

## **Teaching E-mail 69** **Not My Will But Yours Be Done**

(March 23, 2013)

***“My food,’ said Jesus, ‘is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to finish His work.’”*** (John 4:34)

***“You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what He has promised.”***  
(Hebrews 10:36).

One of the important aspects of a home fellowship family is to discern the will of our heavenly Father for both individuals in the group and for the collective faith family. Yet depending on which method they use to do this, unnecessary controversy and strife can result.

One of the major complications among Christians who may be seeking our Father’s will is the influence of *self-esteem* and *self-absorption* in this culture. The ME generation has extended its tentacles backward to older people who should know better, and ahead to the very young whose parents (or mothers, more likely) scramble to satisfy the desires of their demanding offspring.

People who expect that their lives should be happier because of their church affiliation have been duped that being in our Father’s will is always a positive experience. Nothing could be further from the truth nor does the Bible support such a deceived notion. Let’s look at two examples from God’s Word. They make clear that being in His will doesn’t necessarily mean the “quick and easy” path our flesh (and our culture) would prefer.

The accounts of the apostle Paul and the various adversities he faced are a case in point. The Lord Jesus personally appeared to him and forewarned that

he’d be taking a journey for a specific purpose: *“The following night the Lord stood near Paul and said, ‘Take courage! As you have testified about Me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome’”* (Acts 23:1). But while his ultimate destination was clear, en route he encountered a death plot, a wild ride by night to Caesarea, imprisonment, and even a shipwreck.

King David presents a similar story of delay and adversity accompanying God’s will being accomplished. The prophet Samuel had anointed the young man with oil, announcing that he would be King of Israel (1Samuel 16:13). But even though the Spirit came on David with power, God made sure he was in the difficult classroom of escape and evasion from Saul for 3 years. Through this season of pursuit and deprivation God enabled David to develop the deference and trust in Him that he would need in order to be a king after His own heart.

***“Father, if You are willing, take this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done.”*** (Luke 22:42)

Our Lord Jesus became a man fully knowing that He would be the once-for-all atonement sacrifice for the sins of mankind. Yet even with this foreknowledge, His emotions and His commitment to completing the race as the final and best sacrifice needed to be placed on the altar of His Father’s will.

If your heart motives are focused entirely on walking in the footsteps of Jesus (1Peter 2:21) and you’re prepared in your heart to lay down your own life and goals to do our Father’s will, He will likely show you the next step of your path

through prophecy or words of knowledge and wisdom or *rhema* from His Word. That one step He gives is far enough for your faith to see. When you take that one step in loving and obedient trust in Him, the next step will be shown you.

If you are a willing child, your Father *will* reveal to you His will. Yet remember that it's along the way to fulfilling His purposes through you that He permits adversity to test your faith and commitment. He wants the genuine article, not a religious feel-good experience. (See 1Peter 1:6,7.) It's during your own season of adversity that He purifies your trust in Him so you may stand without doubt in the task He's prepared you for.

Our Father guides His children by either revealing to them their ultimate destination *or* how He intends to use them along the way. For example, He made known to the Israelites in Egypt that He was going to take them to the Promised Land. But because of their lack of trust in Him, a brief journey became 40 long years. The original Israelites who left Egyptian captivity never made it to the land He had promised them.

This all-important lesson of TRUST is part of our own learning curve in the adversity He permits on our journey to fulfilling His promise or purpose through us.

We get a glimpse of what it takes to truly be about His will in Revelation 17:14:

*“They will make war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will overcome them because He is Lord of lords and King of kings—and with Him will be **His called, chosen and faithful followers.**”*

Our Lord Jesus warns all of us, *“For many are called, but few are chosen”* (Matthew 22:14). He has specific purposes

for those who would be faithful as His followers and by His grace finish the race (see Acts 20:24). Being called, chosen *and* faithful are essential criteria which are closely connected to our Lord's admonition that those who *endure to the end* will be saved (Mark 13:13). The crucial requirement of our faithfulness to Him is made clear by Jesus throughout Matthew 25. The grievous outcome for those who prove unfaithful is this:

- *“I tell you the truth, I don't know you”* (v.12).
- *“Throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth”* (v.30).
- *“Depart from Me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels”* (v.41).

The Book of Esther presents a situation of a woman who was *called* but had to make the choice to be found *faithful*. Queen Esther's cousin, Mordecai, made her aware of Haman's wicked plan to annihilate the Jews. While her first response was fear for her own life, the wise older man offered a warning that each of us should heed when it comes to facing our own adversity:

*“For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?”* (Esther 4:14).

You never want to be one who claims to belong to our Lord Jesus and yet fails to trust in Him when you're faced with a challenge greater than you alone can handle. Cowards are listed as among those who will never be welcomed into heaven (Revelation 21:8).

***“Surely the Sovereign LORD does nothing without revealing His plan to His servants the prophets”*** (Amos 3:7)

There is one other important element we need to introduce concerning the assistance the Spirit of our Lord gives so we not only know our Father’s will but are encouraged in times of adversity. Paul speaks of the use of prophecy on behalf of followers of Jesus:

*“Everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort... he who prophesies edifies the called-out-ones... so that the called-out ones may be edified”* (1Corinthians 14:3-5).

Throughout the Older Testament are examples in which God chose a person or a group to fulfill a task, yet they lost sight of His purpose. In Ezra chapter 5 and Haggai chapter 1 the very people who returned with Ezra to Jerusalem from Babylonian captivity began to focus on building their own homes rather than constructing the house of God. The prophets repeatedly reminded these distracted folks *why* God had brought them back: so they could fulfill His will.

*“So the elders of the Jews continued to build and prosper under the preaching of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah, a descendant of Iddo. They finished building the temple...”* (Ezra 6:14).

### **Prophecy, Words of Knowledge and Wisdom: Support Your Trust and Confront Your Rationale**

Picture Paul praying for those in your home fellowship family:

*“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. 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”* (Ephesians 1:17,18).

The Spirit of wisdom and revelation has nothing to do with your mind’s **rationale**. Your mind analyzes the pros and cons of a situation and inherently chooses an action that will benefit *you*. The tentacles of your mind’s rationale also lure you to box God into your limited thinking capacity. This tendency is often compounded when you seek His will *but* have preconditions on what you want His will to be.

Following Jesus entails an **obedience-based trust**, grounded in a love relationship much like that of Abraham.

**Obedience-based trust** means that out of love for Him you’re concerned with seeking our Father’s will and doing it no matter what the cost. **Outcome-based rationale** seeks personal benefit *and/or* minimum inconvenience. People within that framework seek a desired result regardless of whether it’s our Father’s will.

As your fellowship family walks together trusting in our Father, you’ll rely less and less on your carnal rationale. Your love for our Father produces trust-filled obedience that’s empowered by His Spirit within. He certainly hasn’t called you to be *mind-less*. But part of the process of your collective *sanctification*, that is, *“working out your [plural] salvation with fear and trembling”* (Philippians 2:12), calls for you *together* to replace with *trust* the rationale on which you’ve relied before.

Put up a stop sign when anyone conjectures about the future or tries to make decisions by weighing the ‘pros and cons.’ Our Father wants to bless you by making the decisions for you. You only need His wisdom and revelation.

One of the purposes of prophecy and words of knowledge and wisdom is to help you have *the mind of Christ* on the circumstances and encounters that affect you (1Corinthians 2:16). These giftings cut through the rationale of your carnal nature, that is, when you rely on your own reasoning as you weigh the positives and negatives of your choices. He reserves the right as your Father to make the decisions for His children—and He receives glory when His children look for and count on His intervention and revelation.

We're warned, "*Do not put out the Spirit's fire; do not treat prophecies with contempt. Test everything. Hold on to the good*" (1 Thessalonians 5:19-21). Doesn't this accord with His assurance, "*Surely the Sovereign LORD does nothing without revealing His plan to His servants the prophets*" (Amos 3:7)? If you fear a prophetic voice of God, this indicates you want to be in charge of your own life. If you find yourself *habitually distrusting* our Father to show you the path He desires for you, you may tragically find yourself hearing from our Lord one day, "I never knew you!"

### Stay Away From the Hunt and Peck Method of Determining Your Father's Will

*Hunt and Peck:*  
*A slow method of typing in which an untrained typist seeks out each key before striking it*

Because reliance on rationale is so pervasive in this culture, most people trust 'pro and con' evaluation in making choices in their daily lives. But you can't use this hunt and peck method in discerning your Father's will. Within Christendom we've seen so many who go

around the same mountain again and again until they at last learn the lesson: **Their Father's will—nothing less, nothing more, nothing else!**

At the end of our book, *Demolishing Strongholds*, we include the poem "Step By Step." In many ways this poem is helpful to people who are still in the infancy of their faith journey. Our Father is training them in obedience in a step by step manner. For followers of Jesus who've matured in their love and desire to please their heavenly Father, there's a goal in their heart that makes the poem even more meaningful. That goal as they seek their Father's will is to affirm this: **"Father, place me and use me where I can bring You the most glory."**

With this motive of heart the poem's stanzas become even clearer and dearer. Consider these two:

One Step Thou Seest — Then Go Forward Boldly,  
One Step Is Far Enough for Faith to See;  
Take That, and Thy Next Duty Shall Be Told Thee,  
for Step by Step Thy Lord Is Leading Thee.  
  
Stand Not in Fear, Thine Adversaries Counting,  
Dare Every Peril, Save to Disobey;  
Thou Shalt March on, All Obstacles Surmounting,  
for I, the Strong, Will Open Up the Way.

Once you've determined your Father's will, be assured He will guide you step by step into fulfilling it. Just know that there *will* be times of adversity and suffering as He brings to fruition His will for you and matures your character in His Son. This is where mutual confirmation of our Father's will and ongoing encouragement by those in your faith family will help you stay focused on His goal. Seeing His pieces fall into place may take a lot longer than your patience wants to wait for!

We've observed many Christian parents who began homeschooling their children using the hunt and peck me-

thod of deciding whether they'd stick with it. Most ultimately gave up. Why? Each failed to approach their biblical responsibility for their children from the vantage point of the outcome our Lord insists upon: *a godly generation*. (See Malachi 2:15.) When the adversity that accompanies the intensity of training up a child at home comes, the parents think they must not be in God's will. They miss the lesson of love that endures and deepens through difficulties.

We've also seen ministries and businesses which have been started by Christians using the hunt and peck method. All too often they fail! Why does this happen? When people rely on what *seems* right to them in discerning God's will, their rationale and their focus on SELF-centered outcomes limit them to only choose the path of short-term satisfaction—beneficial self-serving results. This is why Proverbs reiterates an important warning: *"There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death"* (Proverbs 14:12; 16:25).

No matter what the endeavor, when Christians use an **"only if it's good for me"** determining factor of God's will, they're setting themselves up to fall. Our heavenly Father will use adversity and suffering to test your faith and to perfect it (Matthew 5:48). When you limit Him within the parameters of self-seeking motives, you nullify any trust in His sovereignty and in His ways of bringing everything in conformity to His will (Ephesians 1:11,12).

How different is our God from us in more ways than we can imagine!

*"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways," declares the LORD. 'As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts. As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is My word (rhema) 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"* (Isaiah 55:8-11).

If you and/or your faith family believe that you can anticipate the ways in which our Father brings about everything in accordance with His own will, you're in grave error. When the Israelites left Egypt they never could have envisioned how God would care for them in the desert and deliver their children into the land He had promised them. They only needed to trust Him — and they failed. Nor could Ezra, David, Paul, and a host of others who sought to be faithful to the end ever envision how God would fulfill His purpose through them.

No human being is ever going to write the script for their own life's story. This is why you, your family, and your faith family must be earnest about being **obedience-based**. And this begins with first trusting the Spirit of our Lord within you for guidance. He IS faithful!