

Focusing On the Will of God

Text: Ephesians 5:14-17

Introduction:

1. Many of us wander through life with no focus. No purpose. No direction.
2. We click the remote mindlessly looking for something on television to entertain us. We look curiously for something that is vaguely interesting to help us kill some time.
3. We are born and we will die, and life is just about filling in the time in between.
4. Such wasted lives.
5. Is there more to life than that? I certainly hope so. If not, then what is the purpose for living?
6. Does God have a purpose for us? What is it? Does He have plans? Does He want to accomplish things in our lives?

I. Understand What The Will Of The Lord Is

- A. God does have a purpose and He expects us to learn it - (**Ephesians 5:17**).
- B. That sounds like quite a challenge-to understand what the Lord's will is. But it is really simpler than it sounds, because God wants us to understand it, and He has explained it to us.
- C. It involves self-sacrifice - (**2 Corinthians 8:5**). Such self-sacrifice cannot have selfish motives, otherwise it would not be a sacrifice. Such self-surrender is made because it is God's will. And it is only right that God expects that from us-He gave up the life of His Son unselfishly.
- D. It involves doing the right thing from inward motivation - (**Ephesians 6:6**). We are not faithful in our actions just to put on a show for others. We are faithful because it is God's will-even in our relationships with our employers in the workplace.
- E. It involves being *different* from everyone else. Not in some peculiar or eccentric way - religious kooks and oddballs don't bring glory to God. But we must be different from the world around us, (**Romans 12:2**).
- F. It involves doing good - both toward others and before God - (**1 Peter 2:15**). Good works are a powerful testimony against evil. They silence it. We don't go to war against evil by fighting it with evil - we defeat it by fighting it with good.
- G. It involves changing from what we used to be, and *becoming something far better*. God has always sought **repentance** from His people. Many people want God to simply accept them as they are by His grace whenever they are ready to accept Him. But God *doesn't want us* to go back to what we were, He wants us to **change** - (**1 Peter 4:2**). God does not allow us to go back to the sins from which He delivered us.
- H. It involves holiness and sanctification - (**1 Thessalonians 4:3**). God's moral standard for us is a **high one**. He doesn't want us to degrade ourselves with the sensuality of our times. Sanctification involves being **set apart**, being **different**. It is not a source of embarrassment; it is an honor because it means there is something special about us that separates us from all the rest.
- I. It involves thankfulness **in all things**. When we talk about thankfulness, we don't often think about that action as being a way of obeying God. We think of it as a response to receiving God's blessings. It is that, but being thankful is actually fulfilling the desires of God for our lives - (**1 Thessalonians 5:18**).

J. It involves **endurance**. Not just fair - weather faithfulness, but faithfulness in the worst of times, in the most difficult of circumstances, when we feel like quitting - (**Hebrews 10:36**).

II. **Focusing On The Will Of God**

A. There is entirely **too much focus on the will of man**, and **not enough on the will of God**. We are prone to say, "**I** am not comfortable with that... **I'm** looking for a church that fits... **I** think everyone has to find the truth within themselves... **I** don't think that anyone can tell you what is right and what is wrong... **I** think that what is right for one person may be wrong for another person... **I** want a church that fits me.. **I** want a church that fits my style... **I** want a church that I don't have to do anything.. etc."

B. All of those expressions and attitudes are **focusing on the will of men**.

C. **We need to focus on the will of God**.

D. God demands obedience. **Strict obedience** - (**Matthew 7:21**).

E. Jesus did God's will. He came into the world for that express purpose - (**Hebrews 10:9**). Are we any better than Him? Are we exempt from that same responsibility? Jesus learned obedience by the things He suffered - (**Hebrews 5:8**).

F. We **honor God when we honor His word and obey it**. We dishonor Him when we leave it up to ourselves.

G. How can we know the will of God better? **We have to want to know it**. If we really want to know it, then Jesus tells us - (**John 7:17**).

H. Here is where the difference lies with many of us-those who want to know the will of the Father will know it, those who don't care to know it will **remain confused**.

III. **He Who Does The Will Of God Abides Forever**

A. How important is it to understand and do the will of the Father?

B. It has eternal implications - (**1 John 2:17**).

Conclusion:

1. Much has been said and written about success in business ventures and other areas, but the only real success, the only real purpose in life, is **to focus on the will of God then follow it**.
2. **Are you?**