

"WHAT DOES GOD REQUIRE?"

Deuteronomy 10:12-13

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Without a doubt one of the most often asked questions by Christians is probably the question, "What is the will of God?" At some time or other probably every believer who has ever confessed the name of Christ has had to deal with the question, "What is the will of God?"

In answer to that question there are probably as many responses as there are theologians and probably as many ideas as there are believers.

Because what are we really talking about when we talk about the will of God?

Well many of us probably grew up with the traditional understanding that there are three aspects to God's will. One was to be totally out of God's will which meant you never did anything that God wanted you to. Another was to be in God's permissive will where you did some things that God wanted you to do. The other was to be in God's perfect will where you did everything that God wanted you to do.

I grew up in a Christian home. I grew up in a ministers's home; and I grew up in the church. And I never yet have seen any one who has ever had God's perfect will other than Enoch who walked with God.

Well, we know what we mean by that and it is driving us to know more about how we ought to live for God.

I'm not sure that there is such a thing as God's permissive will. Probably we are either in the will of God or we are out of the will of God or some degree in between.

It's kind of like that old Pop Song we used to sing - "You got to accent the positive, eliminate the negative and don't mess with Mr. In between."

Well - what are we really saying when we talk about - I want to know God's will and what is the will of God?

Well - we have to understand that God's will is more than some activity that we do. God's will is more than some title that we seek. God's will is more than some office that we hold. God's will is more than some accomplishment that we have achieved.

When we look at the Bible we understand God's will. It is not art; it is an attitude of the very being.

God's will in this regard then -- when we look at the Bible -- it is something that is happening on the inside, that God is doing in our very being.

When the Bible talks about God's will it tells us that God's will is really a release. In Psalm 40 verse 8 we hear the Psalmist say -- I delight to do thy will oh God for thy law is within my heart. And we release that creative energy of the Word. That Is the will of God -- to release the law that is in our heart.

When God talks about His will, He talks about it in the terms of revelation. Psalm 143:10, the Psalmist says -

Teach me to do thy will oh God for thou art my
God. Lead me in the plain path (or lead me in
a straight path).

The will of God, then, is a revelation of knowing the meaning of that creative word that he wants to release out of our very lives.

When the Bible talks about the will of God it talks about it in terms of a responsive discipleship because in Ephesians chapter 6 verse 6 it says -

We don't serve God as men pleasers with eye
service or lip service but we have to do the
will of God from the heart.

It is a response of discipleship. We release the Word; we have the revelation of the understanding of that Word as we live as disciples of Jesus Christ.

When the Bible talks about the will of God it talks about it in terms of resiliency -- being able to handle whatever comes our way.

In First Thessalonians chapter 5 verse 18 there is an interesting text that is almost paradoxical. It tells us to - "Be thankful whatever the circumstances are." Now that's not always easy to do. "Be thankful whatever the circumstances are for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus."

The circumstances aren't particularly the will of God, but your being able to have the resiliency to stand up under those circumstances in an attitude of gratitude - that is the will of God.

When the Bible talks about the will of God, it talks about us being in relationship to Him, through Jesus Christ. It is interesting that in Matthew 12:50, Jesus Christ said,

If anyone does the will of My Father, the same
is my brother, and the same is my sister, and
the same is my mother.

Meaning that we have a relationship with Him.

Thus it is that when we talk about the will of God, we are talking about a quality of life. When we talk about the will of God, we are talking about becoming the image that He is giving to us in Jesus Christ.

This is the meaning of John 13:15,

I have given you an example that you should do
to others as I have done to you.

This is the meaning of I Peter 2:21,

Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example
that we should follow in His steps.

This is the meaning of I John 2:6,

He that says he abides in Him, ought also to
walk even as He walked.

Therefore, if we talk about the will of God, it is some kind of
intellectual acquiescence. It is more than an emotional
experience. It is more than a Kingdom understanding.

It is more than a position in ministry. It is more than any
kind of activity that we do. When God talks about His will being
done in our lives, He is talking about us to release the Word that
He has put in us. He is talking about us to have that Word
revealed in a way that we can understand it.

He is talking about responding as a disciple. He is talking
about us coming to that place in our lives where we can be
resilient whatever the circumstances are. He is talking about us
having a relationship with God that will not fade.

So, regardless of what is going on in our lives, we know that
"If God be for us, who can be against us?" Because we understand
that God's will is that we fear Him. God's will is that we walk in
His ways. God's will is that we serve Him. God's will is that we
love Him. God's will is that we obey His commands.

And if we obey Him, then every promise that He has is
available to us. And in Him we live, and we move, and we have our

being. Amen, amen, and Amen....

Well you say, "Pastor Walker, that sounds fantastic. But I don't really understand how that can work. There is so much confusion about the will of God? So I hear what you are saying. It is something that God does in my life. It is the quality of my life whereby I become Christ-like in my living style."

In other words, the will of God is the same for every individual. It is that we ought to become more and more like Jesus Christ as we live for Christ each day.

There are different callings; there are different ministries; there are different places that we have in the Body, that will come under the will of God. But the general, over-all will of God is that each one of us learn what God really requires of us.

But we say, "But you know, it is so confusing. It is so difficult." A man told me sometime ago, he said, "You know, the will of God is kind of like marriage. It helps if you know the boss." And it is always good, if you are going to know the will of God, to know God.

So many people are thinking about their doing. Speaking of marriage, I heard one lady say, not long ago, "You know that marriage is like a midnight call. You get a ring and then you wake up." Now, I don't know if you feel that way about that situation not.

I had a man call me not long ago. And he said to me; it was early in the morning. I had not even gotten out of the bed yet. He said, "Do you really believe what you preach?" Now, I mean, at five thirty in the morning, who really knows who you are, or what you believe? No coffee, no breakfast. I started to say to him, "I don't even know who I am, much less what I believe."

But I shook myself and got myself awake. I said, "Sure, I believe what I preach."

He said, "Why do you believe what you preach?" I said, "Because I have practiced it and I know that it works." He said, "Sometimes I think it is just wishful thinking."

And I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "Well, I cannot seem to make anything work. I have been going through this problem, the other problem; the other problem...." I said, "What are you doing about it?"

He was doing this; and he was doing that; and he was doing the other thing. I said, "Well in the midst of all of this, do you really know God?" He said, "What does that have to do with it?" That has everything to do with it. That has everything to do with it.

Because God's will comes through the relationship that we have with him. And when we give ourselves totally to Him, we don't live our lives. He lives His life through us by the power of Jesus

Christ, in us, the hope of glory. Amen, amen, and amen....

For so many people today, it is just a shot in the dark. It is kind of a hit or a miss. What do I really to ascertain what God requires?

JOKE

It kind of reminds me of the story of the three ministers who were on a ship. The ship got shipwrecked at sea and the three of them wound up marooned on a desert island, all by themselves. One of them was a Catholic priest, one of them was a Jewish Rabbi, and one of them was a pentacostal pastor.

So, they got well acquainted and since they were marooned on the island, they divided up the work load. Since the Catholic priest was celibate, he was the only one that knew how to cook, so he did the cooking. Since the Jewish Rabbi was the most intellectual, he sat down on the beach and watched for some ship to come by that they could hail and perhaps get rescued. And since the pentacostal preacher liked to move around a lot, he collected the wood and built the fires and kept everything together.

And it worked out really well.

One day, the Jewish Rabbi came running up from the beach and said, "Come down here to the beach quickly. A big bottle has washed up on the beach. It has a big cork in it and I don't know what to do."

So they rushed down and looked at it and said to him, "Well, pull out the cork." So the Jewish Rabbi pulled out the cork and lo, and behold a genie appeared. The genie said, "Thank you for releasing me. I have been in this bottle for 3500 years. I have the power to grant three wishes. There are three of you here and I will give each one of you a wish. Who wants to go first?"

They said to the Jewish Rabbi, "Well, since you found the bottle, you go first." He said, "Well, I have never been to Jerusalem. I have always wanted to go the western wall that we used to know as the wailing wall. I wish that I were there right now." And "poof" he was gone.

The Catholic priest went second. They asked him, "What do you really want?" He said, "You know, I have never missed a Notre Dame / Southern California football game in all the time that I have been a priest. I wish that I were there right now." "Poof," he was gone.

The genie looked at the pentacostal pastor and said, "Now, what is it that you want?" He said, "You know, I have really learned to love and appreciate those men. I wish that they were here with me right now."

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Somebody just got it, right there about three-quarters of the way back. Help them with it won't you?

But when Moses was talking to the children of Israel here in the Book of Deuteronomy, it was not wishful thinking. These people were getting ready to go into the Promised Land. This was a whole new generation of folks, save for Joshua and Caleb, and just a few leaders.

A whole generation had been lost in forty years of wandering in the wilderness. Now they were getting ready to go into the Promised Land.

The Books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy have all been written to tell us about the "Exodus" and the deliverance of the Children of Israel out of Egyptian bondage.

When we come to Deuteronomy, it is a very special book because it gives to us insight into Moses in a little different way. Moses the theologian comes alive here. In this particular book he is trying to give to the Children of Israel an exposition of faith. He is trying to define for them the way that they can live by faith in this new and this strange land.

He is dealing with some important theological questions for them. Because they are having to deal with such questions as "What is the meaning of these great acts of God that have done so much for us? When we, as a people, we are not really worthy of His grace. We are not really worthy of His consideration. But yet He does these great acts."

"What is the meaning of this covenant relationship that we

have with God? And how do I live out, and what is God's will within the midst of that covenant relationship?"

That is the reason that they wrote so many laws and told them so many ways to live. So that they could know how to live by this covenant relationship with God.

The third thing was, "How do we handle the pressures? How do we handle the temptations in this new land? With strange gods, and strange people, and strange customs."

Now we know that Israel had a hard time with that. Because God had raised up Israel to bring them to the Promised Land to be a witness to all the people. And God wanted them to be a witness to all the nations.

God wanted through Israel - the people to see who He really was in all the world. But as you know, Israel kept having a hard time and they kept succumbing to the temptation and pressures around them.

The fourth question that Moses dealt with is - "What is the security that we are going to have in this Promised Land? To whom shall we go?"

As I look at our nation today I get the feeling that we have got to look at these same questions again because when God brought this nation into existence over 200 years ago and we began to forge on our coins - In God We Trust - and our first documents started out with the name of God. And, we put the Ten Commandments in our

court rooms and we swore on the Bible and the Bible became the very touch stone of everything we did in our education, everything we did in our society, it was then that we were raised up to be a witness unto all the world.

And I have the feeling that now in this day, when we are no longer a Christian nation, when other nations in the world are sending missionaries to us to bring us the gospel -- those of us who have brought the gospel to the world -- it is time for the United States to wake up and ask the question, "What does God require?" And to answer it by saying - "He requires that we fear Him, that we love Him, that we walk in His ways, and we obey His commands." And, until we do that we will never be the nation that God has raised us up to be. Amen, amen and amen. Well praise Him in this place.

So Moses tells the people --- Look, what you have got to remember -- if you are going to survive int his land there are certain things you have to do.

The first thing we have to answer when we asks, "What does God require?" He requires us to recognize the very character of His nature. God has a character. He has a nature. We have to recognize that and that character is that we fear Him.

You know we used to talk about "God-fearing people." We would say - "He is a God-fearing man." When is the last time you heard that? "He is a God-fearing man." "She is a God-fearing

woman."

When my mother and father when I was younger and was dating girls and they got a little worried that I might date the wrong one. They said - "What you want Paul is a God-fearing woman." I said, "No that is what you want -- is a God-fearing woman." I mean when you are fifteen, sixteen and seventeen that is not exactly in your repertoire at that time in your life. That's before I met Carmelita. Carmelita is a God-fearing woman. She has made me a God-fearing man and a Carmelita fearing man would go along with that. I don't know if she is in this eleven o'clock service or not, I hope not. I think she went to hear Mark preach is what I really believe she did today. We may just turn her out of the church this morning if she went to hear Mark -- no I won't do that.

What does it mean to fear God? On the one hand we know there is a tension we live with. In other words we know that "God is love" in First John chapter 4 verse 16 it says - "God is love and whoever loves, loves God and God loves that person." Verse 18 it says - "Fear cast out love and perfect fear cast out love. There is no fear in love and perfect fear cast out love. And the person who fears has not been perfected in love."

unless you understand hate. You can't understand faith unless you understand doubt. That everything in the world has a thesis and has an antithesis - we have to learn to live with the

synthesis. When it talks about the fear of God there is a two-sided figure there. When Adam and Eve had sinned in the Garden of God and God came walking in the cool of the day they hide from Him because they were afraid.

Now there has to be healthy fear of God. There has to be that understanding of a healthy respect. An understanding that God is a God to be feared. If you lose that understanding that God is a God to be feared then you can never understand the respect for God.

The man that I love most in all of my life was my father. I respected my father. The one side of fear is respect - it is reverence - it is awe - it is honor - it is devotion - it is esteem. The other side of that is that I am afraid if I don't live up to that reverence and that awe and that esteem then I am going to miss what he has for me because I can't be a recipient of His love because I have lost my respect and I have severed myself from him.

What I learned was that my father - I had to respect my father and there was a side of fear there even though I knew my father loved me. My father would only speak once - I knew that if he spoke once the best thing to do was to do it. If I did not do it there were times when the right hand of fellowship was placed on the seat of intellect.

Anybody here remember that?

We find ourselves surrounded by a society that no longer fears God. In Romans chapter 3 verse 18 - if you go in the first seventeen verses before it - the first twelve verses before it - it talks about what happens when a society gives way to total sin and has total depravity.

The book of Romans has two philosophies. One - how does a soul become righteous, the first twelve chapters. The last four chapters - how does the righteous soul act?

In chapter 3 he is talking about the problem of learning how to act in a sinful society.

In Romans chapter 3 verse 18 he says - "There was no fear of God before their eyes.

We look at our world today and we wonder what is happening here? What is happening in the White House? What has happened to the Congress? What has happened in our educational institutions? What has happened in our judicial system? What has happened in our legislative system? Everything seems to be falling apart. You know what has happened -- we have lost our fear of God and until we retain the understanding that God will judge the earth we will never be what God wants to be nor will we be able to do what God wants us to do. We have got to come back to the fear of the Lord. Amen, amen and amen.

It is down to a tragedy time. You look at Romans chapter 3 and you look at beginning with about verse 12 and following down to 18, it gives us a picture of what it is to be in total sin. It talks about the Gentile world being in sin, the Hebrew world being in sin because it was not keeping the law of God. But what the law looked to in Jesus Christ. And it tells us that they all turned away. They were all worthless. "No one did what was good - no not one." It went on to say -

That their throats were like open graves.

Their tongues were filled with deceit. The
poison of vipers was on their lips.

And he goes on to say -

Their lips were filled with cursings and
bitterness.

Said - "Their feet were swift to shed blood. "

It said that -

The very ruin of misery were the way of their
life. And the way of peace was not to be
found. And there was no fear of the Lord
before their eyes.

It's in our art; it's in our music; it's in our movies; it's
in our books; it's in our White House; it's in our Congress.

And what has to happen before we are going to have this world
ready for Jesus Christ to come, we have got as a nation to come

back to one fact. What does God require? That we fear Him and do His will to be His witness in all of the world.

It's really a tragedy when "Achy, Breaky Heart" can make the top forty we have a problem. How many of you know that hymn?

JOKE

Heard the story the other day about a big American Music Concert they had in one of these under-developed Third World countries under a dictatorship. They had the everything from the worst of country music to the best of jazz and everything in between.

There was a big riot that occurred. Some people got killed and they finally boiled down to they blamed it on one country western singer and one jazz musician. They were accused of murder, convicted and they were sentenced to die before a firing squad.

So they took them out on the day of their execution and just before they blind folded them they came up to the country western singer and asked him, "Do you have one last request before you are shot?" He thought for a minute and said "Yes," - I would like to hear six choruses of "Achy Breaky Heart."

They looked at the Jazz musician who was a pure jazz musician and said, "I think we can give his request to him and we will try to arrange that." "What is your last request?" He thought it over for a minute and said, "Please shoot me first."

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But when you really learn to fear God - it is to understand that the love of God has a disciplinary side.

Romans 14 and 12 says that "everything one of us shall give account unto himself unto God."

Hebrews 7:23 says "it is appointed unto man once to die and after this the judgement."

Second Corinthians 5 and 10 - "That we shall give account of every deed that is done in the body whether it is good or whether it is bad and by our deeds we are justified and by our deeds we are going to be condemned."

We begin to understand that that fear of the Lord then brings us into the understanding of what the respect of God really is.

One of the things that bothers me today is - one of the problems in our homes with discipline, the problems in our schools with discipline, the problems in personal lives with discipline, the problems between husbands and wives and families and the problems with drug addiction and alcoholism is that this is a loss of respect for the human body, loss of respect for the human being, loss of respect for father and for mother, loss of respect for the sanctity of the home.

I grew up in a minister's home. I grew up under the circumstances where I had that respect, because I knew if I didn't respect then it was going to mean that I had to have the consequence of my actions. I know there are people who get

victimized. I know there are things which happen over which we have no control and we find ourselves as victims. But a lot of the things that are happening in the world today are a result of individual choice. And the things that we choose the Bible says -

Whatsoever things we sow that shall we also
reap.

There is a law of sowing and reaping. Until we sow that seed in fertile soil that can be anointed by the power of the Holy Spirit we will never reap the kind of harvest that will bring the abundant life.

When you have that fear for Him then you come to the understanding of what it means on the other side of the coin, "What does God require?" That holy respect. You can come to know Him in the same way that the Israelites did.

In Exodus chapter 14 verse 31 when they stood on the other side of the Red Sea and they saw God as He destroyed the Egyptian Army before their eyes. When they saw the great and mighty acts God's destruction of the Egyptian the Bible says they feared the Lord and they put their trust in Him. Hallelujah be to God.

And in Exodus chapter 15 and verse 11 they began to sing the song of Moses. The Bible tells us that when we get to heaven we are going to sing the song of Moses and we are going to sing the song of the lamb. And the song of Moses was sung at the Red Sea.

And they said - "Who among them is like you?"

Who is like you oh Lord? You are majestic in holiness. You are awesome in glory. You are wondrous in your works for you are the great God who has created all the universe.

And you have the last word in everything. Amen, amen and amen. Well praise God.

You will have to forgive me for being Camp Meeting style but I've preached in the Word in Action black church Tuesday night. And they nearly preached me to death. I preached everything that was in the Bible and some things that were not.

But you know it would be wonderful if we could come back to the kind of leadership that we had and all the presidents that I look at as I was studying growing up and many of you probably had the same experience.

Abraham Lincoln made a real impression on me. I guess maybe he made an impression on me because he had human frailty. He was never held up like a pseudo-hero. He was a man who pulled himself up by his own bootstraps. Two nervous breakdowns - bankrupt in business - tragic loss of a son - here is a man who had a bad marriage, it was unhappy all the way. Here was a man who lost in his bid for the election to the State Legislature. Lost in his bid for election to the Congress. Lost in his bid for election to the Senate. Lost in his bid for the Vice President.

But then really probably by a sovereign act of God was elected President when the country was in such turmoil.

TAPE TURNS OVER

Here was a man who feared God. Here was a man who knew God.

I ran across some of the words from some of his speeches. Concerning his love for common people he said - "God must be a lover of the common people or he would not have made so many of them."

With regard to his honesty, he said - "If in your judgement you can not be an honest lawyer, resolve to be honest without being a lawyer."

Abraham Lincoln said that, I didn't say that.

With regard to his commitment to right, he said - "I am not bound to win, but I am bound to be true. I am not bound to succeed, but I am bound to live up to what light I have."

With regard to his compassion and foresight, eh said - "I believe this nation can not endure permanently half slave and half free."

With regard to his resolution, that

We here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vein. (In his Gettysburg Address).

Concerning his trust in God,

Without the assistance of the divine being I

can not succeed. Wtih that assistance I can not fail.

What would it be like if the President of the United States came on the television - national coverage, international coverage, universal coverage, Mars coverage. Were to say - "Without the assistance of God we can not succeed. But with the assistance of God, we can not fail. And in God we trust.

American -- we must go to our knees and pray for God's guidance to help us to resolve these problems. If that were to happen you would see the greatest revival shake this nation that we have ever known. Amen, amen and amen. Hallelujah. Praise God.

I am tired of the "namby pamby" way that we allow small minorities to determine the direction of a nation that was built on the faith in the living God. Amen, amen and amen.

Well praise the Lord in this place. Let the people of the Lord praise the Lord. Praise Him in this place. Praise God forever. Give Him praise and Give Him honor and give Him glory. Hallelujah.

CHORUS

As you remain standing for just a moment longer, I want to conclude in just a minute.

But there is a second phase to this thing. What does God require? He requires us to recognize the very essence of His character and nature.

But it requires us to respond to the meaning of that character and nature in devotional godliness.

What does He require to fear Him? But then to walk in His ways; then to love Him; then to serve Him; then to obey His commands.

What that really says to us is that we will respond to devotional godliness.

As you are standing here this morning if I am talking about devotional godliness, I am not talking about just reading your Bible every day. I am not just talking about having a regular prayer life. But I am talking about the very attitude of life. I'm talking about what you read when you read Numbers 32 verse 12 -

Caleb and Joshua followed the Lord wholeheartedly

I am talking about Second Kings chapter 23 verse 3 when it tells us there that Josiah and all the people of Judah after they had come back from Babylon - they had come back from Babylon, they had been away from the law of God. Then on account of the pseudo-worship experience of seventy years under the Babylon experience, they found the book of the Law and they read the book and the anointing of the Spirit came and they all broke into tears, the Bible said.

All the people committed themselves to keep
the covenant of the Lord.

I'm talking about Second Chronicles chapter 15 verse 15 when it says -

Under King Assacy and they sought the Lord
wholeheartedly and they had rest in their land
- no war in their land.

I'm talking about what we hear from the Apostle Paul in Philippians chapter 3 verse 8 when he said

I consider everything to be lost as compared
to the greatest of knowing Christ Jesus as
Lord. I count everything as rubbish that I
may gain Christ.

I'm talking about First Thessalonians chapter
5 verse 23 -

May God Himself, the God of peace, may He
cleanse you, may He baptize you, cleanse you
through and through. May your soul and spirit
and body be kept blameless at the coming of
the Lord Jesus Christ.

Then he said - Because He who called you is faith and He will
do it.

As we are standing here this morning and I don't know where
you are with this. I don't know - if you look into your own life
-- is there such a thing as devotional godliness?

There is nothing like the world and I've preached a lot of places across this country and in other nations. It's like what we have here. The Lord comes and blesses and when you sing, it doesn't matter what frame of mind I come in here - when we sing and rejoice in the Lord, I'm just raised up to a new level. I'm just raised up to a new level.

When you get out there everyday and you are fighting the devil and you get out there everything and you get under the pressure and you get under the burden and you get under the temptation, "What Does God require of you?" What does it mean that you have a devotional life before Him." What does it really led of that devotional life?

I ran across this -

Do more than move, improve.

Do more than get, give.

Do more than regret, repent.

Do more than look, see.

Do more than sympathize, help.

Do more than attend church, worship.

Do more than have children, rear them.

Do more than build a house, make a home.

Do more than breathe, live.

Do more than live, love.

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If you do that you have a devotional life if we are God.
Hallelujah be to God. We will let the people of the Lord praise
Him.

Let the people of the Lord praise Him.

CLOSING CHORUS