

Title: Your Will Be Done
Date: August 15, 2021
Subject: Christians should pray to do God's will
Scripture: Matthew 6:10; Luke 11:2

A guy at a Bible College liked a girl...a lot. Coincidentally, she sat across the aisle from him in several classes. It seemed like he thought about her day and night. One day he worked up the guts to talk to her. After introducing himself, he said, "God has told me that you are to marry me."

The young lady could have responded, "Okay, if God told you that." Wouldn't have been very wise. According to the story, she looked the young man square in the eye and told him, "Don't you think if it was God's will for us to marry, he would have told me the same thing?" Then she got on with her life, not giving a second thought to his proposal. The young man believed he could determine God's will by what he thought, feelings and probably circumstances, after all, she sat by him in class.

We're continuing our study of The Disciples' Prayer. To keep the total picture in view, we're going to pray the prayer. We'll use The Living Translation as printed in your bulletin.

>>>>>> Pray the prayer.

The prayer is found in Matthew 6. We're looking at the last phrase of v. 10 - "your will be done" which focuses on God's Purpose. We've previously seen God's Paternity, Person and Program.

Jesus used a technique called parallelism. "Your kingdom come" introduced the topic. "Your will be done" emphasizes the same idea while using different language that amplifies and explains.

Definition: God's will is his plan, determination, choice, wishes, desires -- his gracious purpose. It's revealed through his directives, standards, principles and commands for those who are in his kingdom.

The human will is the strategic control center, the place where the person decides.

Since God and people both have wills, this sets up a contest, a battle for control. "Your kingdom come" describes the spiritual life Jesus Christ calls us to utilizing the language of war. It's a fight against the devil and the spiritual forces of evil (Ephesians 6).

Sometimes the battle is in another arena as Christians wage war against God for the control of our will. It's our will versus his will. We can be dead set on what we want, on what we really, really want. Whose will are we going to follow? Logic tells us there can only be one number one. We have to decide who deserves that spot. Jesus said, "No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other" (Matthew 6:24). We have to settle the position issue.

Ted Turner founded a media empire consisting of CNN, the first 24-hour news station, establishing a super TV station in Atlanta and several TV networks named after him. For a time he owned the Atlanta Braves and Atlanta Hawks sports teams. He donated \$1 billion to the United Nations Foundation. He was the largest private landowner in the United States until surpassed in 2011. Quite the powerful man, according to many

people, including himself. At one point during his second marriage, he made the relationship with his wife ultra-clear. A friend recalled Turner saying as he walked out the door for a sailing competition: "I've told you, Janie (not Fonda). Business comes first. My boat comes second. And you come third" (Readers Digest. 9/1998. p. 205). Turner established his pecking order. Who's first for us?

Why should we submit our wills to God's will? Why should we say to him "as you wish?"

God is superior. He is sovereign. Sovereignty has been defined as "chief or highest; supreme in position to all others; independent of and unlimited by any other; possessing or entitled to original and independent authority and jurisdiction" (Websters Dictionary).

A soldier was standing at attention with the rest of his platoon during the ceremony marking the end of basic training. Suddenly, he waved. The drill instructor was not pleased and proceeded to vigorously chew out the soldier. A little later the soldier waved again. This time the sergeant waited till he got the offender back in the barracks to read him the riot act up one side and down the other: "What's the matter with you? Don't you fear me?" "Yes, Sir... but I fear my mother more." The soldier understood his mom was the real boss.

Our true superior is the Lord though a lot of people like to think they are supreme and independent. They aren't and the sooner people learn that the better. God's the one who calls the shots. In spite of his power, God doesn't force himself on people and make them do his will. He created people with a will, the capacity to choose and therefore desires that people use their free will to choose to follow him. People don't have to, but it's in our best interests. A man put it this way, "Yet he has given the right that a man might choose to be as miserable as he wills to be" (Francis W. Grubbs. *Lord, Teach Us to Pray*. p. 47).

We need to have faith in God's character and purpose, that he knows what is best.

John MacArthur, "To pray Thy will be done, on earth as it is heaven is to rebel against the worldly idea that sin is normal and inevitable and should therefore be acquiesced to or at least tolerated. It is to rebel against the world system of ungodliness, the dishonoring and rejecting of Christ, and also the disobedience of believers" (John MacArthur, *Matthew*, p. 384).

We need to settle the position issue. We also have to settle the permission issue. It's one thing to know who's in charge. It's another to submit our hearts and lives. We have to resist the urge to try to get the Lord to do our will. People use prayer to come to God with their list – "Here's what I'd like you to do for me...."

Wilbur Rees wrote a description of the average man's view of God: "I would like to buy \$3 worth of God please, not enough to explode my soul or disturb my sleep, but just enough to equal a cup of warm milk or a snooze in the sunshine. I don't want enough of him to make me love a black man or pick beets with a migrant. I want ecstasy, not transformation; I want the warmth of the womb, not a new birth. I want a pound of the eternal in a paper sack. I would like to buy \$3 dollars worth of God please."

Some resign themselves to doing God's will because they figure who's able to resist his will. God is too strong and they might as well accept the inevitable. They just say, "Uncle. I give up. Do what you want. You're gonna do what you're gonna do anyway." It's a defeatist attitude, possibly full of resentment.

Some people resort to bargaining with the Lord. The person may begin by telling the Lord to leave them alone so they can live the life they want to live. The person then realizes this isn't the wisest decision. He approaches God to strike a bargain: "You give me what I want and then I'll give you what you want." Or they'll suggest that they'll give God better if he gives them better. This can move to partial surrender where the person seeks to maintain control of certain areas. Next may be wrestling. And then finally the person decides to give God whatever God wants regardless of whatever the person gets.

We don't have to go through this process. It can be a quick determination that God's ways are better and I'm going to follow them.

Anybody have a strong-willed child? Or maybe we were one ourselves. When it comes to spiritual matters, all of us were and are strong-willed. Some have a more difficult time in submitting and obeying, but all of us go through the struggle.

Jesus is our example of desiring and determining to do the will of God. God the Father is the creator and initiator while the Son is the accomplisher and fulfiller. Jesus proclaimed early in his ministry, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work" (John 4:34. Echoed in Hebrews 10:7 – 9). The emphasize on doing the will of the Father continued throughout his life: "I seek not to please myself but him who sent me" (John 5:30); "For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me" (John 6:38); "I always do what pleases him" (John 8:29); "the world must learn that I love the Father and that I do exactly what my Father has commanded me" (John 14:31). And Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane: "yet not my will, but yours be done" (Luke 22:42).

Jesus placed a high priority on his obedience to God the Father. He does the same for us. "If you love me, you will obey what I command...Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him...If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. He who does not love me will not obey my teaching...If you obey my commands you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love...You are my friends if you do what I command" (John 14:15, 21, 23, 24; 15:10, 14).

How do we submit our will to God? We need to be ready, willing and teachable. At a meeting of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Bobby Richardson, former New York Yankee second baseman, offered this brief prayer: "Dear God, Your will, nothing more, nothing less, nothing else. Amen."

Kent Hughes explains what that entails: "We invite God to conquer us, and that is why this petition is so scary. When we pray this prayer, we are asking God to do what is necessary to make his will prevail in our lives. And God then comes with gracious, kind violence to root out all impediments to our obedience. To pray this prayer may terrify us, but it will also deliver us from ourselves. It can truly be said that we have not learned to pray at all until every request in our prayers is made subject to this one" (Hughes, R. K., *The sermon on the mount: the message of the kingdom*, p. 177).

A young man worked for a banana company near his hometown of Kingston, Jamaica. An executive noticed his diligent work and invited him to his office. The exec complimented him and said he saw potential in him. “You have a great future with our company, with excellent prospects for rapid promotion. But we are looking for committed men. If you are going to be a success, I want you to know that you will have to give your life in exchange for bananas.”

Jesus asked what can people give exchange for their soul. Bananas. No. His will. Yes. We should see prayer as a way surrender to God’s will and cooperate with it. If we throw a hook from the boat, catch hold of the dock and pull, do we pull the dock to us, or do we pull ourselves to the dock? Prayer is not pulling God to our will, but aligning our will to God’s.

We need a knowledge of God’s will. We’re correct in assuming we discover it as we dig into his Word. Guidance comes in the form of commands, principles, promises and proverbs. The Holy Spirit is given to help us understand and enable us to discern God’s will. The Spirit is the facilitator through which God works in us so we’ll have the desire to act according to God’s purposes (Philippians 2:13).

At times Scripture expressly reveals God’s will by using that precise word. These include: sanctification, avoiding sexual immorality and impurity (I Thessalonians 4:1-8), perseverance (Hebrews 10:36), service (Ephesians 6:5-9; I Peter 5:2), non-conformation to the world, transformation, and renewal (Romans 12:1-2), wise living (Ephesians 5:15-21), continual rejoicing, ceaseless prayer, and constant thanksgiving (I Thessalonians 5:16-18). Other Scriptures don’t use the term “will,” but speak of the Lord’s desires: no one should perish but come to salvation, (2 Peter 3:9), love the Lord with all our heart, soul, mind and strength (Matthew 22:36 - 40).

Greg Brown “To pray effectively, we must know God’s will. The primary way we know God’s will is by knowing Scripture. The more people know what Scripture says about parenting, dealing with conflict, serving, working, decision-making, marriage, etc., the more they can obey God’s will... We should pray for governments to practice God’s ethics—that there would be no corruption in our politics. We should pray for parents to raise their children in the Lord and that children would honor their parents. We should pray for the church to be holy, preach God’s Word, evangelize, serve the needy, and impact society in a way that draws people towards God” (bible.org/seriespage/23-may-your-will-be-done-matthew-610b#_ftn2).

Praying “your will be done” isn’t a prayer for God to answer anyway he wants -- “Do whatever.” Rather, it’s praying God’s will would be accomplished. While it’s true we sometimes may not understand what his will is, we should strive to know what the Bible says and pray accordingly.

Another aid in determining the will of God is the counsel of mature followers of Christ. They can help us in areas Scripture addresses as well as others where we need guidance – job, college choice, relationships.

There are lots of areas where the Lord leaves the decisions to us. Paint your kitchen blue or green? The kind of clothes to wear (unless they’re immodest). The kind of car to purchase. God has teaching about being a good steward of his money and not being wasteful, but there’s nothing about what brand is better. At the restaurant, do we order rhubarb pie or sour cream raisin pie...or a slice of each? What pleases us pleases God.

We need to address the role of circumstances which often present an expedient, convenient, or easy choice. (Andy Wilson, Evangelical Community Church of Abu Dhabi): “Circumstances are very much part of God’s leading, but sometimes they can be misleading. Most of us tend to rely exclusively on circumstances. Circumstances are many times more reliable as a negative guide than positive. If you believe that God is leading you to go to graduate school in engineering and you are unable to be admitted to any university, you can be fairly clear that God does not want you to attend graduate school. On the other hand, if you are accepted into three programs, that may not be an indication that He wants you to go into Engineering” (eccad.org/sermons/sermon/2011-07-15/affirming-the-will-of-god). Could also be an indication to persevere.

Our loving heavenly Father urges us to surrender our mind, will, emotions and body. Some gravitate to a specific Scripture. It may be: “Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will” (Romans 12:1, 2). Or “Don’t you know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies” (1 Corinthians 6:19, 20). Or “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me” (Luke 9:23). Or “Be filled with (controlled by) the Spirit” (Ephesians 5:18). The principle is the same -- Give God control of all our little kingdoms.

This request ends with the phrase “on earth as it is in heaven.” The intent is for God’s will to be accomplished here the way it is in heaven. We aren't able to fulfill it in the same manner because we aren't in the perfect ideal location. And we’re sinners. However, we can pray God's will would be done now without hesitation, cheerfully and voluntarily. Can you imagine any of the angels saying, “Oh, if I have to” or “In a minute. After I get done watching a rerun of Moses parting the Red Sea.”

There’s also the element of looking forward to the time when Jesus Christ will rule and reign on earth for the 1000 year Millennium. Then God's will will be lived out perfectly. Some will delight in doing what God wants. Others will be forced to submit because Jesus will rule with an iron thumb.

Results and promises regarding those who do the will of God. Gain heaven: “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 7:21). Relationship with Jesus: “For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother” (Matthew 12:50). Depend on God’s love: “He who did not spare his own son, but gave him up for us all – how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?” (Romans 8:32).

It’s like parents whose child has told them he/she will obey what mommy and daddy say. Will the parents then decide to make their child’s life miserable, tough, grim? Will they seek to torment their child? Or will they give the child what is best out of their love for the child and the child’s love for them? God acts out of love.