

“Now this is the confidence...”

Knowing, Believing and Praying

The still small voice of His Word

One recent winter morning, the Lord seemed to be saying to get up a bit earlier, as though there was something important to hear. As I did so, a familiar verse from 1 John chapter 5 came to mind. It is a verse I know well, as you probably do.

1 John 5:14-15 "Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him."

When I had woken up, an hour or so earlier, I had been pondering the difficulties that were ahead of me. It was my usual sort of "list", just like many days in my week. There were issues of unsaved family, but also remembering the difficulties that other family might have in representing Jesus to others, so that they too might know Him. Then there were the issues of relationships, particularly where they seemed strained, and where I seemed to be unable to influence them through truth, and having to totally rely on the Lord. Moreover there were the problems where people of the world seemed to be threatening or difficult in some way (*always remembering the Lord allows these things in order for us to learn to go to Him for everything*) – along with the state of the world and my perception of their inability to see the dangers threatening normal life, as we approach the second coming of Christ to this earth.

It was all too much for me and I was despairing a little and feeling frustrated that my best efforts did not seem to be making much difference, nor likely to do so in the near future. And then came the call to get up to see what the Lord might be saying. It was one of those times when staying in bed did not seem appropriate. (this turned out to be true as I needed pen and paper to record what came to me by the Spirit) And then came the verse that provided the foundation for God's plan for me as to how to approach these multitudinous tasks.

1 John 5:14-15 "Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him."

- We have confidence in Him.....
- If we ask anything according to His will – He hears us.....
- If we know that He hears us, whatever we ask.....
- We know we have the petition we ask of Him.....

Those verses inspired me to believe in a fresh way, not only for what the prayer said, but also that God was doing something special with me on this day.

The words according to His will struck me as being very important. We might believe about the confidence, and that He hears and us having our petitions being successful. However, the fact that we need to know His will brought a questions to my mind as to what really was God's will.

*So, what are some central aspects of life, that we could say are
"according to His will?"
What is His general will for us believers?*

1 God is not willing that any should perish

The first thing I thought of was that God does not want anyone to perish.

2 Peter 3:9 *"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."*

That verse really appeals to me because it expresses my own heart in terms of lots of people I know, some in family. God does not want anyone to perish – is **the first piece of His will** on which I could pray! So that was a good start.

2 God wants us to live in unity

To represent God in this world, we need to live in unity with each other.

Psalm 133:1 *"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"*

Philippians 2:2 *"...fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind."*

Acts 2:46 *"So continuing daily with one accord.."*

1 Peter 3:8 *"Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous;"*

How can we possibly minister to a broken world if we do not express our unity in love with each other

3 And greater works than these

The second part of God's will was equally exciting and quite amazing. Jesus said that we will do greater works than He did. Isn't that just a bit hard to believe at first look? It came from John 14:12.

John 14:12 *"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father. "*

Now it is verses like this from the Bible, where we just have to believe, otherwise we would falter into reasoning as to how this could be. Even though we don't understand how this could ever be, if we are to be disciples of Jesus, then we had better believe it. So it is the will of God that we, on this earth right now, will do greater works than that of Jesus – **a second point of God's will** on which we can pray.

4 Abide in me and I in you

This is a direct instruction from the mouth of Jesus Christ, so is obviously His will for us. As we abide in Him, He will abide in us, and as branches we will bear fruit out of our being a part of the Vine. Abiding is **a third point of God's will**, on which we can use as a basis for our prayer

John 15:4 *"Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me."*

5 The Spirit of truth dwells within

I then remembered two further point of God's will for prayer, both to do with truth. It is God's will for believers that the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, dwells within us. Two special verses deal with this aspect of God's will for us. The first is:

John 14:17 *"...the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you."*

6 He will tell you of things to come

This verse says that because we know Him, the Spirit of truth dwells within us and is in us. This second verse extends the breadth and value of this truth

John 16:13 *"...However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come."*

So, not only is the Holy Spirit within us, but that He will guide us into all truth AND tell us of things to come. What an amazing privilege and responsibility!

Imagine these as God's will expressed in our lives!

Pause for a moment and imagine these aspects of God's will for us.

- God does not want anyone to perish.
- We will do greater works than Jesus.
- We will be guided into all truth.
- God wants us to live in unity
- Abide in Him - He will abide in us.
- He will tell us of things to come.

Can you imagine what our life can be like, if we knew all these – and used them routinely, not just intellectually, but by the revelation of the Spirit – and then continued to practise them? Would it not put a fire in your belly to want to fulfil these, not by our effort but by the power of His Spirit. Consider this in the context of 1 John 5:14-15

Knowing His will (general, not specifics – the specifics are His business) we can have confidence that whatever we ask, He hears, and we know we have the petition that we have asked of Him.

At this point I did not consider pursuing any more point on the question of what is God's will, but simply followed the Lord's lead into other scriptures that came to me, all of these supporting or enhancing those already mentioned.

Once I realized more about the depth of these things from the Spirit, I could then see the supportive truths in many other scriptures, some of which follow.

*More encouraging scriptures that help us
to pray according to God's will*

☐ *Whatever you ask in My Name...*

John 14:13 "And **whatever you ask in My name, that I will do**, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." John 14:14 "If you **ask anything in My name, I will do it.**"

John 15:7 "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, **you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.** "

John 15:8 "**By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.**"

☐ *We are one with the Father and Jesus...*

John 14:20 "At that day you will know that **I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.**"

John 17:21 "...**that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us**, that the world may believe that You sent Me.

☐ *The Helper - The Holy Spirit convicts*

John 16:8 "...And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: " John 16:9 "...of sin, because they do not believe in Me; ' John 16:10 "...of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; " John 16:11 "...of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged."

Finally a the most amazing aspect of all this

☐ *We were chosen by Jesus to do these things....*

John 15:16 "You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you."

Knowing His will (general, not specifics – the specifics He involves us in are His business) we can have confidence that whatever we ask, He hears, and we know we have the petition that we have asked of Him.

*I believe that whatever degree of holiness is ours,
whatever degree of surrender of our lives we have made to the Lord,
whatever degree of obedience we bring to Him,
all of these will develop as we pray according to these aspects of His will and these encouragements from His Word*

I believe that this word from the Lord was for me in particular, but may be useful for others.

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