

# *Praying in the Will of God*

*...how the sovereignty of God  
includes  
the supplications of men*

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# Table of Contents

Some things to think about.....	3
Lesson 1. The will of God.....	4
Lesson 2. The plan of God.....	6
Lesson 3. The Sovereignty of God.....	7
Calvin vs. Arminius.....	8
Lesson 4. Example 1, Abraham.....	9
Lesson 5. Example 2, Pharaoh.....	11
Lesson 6. Example 3, Jesus in the Garden..	13

# Some things to think about...

1. Is God's will His broad wish,  
or His ultimate goal,  
or His detailed itemized plan?  
eg., Did God "plan" the death of His Son?  
Did God "plan" all other deaths? And the sicknesses that accompany?
2. Can prayer change the will and plan of God, or is prayer a part of the plan?
3. Has God determined what shall happen, or do we?  
Should our God be considered a computer with us at the keyboard?
4. Why did God create a being that can defy His will? *Or can he defy His will ?*  
(His plan, his sovereignty)?
5. Can Satan override the plans of God?
6. What does "sovereignty" mean?  
Are God's sovereignty and my free will compatible? Can both concepts be true?  
As trinity and unity  
As Deity and humanity of Jesus
7. If both can be true, were denominations dividing us necessary after all?  
Each group suffers from great gaps in understanding.

Ephesians 1:3-14. ...chosen before the foundation of the world... predestined to adoption... the good pleasure of His will... the mystery of His will... predestined according to His purpose.... *What does it all mean?*

# 1

## ***The will of God:***

### **1. Defined?**

What God wants, what God likes, what God chooses, what brings Him glory.

### **2. Done on earth.**

Genesis 1-2. God thinks it, does it, sees it, loves it. “Thy will be done on earth” is operating, the artist’s work.

But, man. Canvas spoiled? “What is wrong with this picture?”

Genesis 3. “Now the serpent...” Created by God whether Lucifer in heaven or serpent on earth.

The largest “why” of the Bible.

### **3. Unchanging**

Even when not obeyed immediately, every moment, or by all.

a. the call to salvation, I Peter 1:2, 2:9, II Peter 3:9,  
but Revelation 20:8,10,15.

b. the call to preach , Romans 11:29 (a salvation passage, but all gifts...)  
but Jonah.

c. the call to holiness, I Thessalonians 4:3, Hebrews 12:14  
but Galatians 6:1.

### **4. So, Perfect vs. Permissible will of God.** What God “allows” is not always what He wants.

a. Divorce. Matthew 19:8. Permitted but not so “from the beginning...”.

b. Denominations. Lifestyles. John 17. That they may be one.

c. Not everyone is judged immediately as Ananias/Sapphira.

Ananias-Sapphira symbols of his holiness and His perfect will.

Most of the rest of us are symbols of His longsuffering.

Churches, individuals have teachings & practices that are seemingly OK’d by time. No intervention.

But judgment comes (“White Throne” or Christ’s). Noah’s day.

Eventually, eg., the foods we eat catch up with us.

His will is done.

d. Though He is patient, His will has not changed.

Noah told, “Make all things according to the pattern.” If he had not we would not be here.

### **5. Praying in/for God’s will :**

a. David, Psalm 143:10/Acts 13:22.

With all the mistakes in David’s life, God saw him as a man who did His will.

b. Jesus, Matthew 6:10/Hebrews 10:1-10/Psalm 40:6-8.

As with divorce, sacrifice and offering not his best idea. Temporary measure.

Pattern for doing God's will: Ears open, God speaks, I go, it is prophesied, I love it.

#### 6. How to know God's will,

Romans 12:2

"Reasonable" = logikos, as it sounds. "Service" as in John 16:2.

i.e., Transforming your mind by His Word is the obvious thing to do.

Given to God first.

When conformed to, or given to, the world, cannot hear.

Conformity in music, games, clothing, lifestyle. Church or individual.

#### 7. Some specific examples of the will of God:

Thankfulness, I Thessalonians 5:18.

Submission, I Peter 2:15.

Compassion/brotherly love etc. I Peter 3:8, 9

#### 8. "Thy will be done."

Is *that* prayer answered?

a. in every specific life?

b. today?

c. eventually, according to the Master Plan? (next week)

# 2

## *The plan of God*

### The plan of God:

1 Plan and will are parts of the same thing and are interchangeable words.

Helps me approach subject from different angles.

2. Something went wrong. Genesis 3.

The chess game analogy.

God must be prepared for moves of Satan.

If so, He must have an entire game plan.

His plan is perfect.

That's why He can write a Book that tells what's coming: It's planned!

3. Romans 8:18-39

This is in a prayer context! Catch Paul's argument:

a. Much suffering now, much glory coming. Even death swallowed in victory.  
No comparison! 18

b. The creation was cursed, but given hope. All of it is waiting for us! 19-21

c. Creation and we are groaning, waiting for kingdom and new bodies. 22-25

d. Spirit comes in and groans with us. But God knows that language. 26-27

e. **Therefore everything works together for good. 28**

f. **God had a plan regarding the sons of God (19). 29-30**

g. Since God has a plan and will do it, we are safe in Him. 31-39

4. Examples of plans gone awry but foreknown and “covered”.

As we pray in the Spirit, “all things work together for good” but are not necessarily good. Consider:

a. Relationships shattered: Acts 13:13, 15: 36-41, 30-35. Paul and Barnabas... Silas!  
Seems like God's plan is thwarted. But God has moves planned all the way to glory. We simply cannot lose. No need to be anxious. Keep praying.

b. Families attacked: II Samuel 11 ff. David.

Satan knew of the promise of Messiah through David.

He attacks David's offspring. He lures him into sin, and therefore the punishment of God. Sons born but they all turn bad. First-born from Bathsheba dies.

But God is not finished. What David loved is destroyed, but what God loves and His mercy are on the way.

Here comes another child. *Yedeed-eh-yaw* “loved of God” II  
 Samuel 12:24-25. Solomon. Many kings through him.  
 Satan had not counted on “mercy.” (You and I must be a surprise to him also!)

The very relationship that led to sin is blessed with the next king.

Enemy has a lot of cards on the table.

Sin, shame, failure, adultery, rape, murder, rebellion...  
 “the hand I’ve been dealt.”

God’s mercy trumps all.

Later another son, Nathan, brings Messiah. Another surprise. A relatively unknown son becomes physical ancestor of Christ Jesus. As David himself was relatively unknown in the house of Jesse.

Keep praying.

c. Prosperity threatened. Genesis 26:17-33.

Story happens in the “promised land.”

“Everything he does shall prosper.”

What happens when someone fills your well? You think you cannot survive. You are not prospering.

Do what Isaac did. Move down the road.

The failures and closed doors are leading you somewhere.

Eventually they lead you to Beer-sheba, and the blessing of God, and the favor of men.

Keep praying!

## 5. The prayer factor

Already seen above.

God has a will, God has a plan. But you have an enemy with a counter-plan.

Just keep praying!

Remember the persistent woman of Jesus’ parable: Luke 18:1-8

God has already decided to deliver us from the enemy. The plan is in place.

Our job is still to cry out day and night. God’s will will be done.

# 3

## ***The sovereignty of God***

1. Not a Bible word, but a Bible idea. As Trinity, rapture, etc.
2. Supreme power, freedom from external control.
3. Sovereignty is God’s ability to carry out His plan, His will. (Hence, the 3 words related.)  
 We say, “God is in control.” Saying this, we are speaking of God’s sovereignty.
4. Some texts: Psalm 66:7, 79:11, 111:6
5. The debate about the sovereign God: **Calvin vs. Arminius** .

<b>Arminius, Jacob</b>		<b>Calvin, John</b>
B. 1560, Holland Professor, U. of Leyden Reacted to Calvin's teachings, His followers called heretics D. 1609	Life	B. 1509, France Studied law, theology Invited to Geneva Built a theocracy Reacted to works orientation of Romanism D. 1564
Pelagius, Erasmus (many more, lesser known) Dave Hunt	Similar beliefs	Augustine, Luther, Whitefield, J. Edwards, Spurgeon, R C Sproul, John Piper, James White
Methodist, Holiness Pentecostal	Denominations	Presbyterian Reformed
election is conditioned by faith, <b>foreknowledge doesn't demand determinism*</b> , unlimited atonement, apostasy possible, resistible grace, “God cannot be an accomplice to evil.”	Tenets	absolute supremacy of God, literal reading of Scriptures, Church organized around plu- ralities of pastors, elders etc., election is solely from God, <b>foreknowledge demands *determinism</b> , limited atone- ment, eternal security, irresisti- ble grace, God must be the au- thor of our salvation, not man.

\*“Determinism”, a decision beforehand: Creation, “Let there be!” Also II Chronicles 25:16. Daniel 9:24,26,27, 11:36. Luke 22:22. Acts 17:26. Acts 2:23.

### Prayer factor

Questions:

Does foreknowledge demand that God planned all?

If so, how can prayer change anything?

If not, am I really in charge?

Comments:

Praying in GOD's “determination” is important.

“Go with the flow” of His will. Eg.,

“Even so come Lord Jesus.”

“God have mercy on me a sinner.”

Can you think of others?

Remember I John 5:14-15

# 4

## ***Example 1, Abraham: God's will done in a believer's life***

### **1. The will of God:** A list of promises. Genesis 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 22 etc.

- a. I WILL make your descendants uncountable: (13:16, 15:5)
- b. I WILL bless you. (12:2)
- c. I WILL make your name great. (12:2)
- d. You WILL be a blessing. (12:2)
- e. I WILL bless or curse those who bless or curse you. (12:3) [and as Egypt, 15:14]
- f. To your descendants I WILL give this land. Boundaries WILL be from the Nile to the Euphrates. (15:18)
- g. Your descendants WILL be strangers...[and afflicted] 400 years. (15:13)
- h. You WILL be buried in an old age. [already in his 80's, but his dad 205!] (15:15)
- i. I WILL make nations (plural!) of you. (17:6)
- j. Kings SHALL come from you. (17:6)
- k. SARAH WILL give you a son. (18:10)
- l. In your seed ALL the nations of the earth WILL be blessed! (12:3)

NONE OF THE ABOVE is Abraham's plan. It is God from start to finish!

### **2. The plan of God:**

God's will seems to be thwarted often during the process. Someone else has a "will" as in story of Satan vs. Job. But to us who see the whole picture, it is obvious that a plan was in place. Satan's plan is woven into the bigger plan of God. God's will is done.

- a. First thing that happens, famine (12:10). Must move. So much for the promised land (#6 above).
- b. Abraham compromises the truth (12:11-20) and almost loses his wife, the only way he can become a great nation, offspring! (#1 above, but #5 also. #3 and #4 don't work when we compromise!)
- c. The family is split up (13: 1-12). #2 kicks in so much that # 1 seems threatened ! God is in control.
- d. The family is threatened with great danger, but delivered. (14:1-16). #1?, #2?, #3?. Then, #5!

When God is determined to bless, no one is going to curse!

This does not preclude TROUBLE.

No promise to keep us from tribulation, only to see us through it.

In fact "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers us from them ALL." Trouble first, deliverance later.

The hedge of protection is unusual, far from the norm worldwide.

Job had to learn that and it was not a pleasant experience!

Now Abraham learns it.

And how can Jesus be our deliverer if there is not a situation?

How pass a test if there is no test?

- e. Chapter 16: Helping God without God's asking for help. No promise fulfilled. Only trouble started.
- f. Chapter 18: Helping God when He asks. Intercession. #4

**The sovereignty of God:**

By His power, His plodding, His patience.

Using man's mistakes and Satan's moves and man's good and bad choices, every promise of His perfect will fulfilled.

Yes, Satan's moves. Is God accomplice of evil? No! Satan is accomplice of good! By what he does, we become stronger. When he persecutes the church, it grows.

Review above list and describe how and when God kept His promises.

**The prayer factor:**

- a. "Thy will be done" must be our motto and our earnest prayer.  
God really has a will! It WILL be done! We cannot stop it!
- b. Will we be a part of it? I John 5:14-15  
Be SURE it is His will, not mine.
- c. Must have faith. Abraham's works on his own were not accepted. When he believed God, God accounted him as righteous, knowing that at that point is where man begins to be God's.

# 5

## ***Example 2, Pharaoh: God's will done in an unbeliever's life***

Intro, Pharaoh facts:

- a. The Pharaoh of the Exodus is either Merneptah or Amenhotep II.
- b. He was probably already “hardened” to God before the incident in our Bible. He thought he was “god.”
- c. Pharaoh means “great house”. The term evolved into respectful title for a person.
- d. There was no person whose name was “Pharaoh” as in “Caesar.”

### **1. The will of God:**

- a. Exodus 3:10, original call: “**I will** send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people out...
- b. WHEN you have brought... you **WILL** serve God.
- c. v. 16-17: “**I WILL** bring you out.
- d. v. 19: the king of Egypt **WILL NOT** let you go...
- e. then, v. 20, “he **WILL** let you go. 4:21, 7:3,
- f. “**I WILL** harden his heart...” 7:13, 8:15, 9:12, he did not listen, he hardened his heart, “as the Lord said.” But the Lord had said, “**I** will harden.”
- g. Other mentioning of the Lord or Pharaoh’s hardening: 8:32, 9:7, 9:34-35, 10:20, 10:27, 11:10
- h. 14:4, “I will harden...that he **WILL PURSUE** them!”
- i. Why?
  - 1. Ch. 10: “...that **YOU** (my people) may know I am the Lord.”
  - 2. ch. 14: “...that the **EGYPTIANS** will know I am the Lord.”

### **2. The plan of God:**

- a. It seems God’s perfect will will be hindered again, as Pharaoh attempts 4 compromises,
  - a. 8:25, “in the land.” Today, “You don’t have to go to church to be a good person...stay in Egypt”
  - b. 8:28, “near”. Today, “Go to church if you must, but stay within reach of Egypt.”
  - c. 10:11, “grown-ups only.” Today, “Let the old people do it, but free the children to choose...”
  - d. 11:24, “flocks and herds here” Today, “Keep your money invested in this life, not ‘pie in the sky.’ ”
- b. all are rejected: God had said Pharaoh would refuse their request and Moses forces him to do so, No compromise!
- c. When God afflicts with spiritual hardening of the spiritual arteries: death!

### 3. The sovereignty of God:

The hardening of the heart is a Bible theme that is important to investigate.

a. **Romans 9**. Vs. 1-5, Paul's love for Israel, and why we should love her too.

Vs. 6-9. But not everything that is called Israel is really Israel.

Even tracing back to Abraham won't do it.

In fact, only those born of the promise, that came through Isaac *and leads to Christ!* Isaac is the predestined seed.

Vs. 10-13. So too, *for purposes of salvation*, Jacob is chosen and foreordained, and loved above Esau.

Vs. 14-24, objections answered:

14-18, Is God unrighteous to choose one over the other? No, *look at Pharaoh*. Exodus 9:16

He can choose whomever He desires, and harden, too, for His ultimate purposes in Christ!

19-24, How can God punish someone if He made the person do something wrong? People can't resist His will once He decides to do something. Unfair!

The answer is much like that given to Job: There are some things you do not understand, and you ought to put your hand over your mouth when you're about to blurt out that God is unjust!

We sing "I am the potter, You are the clay" Do we mean it?

What if God prepared some vessels to destroy and others to lift up to glory? Are you afraid you are not one of the called? And if you are one of the called, do you balk?

b. other passages: Deuteronomy 15:7, Joshua 11:20, II Kings 17:14, John 12:40, Nehemiah 9:16-17, Mark 3:5, 6:52, 8:17.

In these passages, sometimes God hardens, sometimes God's people harden.

Solution? Is it possible that those who are in the regular practice of rejecting God and His ways can then be used by God in any way He chooses? Hence the serious warnings about NOT hardening your heart?

### 4. The prayer factor:

a. Key "hardening" passages: Psalm 95:8/Hebrews 3:7-15.

b. Did Paul write this *and* Romans 9? Paul vs. Paul!

Look at the process:

3:10, they always go astray (hardening process)

3:11, so **I** swore (now God is hardened in His decision)

When your hard heart hardens God, you are doomed

See also Jeremiah 14:11-16

c. Luke 22:40, 46. Prayer keeps from temptation which leads to sin which leads to death.

The prayer factor is the key factor for keeping the heart soft.

"If you hear His voice, do not harden..." And that voice is heard in prayer.

Final lesson: More of the story of Jesus in the garden.

# 6

## ***Example 3: Jesus in the Garden (Matthew 26:36-46) God's will done in God's Son***

### **1. The will of God:** (from Isaiah 53)

- a. God's will: "My servant" to be despised, rejected, wounded, bruised, led as a lamb to the slaughter, and then slaughtered (unlike Isaac), put to grief, made an offering, made to suffer travail, stricken, smitten of God.
- b. "Did God want Jesus to die?" Absolutely NOT. But yes.

When God turned His back on Jesus, He turned His face toward you!

**Herein is the center of the mystery of the "will of God."**

- c. Jesus' will must line up to be a perfect Son. 26:39 "Not My will, Yours."

Possible for the "I" of the Son to be different than "I" of Father?

Word entered human flesh, with tendency toward sin. In all points tempted as we are.

Temptation is when the two "I" 's are on separate courses. Temptation is not sin.

Have you felt this tearing? "You have not yet resisted unto blood [as Jesus in the Garden] striving against sin!" (Hebrews 12:4)

### **2. The plan of God:**

Remember, God's plan is always under attack.

- a. Attempted distraction by Satan in the wilderness, and by Peter, and Nicodemus, and the deceiving Pharisees ("Teacher, we know you are true....") others?
- b. One last battle to be fought with His own human flesh.

26:39, 42 "If it be possible."

But there are some things not possible.

As the removal of Paul's thorn.

I John 5:14-17 (the key will-of-God passage).

### **3. The sovereignty of God:**

- a. It all came to pass just as the Father had decreed through Isaiah and all the other prophets.
- b. This cup could not pass away. Jesus drank it. "It is finished." As medicine Mom says to drink ALL, nasty or not.
- c. What is finished? Everything the Father decreed. The perfect will and plan perfectly executed. "I have finished my course."

#### **4. The prayer factor:**

- a. 26:37 Discomfort, being ill at ease, not wanting to do something, none of this is proof one is outside the will of God, only that the flesh does not want to deal with it.
- b. 26:39, Jesus was tempted not to go to the cross. Our salvation literally depended on the prayer struggle He fought that night.  
We win or lose the battle during prayer, not at the event itself.
- c. 26:41-42, 43-44 Command: Watch and PRAY is the way to stay far from temptation. Jesus obeyed His own word by returning to pray two more times after admonishing them.
- d. 26:44, Jesus prayed with the same words. Repetition is not forbidden, only mindless repetition.
- e. 26:44, It is good to have prayer partners, but be prepared to pray alone without whining.
- f. 26:45, Struggle is over. Battle is won, through prayer. Son of Man is betrayed. Calm acceptance of God's will. Calm does not come without a struggle.
- g. Peace is product of war, not a feeling. Jesus did not try to feel at peace. Did not ask to be zapped with a feeling. *He fought and won.*  
Three times He had to go and lay Himself at His Father's feet. "Your will be done!" How often will we have to go until we really mean it?

#### **Summary of series**

1. All prophecy, predestination, the plan and will of God, points to Calvary, and Jesus.
2. To be in the perfectly ordained plan of the ages is to be in Christ.
3. Your daily supplications have to line up with God's purposes in Christ Jesus, and all your prayers will be answered. Those that don't line up will not be answered.
4. Your life must be submitted to the person of Jesus, and renewed by daily doses of the Word of God in order to have a certain knowledge that your life is headed where His is, eternal glory.