

## Understanding the Will of the Lord (Part 2) (Ephesians 5:1-18)

Last week, we began to consider the topic of understanding the will of God for our lives. This is a topic that confounds and frustrates many believers. However, God shows us clearly what He desires for us from Ephesians 5.

The first job of every believer is to submit to God's will for our lives. This requires us to trust that God wants what is best for us. Once we do this, then God can work with us, as He pleases.

God's will begins with the believer in Jesus Christ learning about and following Him (*Ephesians 6:1-2*). This seems to be very basic and simple, but is often rejected or missed by many church-goers. The Christian faith is all about Jesus. It is not about building congregations or buildings. It is not about gathering great wealth and power to ourselves. Instead, it is a lifestyle of learning about and following Christ, with the intention of serving Him on Earth. To do this requires humility and submission to God's Word.

### II. Being Transformed by the Renewing of Our Minds

This passage continues, by encouraging the children of God to act like their Father in Heaven (*Ephesians 5:3-7*), because it is also part of His will for us. Remember that this passage builds upon itself. If we work to follow after Jesus Christ, we will naturally become more like Him. If we are filled with the Spirit of God, we will be more apt to do the things that please Him.

To be saved from sin, we must accept the Christ's work on Calvary and His free gift of eternal life (*Acts 16:31*). By accepting Jesus' payment for our sin debt, we are justified in the Father's sight: meaning that our debt of sin is wiped clean forever (*Romans 5:1*). Of course, while we are made perfect and righteous in the sight of God, the reality is that we are still prone to commit acts of sin on Earth.

This occurs, because we still have the world, flesh, and Devil that tempt us to give in to them. Because of these things, we must daily die to self, and allow Christ to live through us. As the old man dies daily, the new man grows and matures. This allows bad habits to become good ones, and fleshly desires to become godly ones. It essentially creates a brand new life for the believer and renews their mind (*Ephesians 4:22-24*).

If we decide to follow Christ, and allow Him to change our lives, (*II Corinthians 5:17*), we must understand that those that do not know Jesus may not like the changes they see in us. Many times, when Jesus taught His disciples about following Him, He cautioned them that the world would persecute them for their beliefs (*Luke 12:1-12, 49-53*).

Many people do not realize that Jesus' doctrine does not unite, but divides. It often does not make friends, but enemies! Why does this happen? Is it because our attitude and actions are to be repulsive, arrogant, and cruel? No! A thousand times, no! Jesus was always loving, kind, and compassionate, but He also unapologetically stood on the absolute Truth of the scriptures with authority (*Matthew 7:29*).

When someone stands on absolute Truth, the enemies of Truth and Light will always fight against it, no matter how kind and loving the person taking the stand is (*John 1:5*). We must understand that the preaching of the cross is foolishness to those that are unsaved (*I Corinthians 1:18*), while it is the power of God to the saved. The things of God are also a condemnation to the carnal believer and will convict their heart, because of their backslidden condition (*I Corinthians 3:1-3*). The only cure for these groups is salvation through Jesus Christ, for the unsaved, and restoration, through confession of sin, for the saved.

We are told in this passage that, when we read God's Word and allow it to renew our minds, we will naturally and gradually separate from the children of darkness. Sometimes the separation is made by personal choice and other times it is forced by others. Whatever the reason, we must understand that this separation from the lost and ungodly is natural and expected (***II Corinthians 6:14-18***), even though sorrow often accompanies it. Therefore, we must draw closer to Christ and like-minded believers for comfort and encouragement.

How is your walk with Jesus Christ? Are you regularly attending a local, Bible-believing church that helps you to read the Bible, pray, and serve the Lord? Is your relationship with Christ stagnate or growing? 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.

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