experience?

2. God's will often unfolds very differently than we expect. One example of this is found in an interesting story in 2 Kings 5:1-15. After reading the story, answer the questions below.

2 Kings 5:1-15

Now Naaman was commander of the army of the king of Aram. He was a great man in the sight of his master and highly regarded, because through him the Lord had given victory to Aram. He was a valiant soldier, but he had leprosy.

[2] Now bands from Aram had gone out and had taken captive a young girl from Israel, and she served Naaman's wife. [3] She said to her mistress, "If only my master would see the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy."

[4] Naaman went to his master and told him what the girl from Israel had said. [5] "By all means, go," the king of Aram replied. "I will send a letter to the king of Israel." So Naaman left, taking with him ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold and ten sets of clothing. [6] The letter that he took to the king of Israel read: "With this letter I am sending my servant Naaman to you so that you may cure him of his leprosy."

[7] As soon as the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his robes and said, "Am I God? Can I kill and bring back to life? Why does this fellow send someone to me to be cured of his leprosy? See how he is trying to pick a quarrel with me!"

[8] When Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his robes, he sent him this message: "Why have you torn your robes? Have the man come to me and he will know that there is a prophet in Israel." [9] So Naaman went with his horses and chariots and stopped at the door of Elisha's house. [10] Elisha sent a messenger to say to him, "Go, wash yourself seven times in the Jordan, and your flesh will be restored and you will be cleansed."

[11] But Naaman went away angry and said, "I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of the Lord his God, wave his hand over the spot and cure me of my leprosy. [12] Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than any of the waters of Israel? Couldn't I wash in them and be cleansed?" So he turned and went off in a rage.

[13] Naaman's servants went to him and said, "My father, if the prophet had told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more, then, when he tells you, 'Wash and be cleansed!'" [14] So he went down and dipped himself in the Jordan seven times, as the man of God had told him, and his flesh was restored and became clean like that of a young boy.

[15] Then Naaman and all his attendants went back to the man of God. He stood before him and said, "Now I know that there is no God in all the world except in Israel. Please accept now a gift from your servant." [NIV]

How do Naaman's expectations of how God would heal him compare to how it actually happened?

Why do you think Naaman was so angry at how God chose to heal him?

What can we learn about how we and others respond to God's will from this story?

3. In order to live out the simple and clear will of God we need more than knowledge, willpower and effort. We need the power that only God provides. How does each verse below connect our obedience to God's will with God's provision of power?

Philippians 2:12-13

Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed--not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence--continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, [13] for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose. [NIV]

Ephesians 5:15-21

Be very careful, then, how you live--not as unwise but as wise, [16] making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. [17] Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. [18] Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. [19] Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, [20] always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[21] Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. [NIV]

John 15:4-5

Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

[5] "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. [NIV]

Can you think of any common challenges people face in tapping into God's power to live the Christian life?

TAKING IT HOME

1. Larry listed four simple and crystal clear components of God's will. As you look back at these, which one is most challenging for you right now?

2. Take a minute and use one of Paul's prayers in Digging Deeper question #1 as a guide for praying for someone else.

Prayer is an important part of the Christian life which is why we desire for prayer to be a priority in Growth Groups. Good group prayer often takes effort, so here are some guidelines to help make your Growth Group prayer time more effective.

- **WE PRAY FOR ONE TOPIC AT A TIME-** Anyone in the group is free to introduce a prayer request either before prayer begins or during the prayer time. Once a topic is introduced, the group focuses on that request alone. Once it's covered, the group moves on to the next topic.
- **EACH PERSON PRAYS MORE THAN ONCE-** Because the group is focusing on one topic at a time, each person is encouraged to pray several times during the prayer time for those topics they feel most led to pray about.
- **WE KEEP OUR PRAYERS SHORT AND SIMPLE-** Group prayer goes better when members keep their prayers short and to the point. When someone prays for a long time, it's hard for the other members to stay focused and long prayers tend to intimidate those who are just learning to pray out loud in a group.

Prayer Requests

