

Understanding the Will of the Lord (*Ephesians 5:1-18*)

The Bible is the foundation of every true Christian. This means that it is the authority in our lives and dictates to us how we ought to live. The keystone to this foundation is the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus Christ. If Christ was not who He said He was, or did not do what the Bible says that He did, then we are wasting our time in following Him. However, the fact that He is God in the flesh and paid the sin debt of mankind on the cross: offering eternal life freely to all that believe in Him, means that He is indeed worth following and believing in!

Because the Bible is our foundation, we believe that it is sufficient to help us live life on this earth successfully. Despite this, many believers neglect the sufficiency of the scriptures and turn to the counsel of the world. This causes believers to become frustrated and spiritually weak.

One area of frustration in the lives of many is that of knowing the will of God. Our God has a plan and purpose for every person that walks this earth, and He does not want us to live frustrated, confused lives (*I Corinthians 14:33*). His first desire is that a person trust in Christ as their personal Savior. But, what are we to do after that? Does the Bible tell us? It certainly does, and we can clearly find God's will for our lives in *Ephesians 5*.

Before learning about God's will for our lives, we must first determine to be surrendered to it. What God wants for us is often not what we, our family, our friends, or other people want for us. Therefore, we need to determine that God knows what is best for us, and we will submit to His plan. So many believers act like they can do whatever they want in God's name and that He is fine with their disobedience. Instead, we clearly see that our God wants us to submit to and obey Him. Only then is He pleased with us (*I Samuel 15:1-23; John 4:24*). We must also take heart that our God wants better things for us than we want for ourselves (*Romans 8:28-29*). To take anything less than God's best for us is to damage our Christian growth.

I. Following and Learning about the Lord Jesus Christ (v.1-2)

Many people get hung up on what God wants them to do in life, but forget (or are never taught) that the most important aspects of doing God's will are applicable to every believer! God does have specific desires for every believer, but most of them are general and apply to all of His children.

Once a person is born again into the kingdom of God, the first priority that God gives us is to follow and learn about Jesus Christ. This priority is reflected in our identification with Christ through believer's baptism: professing to the assembly our desire to follow Jesus (*Matthew 28:19-20*).

When Jesus called His disciples, He called them to follow and learn about Him: to live as He lived, act as He acted, believe as He believed, and teach as He taught. Even the terms well-known and often used in Christian circles today have to do with learning about Jesus Christ and following Him! The term *disciple* means *follower, student, or learner*. The term *Christian* means *Little Christ*.

Jesus Christ gave two simple commands to His followers: to follow Him (*Matthew 4:19*) and learn about Him (*Matthew 11:28-30*). He promised His disciples that, if they followed Him, He would make them to become fishers of men. He also promised them that, if they learned about Him, He would give them rest and peace, as they served Him. These are things sorely needed in this world and are available to the believer that will claim them!

This process of following and learning is a continuous one, and is available only as we allow the Spirit of God to teach us through the scriptures. Our private, daily Bible study and public attendance of hearing the preaching of God's Word both help us to learn about Him and are mandatory for our growth in

Christ! We will never be exactly like Jesus until we reach Heaven's gates, nor will we know His doctrine as well as we will in Glory, but there is no place to stop learning, as a disciple of Jesus Christ. No believer will ever master the scriptures before they reach Heaven's shores; all we can do is keep learning!

Some may ask, "Why should I follow after Jesus?" The simple answer is given to us in this passage. If we love Him, we will follow Him (***Ephesians 5:1-2***). After all that He has done for us, how can we not follow Him? His love for us constrains us to do so (***II Corinthians 5:14***)! Furthermore, if we start each day filled with the Spirit of God, following Christ becomes easier and more natural.

How is your walk with Jesus Christ? Are you regularly attending in a local, Bible-believing church that helps you to read the Bible, pray, and serve the Lord? If you need help with these matters, please feel free to drop by or contact us anytime! If you have questions about starting a relationship with God or knowing the way to Heaven, we are here to help guide you, as well.

James Bussard is the pastor of Heritage Baptist Church that meets at 8 N. 2nd St. in Woodsboro, MD @ 11:30am and 6pm on Sundays. For questions or comments about this article, please call (301) 304-2127 or write him at HeritageParkPastor@Gmail.com. For more service times and information about the church, please go to www.FrederickforChrist.com or call (301) 304-2127.