

# Embracing The Will Of God

Every true follower of Jesus Christ says he wants to do the will of God. Yet most Christians think of God's will as something that is imposed on them - something distasteful and difficult, which they are forced to do.

I believe the perfect will of God is a matter of great importance to all who say they love the Lord. And there is a vast difference between submitting to God's will and embracing His will.

To submit means to "subject oneself to," or to "give in to imposed conditions." Often, submitting is thought of in terms of punishment or discipline. For example, the government of Iraq was forced to submit to conditions of punishment set by the United Nations. The Iraqis did not embrace this imposed discipline - rather, they submitted to it.

Sadly, many Christians see the will of God in this way. They picture God as demanding that they give in to a hard set of rules and conditions: "Do it My way, or you're on your own!"

How very wrong they are! How very different from our lovely Savior is such thinking. The truth is, when a believer knows the glory of doing the Lord's perfect will, he embraces it with joy and hope! To embrace means "to clasp, as in your arms" - to press to your bosom as an expression of love and affection. Yet the sad fact is, very few Christians embrace God's perfect will.

Perhaps you're thinking, "God's perfect will has passed me by. My life is haphazard - it has no form or order to it." No! You can rest assured that God has an absolute, perfect plan and will for every one of His children. He leaves no single life to chance. In fact, He wants to

order every step of your days here on earth. And He desires that you enter into His plan and will for you today!

God's beautiful will is not just for ministers or deeply spiritual saints, but for all His children. The New Testament exhorts us: "*That (we) no longer should live the rest of (our) time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God*" (1 PET 4:2). "*Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight*" (HEB 13:21).

The early apostles had one desire for all the churches - that every member know God's perfect will for their lives and embrace it. Paul wrote of a brother named Epaphras, "*who is one of you, a servant of Christ... always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God*" (COL 4:12). Epaphras knew God had a perfect will for everyone in the congregation. And he knew that if they would enter into the Lord's will, they would find joy, ecstasy and their every need met.

It is very easy for any one of us to say, "Yes, I want God's perfect will in my life!" But the truth is, no believer enters His will without a great struggle. God's perfect will is embraced only in Gethsemane - and Jesus set the example for us.

## You Simply Cannot Embrace God's Will until You Die to all Self-Will!

It was prophesied of Jesus from the very beginning that He would come to earth for one eternal purpose: to fulfill the will of the Father. "*Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God*" (HEB 10:7).

Christ told His disciples: "*I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me*" (JH 5:30). "*My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work*" (4:34). "*For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me*" (6:38).

There was never a moment in Jesus' life when He wasn't aware that His purpose on earth was to do the will of the Father. This ought to be true of us as well - that in every waking hour of the day we seek to do His will. The fact is, we no longer belong to ourselves; we have been bought with a price. And like Jesus, we were created to do the Father's perfect will!

Yet, no matter how spiritual you are or how long you have walked with Jesus, a time will come when you'll have to decide once and for all whose will is going to prevail in your life: yours - or the Father's. Jesus had to face such an hour. He knew He had a divine, eternal call. But He was also human - and He was greatly tested!

When that hour came for Christ, He saw before Him the painful cost of embracing His Father's perfect will. It meant walking straight into the jaws of death - into pain that was indescribable and unknown - and he became *"exceeding sorrowful, even unto death"* (MT 26:38). *"Being in an agony... his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground"* (Luke 22:44). Jesus' very flesh began to quake!

Beloved, our Lord's bloody battle at Gethsemane was all about embracing God's will: *"Oh my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt"* (MT 26:39). Jesus' own human will had to die. He had a life-or-death struggle over it!

Yet, when He arose from that struggle, His soul was flooded with ecstasy. There was something in Him of eternal glory - because something had been settled: His own will lay forever dead!

**Our Lord went to the Cross with complete joy - because He was already dead.** He had died to everything that was of His humanity. And He was able to say, "Father, I did not come here to live an easy life. I came to spend Myself for you. Now I face the cost - and I embrace it!"

Jesus clung to the Father's will with an affection that lifted Him beyond all the sufferings that lay ahead. No man or demon could touch Him. And now He eagerly anticipated the glory that would be His father's!

**IF WE ARE TO BE LIKE CHRIST,  
WE TOO WILL HAVE OUR  
GETHSEMANE WHEN FACED  
WITH MOVING INTO GOD'S  
PERFECT WILL.**

You may have testified for years: "I'm here on earth to do God's will alone. I will obey!" But then one day you are brought face to face with a life-or-death crisis beyond anything you have ever known. It is a place where choosing God's will can be the most painful, difficult decision you have ever faced.

In the end, you have three options:

1. **You can run.**
2. **You can do nothing, going the way of self-will.**

**3. Or you can do it God's way, the hard way - the way of death.**

The Lord's way almost always looks painful, hopeless. And embracing it can mean dying to all you had hoped for in the flesh. Let me give you two true-life illustrations:

**A vivacious young English girl was called to be a missionary.** She had given her heart totally to the Lord - and she was full of ambition for Jesus! She led a small prayer group and worked with street people. And like most girls her age, she hoped to find a spiritual young man to marry - someone who would share her burden for the lost. She testified to friends and to Christ that she was ready to "do God's perfect will, no matter the cost!"

The day came when that desire was tested. She was just a very young girl - and the Holy Spirit told her to get on a boat and go to the Orient!

Down on her knees she went: "What about a husband, Lord - a spiritual covering for my ministry? What about all the heathen in England who need You? What about all my friends and our wonderful prayer meetings? Am I supposed to just take a suitcase and go - not knowing anybody, not even the language?"

She was facing the will of God - the unknowable. Yet she knew the Spirit had spoken, and His will was clearly revealed: "Go - and I'll go with you!"

She had a Gethsemane experience! And before she got up from prayer, she died - to all ambition, to church and friends, to all comfort and self-will. Joy filled her heart!

She got on the boat and kissed her friends good-bye. She had crossed the line: **God's will at any cost!** When the boat came to Hong Kong, God told her to get off - and she did, not knowing a soul.

That was over fifteen years ago. Today, Jackie Pullinger is a spiritual mother to literally hundreds of junkies and troubled people in the slums of Hong Kong. She is married to Jesus and is a true daughter of Zion. She knows the ecstasy of being in the perfect will of the Father - an ecstasy that never left her once she got on the boat!

**A woman named Amanda Smith lived over a century ago - a woman whose heart was set on God.** She was a humble black servant and a prayer warrior. People felt the presence of Jesus around her.

God sent this young woman a wonderful, loving husband who ministered with her. Amanda was a missionary at heart - she liked to travel, and she won people to the Lord wherever they went. But then the Civil War broke out, and Amanda's husband was killed.

Amanda grieved. But she continued giving herself completely to prayer and to the service of others. Eventually, though, she began to feel lonely. She began to pray, "Lord, send me a godly husband - one who will share my burden to travel and minister."

One day she met a man who appeared to be all of those things. He was a Methodist lay pastor who said he was going to become ordained as a circuit rider. Amanda prayed, "Oh Lord, thank You - this is the man!"

But Amanda did not take the matter to Gethsemane! She didn't seek the Lord for His perfect will. Deep down, she was afraid God might say no - and she wanted to marry him. Amanda never died to her will - and her will took over. They married - and within three weeks Amanda realized she had missed God's will. Her husband was not a man of prayer - he had been acting, just to win her heart. Then he confessed he wasn't going to be ordained. He said he knew she wouldn't have married him if he'd told her the truth!

Eventually, he left Amanda and backslid. She spent the rest of her life alone. But everything she did from that point on, she took to God, dying to her own will - and was greatly blessed! The Lord led her perfectly all her days. She was used mightily as a preacher of holiness. Amanda Smith had found ecstasy in God's perfect will!

**If the Will of God Is not  
Embraced Joyfully and Obediently,  
Something Frightful  
Happens!**

Hardness sets in - life loses its flavor, and all becomes dead. This is what Jesus meant when He said, *"Remember Lot's wife!"* (LK 17:32).

Now, it was God's perfect will to chasten and destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. And it was His gracious will to take Lot and his family to safety. If the angels hadn't taken them all by the hand and dragged them out, they would have been lost! Yet, Lot's wife did not turn into a pillar of salt simply because she turned back to look. I'm sure Lot and his daughters couldn't help looking back also upon such a holocaust.

No - what Jesus was saying about Lot's wife goes much deeper. You see, she was angry at God! In her heart, she was married to her house, her family, her circle of friends - and God was taking it all away. She had no desire for God's perfect will if it meant losing all those things!

I can hear her crying: "God, it's not fair! Everything was going so well. My beautiful kitchen, my lovely china - none of that was sinful. I was a good mother. Our Sunday dinners were so wonderful. Why are you taking everything from me?"

At that moment, in her brooding anger, her heart turned to stone. Bitterness consumed her. And Jesus was saying of her, "When you're married to things and won't get out of Sodom, a hardness will set in you. You'll be like a lifeless statue, dead inside - because things have attached themselves to your heart!"

Not only did Lot's wife miss God's will - including a new beginning, with peace and purpose - but she also lost all her earthly dreams and longings! It all went up in smoke!

#### **Doing the Will of God Can Require Walking Right into the Face of Fiery Furnace!**

Consider the three Hebrew children - Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. They were young men in the prime of life: leaders of provinces, having authority, experts in linguistics. Their goal was to bring the Hebrew laws of morality to their heathen society. There is no telling what dreams they shared for God's glory!

But they were commanded by decree to worship an idol with the rest of the people. They were warned: "You have twenty-four hours. If you don't bow down at the sound of the trumpet, you'll be

thrown into a furnace that's heated seven times over!"

God's will was very clear to them: they could not possibly bow down! Yet there they were, three brilliant young men - facing the death of all they knew.

Of course, they had options. They could have said, "We will bow only in our flesh - but not in our hearts!"

Or, they could have escaped. They had armed guards at their command, the best Arabian horses at their disposal. They had all the money they needed at their fingertips, in the national treasury. And there were safe havens in nearby countries.

But Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego did none of those things. Instead, I believe they had an all-night prayer meeting! There wasn't a single voice of compromise that night - because they all did what Jesus did: they had a Gethsemane!

They died to their will - to all their abilities, to their future in government, to all their godly plans. **And the moment they died that night, their hearts were filled with ecstasy!** They hugged God's will, loving it - they would never let it go. They said, "Oh God, we'll face anything! You are able to deliver us from this - but even if You don't, we'll gladly go through it!"

They didn't resist when the soldiers came the next morning and bound them hand and foot. Rather, I believe that as those young men were led away to the furnace, they sang praises to God - because they had come into the ecstasy of His perfect will!

Beloved, stop and look into the white-hot flames of that seven-times-heated furnace: **That is exactly what it looks like to stare into the perfect will of God!** It is scary, frightful, painful to the flesh, with no promise of a reprieve. There is only an invitation: "Go in!"

Yet when those three Hebrew men were cast into the furnace, they were already dead! Dead to all ambition, dead to the joys of hearing the prophetic messages Daniel had shared, dead to any thought of wives and children, dead to all hopes and dreams. Only one thing mattered to them: obeying the perfect will of God!

Then you gladly embrace God's will - when you have truly died to self - something is released in your heart that nobody can explain or give to you. It places you beyond the reach of men and devils. But it is not released until you go into the furnace!

#### **A Marvelous Glory Awaits the Soul who Embraces the Will of God!**

The furnace door represents a crossing over into God's perfect will. On this side of the door is an army of mocking enemies, visions of pain and suffering. Demons scream at you: "God doesn't expect this of you! He loves you. Didn't He say He'd give you the desires of your heart? You've become a fanatic!"

But once you cross the line and embrace the will of God, something incredible happens: **Jesus manifests Himself to you!**

When the Hebrew children were inside the furnace, Jesus was there waiting. He did not reveal Himself right away - because first they had to decide to embrace His will. Yet when they did embrace it and had died to all self-will, Jesus manifested Himself to them. And what they thought were painful coals were instead turned into green pastures and gentle breezes - because Jesus had gone before them!

**The very moment you walk into the furnace - when you cross to the other side and embrace God's will - you'll turn around and see Jesus.** He will be there in a manifestation that you cannot have in any other way. And He will do three things for you:

**1. First, He will become everything in your life.** He will be your joy, your expectation. He will touch that place in your heart that no person on earth can touch.

I love my wife and my children. The love, compassion and friendship I receive from them are all a joy to me. But there is only one ecstasy in my life - only one Person who can meet the deepest need in me - and that's my Lord. And I too have met Him in the furnace!

**2. The next thing Jesus will do is to cause all your bondages to fall off.** When Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego went into the fur-

nace they stepped into a release: every bond was broken, every hurt was healed, every fear vanished - because Jesus moved in quickly!

*"And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste... and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God"*

DAN 3:23-25

The king saw four men - walking, talking and embracing. The three young men were being embraced - hugged - by Jesus!

Are you hurting? Do you know how to get your hurt healed? It won't happen simply because God sends someone who understands you - because nobody understands you the way Jesus does. No, the only One who can meet you completely is Jesus Himself! Whether you have emptiness, sorrow or anything else - when you walk into the furnace of His will, all your bonds will fall off!

### 3. Finally, you will receive a call to preach Christ to the nations.

When the three Hebrew young men entered the furnace, a call came to them which could not have come in any other way:

*"Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace... and said... ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither... Then Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God.*

*"Therefore I make a decree, that every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing amiss against (their) God... Shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill: because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort"* DAN 3:26-30

Talk about a Macedonian call! Look how quickly God changed the whole atmosphere, in such a short time - from mockery, to wonder, to a call to make the gospel heard!

Beloved, this is what is going to happen in the last days! People

won't turn to big-name preachers. Instead, they'll look to simple, lowly saints who have yielded themselves wholly to the perfect will of God! These are ones who have known the heart of Jesus. They have come out of the furnace having been with Christ - and people will gather around them, saying, "Please, talk to me. I see you giving your body and your soul to Jesus - and I want to know more about it!"

### Finally, Doing the Will of God Sometimes Requires Going Back into a Family Situation that You've Been Running from

You may be in a family situation that seems hopeless. You've cried out, "Lord, I can't handle it - I know You don't expect this of me!" You think you can't go on much longer - and if you haven't run yet, you probably feel like it. Yet it is never God's plan to run!

Jacob had a terrible family situation. It was more than he could handle - in fact, it threatened his very life. He had robbed his brother Esau of his birthright and angered him to the point of murder.

How did Jacob handle his problem? He ran from it all! He didn't have a Gethsemane - he didn't die to self-will and ask God what to do. Instead, Jacob listened to the voice of his flesh - that is, to his mother, Rebekah, who said, *"My son, obey my voice; and arise, flee"* (GEN 27:43).

Jacob ran for twenty years - and those were twenty years of heart-ache and trouble. Finally, God told him it was time to face it all: *"Now arise, get thee out from this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred"* (31:13). God was saying, "Jacob, you're never going to know fullness in Me until you turn and face this problem head on. Go - walk into the furnace!"

Jacob journeyed back with his family to make things right - and what do you think he saw first? It was Esau, coming out of the desert to meet him - with four hundred angry soldiers, ready for revenge!

Jacob cried, "Oh Lord, I need a miracle! You've got to change my brother's heart. Take away his hatred for me!" Jacob had fear and anger in his heart toward God - because he had only submitted to God's will! He was saying, "Lord,

I've set my heart to obey You - but things are not going right!"

Perhaps things are not right in your family. Do you have an alcoholic husband, a wife who doesn't understand you, financial problems? Beloved, those are the very things Esau and his army represent - every pain, every argument of the flesh, every reason your mind can conjure why you can't face your hopeless situation. The devil tells you: "You've obeyed God, you've done right - but nothing has changed! Your loved one's heart is still hard - in fact, it's worse. If you don't run now, you'll spend the rest of your life in a living hell!"

The truth is, you can't go on - if you're just going to submit. But you can go on if you do as Jacob did: he had a Gethsemane - a night of dying! I know what Jacob prayed that night - because I've prayed it:

"Oh, God, this situation is too much for me. I've manipulated and tried to make things happen. But I'm tired of doing things my way! I can't run anymore, Lord - I want my life to be right with You. Esau may kill me and my family - he may take everything I have. But I'd rather be with You in glory than go another day living this way!"

**That night, Jacob died.** God crippled him so he could never run again. He could only hobble into the future, wholly dependent on the Lord. Yet something else happened as well: ecstasy filled his soul. And I believe when Jacob walked across the brook to meet Esau early the next morning, he was absolutely fearless!

You too may be facing an Esau. You may think, "Does this mean my husband will never change - that nothing in my life is ever going to be better?"

No - God changed Esau! He took the heart of stone out of him. And by the time Esau met Jacob, he fell on his brother, kissing and embracing him. There was total peace!

Dear saint, don't be afraid to step into the furnace. As long as you have the peace of Jesus and the perfect will of God, you can stand anything, anywhere, at any time. Your circumstances may not change - but you will! Jesus will fill your soul with joy and heal all your

hurt and pain. Your life will be full,  
blessed - because He will be  
everything to you!

You don't have to run. You need  
only look to Him - to embrace His  
perfect will for you. And He will  
give you His exceeding great joy in

the very midst of your present fiery  
trial. **Hallelujah!**

David Wilkerson 11-30-1992

Copyright © 1996 by World Challenge, Lindale Texas

\*\*\*\*\*

**CHRISTIAN ASSEMBLIES INTERNATIONAL, P.O. BOX 888, COFFS HARBOUR NSW 2450, AUSTRALIA**