

The Honor of God: A Life Lived for God

The Honor of God
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The following sermon is by our Senior Pastor Grant Castleberry of Capital Community Church located in Raleigh, North Carolina. Capital Community Church is a people awakened to a holy God. If you are searching for a new church home, or from out of town looking for a church to worship with, or simply seeking for answers, please join us for worship at 9 o'clock AM every Sunday morning. If you have any questions, please email us at info@capitalcommunitychurch.com. We pray this sermon will help you grow deeper in your walk with Jesus Christ.

This morning we are continuing our series on "The Honor of God," and what I'm going to talk to you about this morning is "A Life Lived for God." A life lived for God. How to honor God with your life. This is probably one of the most radical differences between Christianity and the ideologies of our secular world. Our secular world says live for who? You. Live for you. Follow your dreams, your heart, your motivations. But the Bible says over and over and over again to live for God because he is our Creator.

Let me just give you a few references from the New Testament. We could look at a lot in the Old. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 10:31, he says, "whatever you do, whether you eat or drink, do all to the glory of God." He says in Romans 11:36, "For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen." He says in 1 Timothy 6:16, "To Him be honor and eternal dominion! Amen." And one of the great theologians of the 20th century, Dutch theologian Herman Bavinck, said that the Christian moral life has faith at its root, the law as its rule, and the honor of God as its goal. The honor of God as its goal.

So I want to talk to you this morning about how to live for the honor of God. How to live for the honor of God. Now just in thinking about this, this is a massive topic. I mean, really, where do you begin to talk about the honor of God? That was one of the struggles that I ran into this week. How do you even begin to talk about how to honor God because literally there are so many commands and passages that we could go to throughout the New Testament, and there's so many ways that we could approach this topic. But what I decided to do is to narrow it down to a case study and look at one person, the Apostle Paul. And the reason why I decided to do that is, first, is because of the sheer productivity of his life. Raise your hand this morning if you are a Gentile. If you're a Gentile, okay. If

you're a Gentile and you are a Christian, you owe your faith to the Apostle Paul because the Apostle Paul is the one who took the gospel to who? The Gentiles. He passed the Jewish world to the Gentiles and he had a massive impact. And secondly, the reason why I wanted to look at Paul is because Paul himself said to follow his example, to follow his example. 1 Corinthians 11:1 he says, "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ." Philippians 3:17 he says, "join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us." One of the ways that you learn things is by looking at somebody do it. You don't just learn by information download in a classroom, you learn by watching someone. You have to see it. So if you want to learn how to paint, you go and watch a painter do it, right? If you want to learn how to do a crossover dribble, you turn on the game and you watch one of the best point guards do it, and then you imitate them. And so Paul says, "You watch me, you imitate me as I follow Christ."

So that's what we're going to do this morning is we're going to look at him, his life, his ministry philosophy. I want to start by having you turn to Philippians. Philippians 1:20, and here Paul really lays out one of the themes of his life. I don't know if Paul had a life verse but maybe this is one of them that he meditated on. He says, "it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always," listen, "Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death." And then you probably know the next verse, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Notice what Paul said, he's saying, "Look, my expectation and hope is that I will not be ashamed at all." Ashamed of what? Ashamed of the cross. The cross was a shameful act. We've talked about this, Paul says in 1 Corinthians 1:23, "we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles." It was a stumbling block, and it was folly because of the shame, the idea that God could be crucified on a cross, an object of worship could be crucified. That was a stumbling block and Paul says, "It's my expectation and hope that I will not be ashamed of the cross. I will not be ashamed to proclaim the message of the gospel."

And he says, "I want to have full courage that Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death." That Greek word he uses for honor is the word megaluno and you can hear that prefix mega, big. He's saying, "I want Christ to appear as big as he really is in my life by the way that I live. I want people to see Christ as huge because of how I carry out my life. I want to magnify him." He wants the weightiness of Christ to be seen.

And then he says, "Also I've got nothing to lose." You know, it's a really dangerous person who's got nothing to lose. He says, "For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain." He says, "If I live, I get to honor him, I get to make him big, but if I die, I'm going to go be with him."

So it's all good, it's all for the Lord, and it's this mindset right here, verse 20 and verse 21 which propelled him to turn the world upside down. It propelled him to turn the world upside down. This is so important for you to understand is this mindset of making Christ big, of honoring Christ, because the world is telling you that there's so many other ideas and philosophies that should energize you, but this is the most important philosophy, it's

this idea of honoring Christ. And what this did for Paul is it took him on four missionary journeys. Over the course of the known world he went to Cyprus, the island of Cyprus, Antioch, Pisidia, and Asia, Galatia, Iconium, Lystra, Ephesus, Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth, and then eventually Rome. Some people think he eventually made it to Spain. And in addition, he trained numerous evangelists and teachers along the way, and you simply couldn't stop him. You remember those old commercials for the Energizer Bunny that it advertised? The millennials are shaking their heads no, but basically in the commercial you put the Energizer battery in this bunny and nothing can stop the bunny with the Energizer battery. Paul fueled by this vision was basically unstoppable. You couldn't put him down.

This is what he says in 2 Corinthians 11:23. He says, "Are they servants of Christ? I am a better one--I am talking like a madman--with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death. Five times," five times, "at the hands of the Jews I received the forty lashes less one. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure." You simply couldn't stop this guy until you killed him, and that's what they had to do. The Emperor Nero executed him in Rome, probably around 68 AD.

So what fueled this passion for the honor of God? How did Paul live this out? How did he experientially do this? How did he practically think about honoring God? I want you to turn to Romans 12. Romans 12 is really the flesh and blood philosophy of how to honor God in your life. The first two verses, Romans 12:1-2. If you've studied the book of Romans, you know that the first 11 chapters of Romans is where Paul lays out his doctrine, his doctrine of justification and sanctification and assurance, and it's in Romans 12 where he begins the applicational section of the book. So he's built it on the doctrine and now he begins the application and what I want you to see is how Paul describes his life lived for the honor of God, okay? And the first thing I want to show you is the motivation of honor. What motivates someone to live for the honor of God? Where do you get this motivation that he's talking about?

Well, look at verse 1, he says, "I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living and holy sacrifice." He says, "I appeal to you." The verb is *parakaleo*. It's a very strong apostolic command. It's the picture of a general speaking to his troops before they go into battle. Remember that scene where Patton's speaking to the Third Army and he's exhorting them? That's the picture. Paul's saying, "I beseech you. I urge you." And then look at the imperative, what's the imperative? Look at verse 12. This is the imperative, "to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship."

This is a command, a command that Paul is giving to the believer. And one of the things that I've found just especially with the modern church, is the modern church really

reflexes against any command. Oftentimes I hear that's, what's the word? Legalism? "If you tell me to do something, well, that's legalistic. Now you're stepping, you're encroaching on my life. You're stepping on my toes. That's legalism to tell me to do something." But whenever I hear that, what that reflects is a failure to understand grace and a failure to understand God, and it's a failure to understand what actually is the motivation of the Christian life. What's the motivation? Look back at verse 1. Look at this little phrase, I want you to underline it, "by the mercies of God. I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God." What's Paul saying here? He's saying the command is built on this truth, it's grounded in this truth, the mercies of God. Paul's saying, "When you truly understand the mercies of God, then you'll be motivated to honor him."

It's this remembrance of what God has done that propels you to live for his honor, and the mercies of God is something that Paul never forgot because who's Paul? Well, Paul is also known as Saul of Tarsus. Now a lot of people think that he was born Saul of Tarsus and then he became Paul the apostle, but Saul was actually his Hebrew name and Paul his Greek name. So he would have been called both throughout his life. He was always Saul of Tarsus. He was always Paul the apostle. But the idea is a really important idea, right, because there was a dramatic change that happened in his life.

Saul was on his way to becoming the bright light, the shining star of Judaism. His parents sent him to Jerusalem to study under an expert in the law named Gamaliel, and Saul was basically his brightest student. Paul had a lot of brain matter. He was brilliant. He was one of the sharpest thinkers around. Paul says in Galatians 1:14, "I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers." He was the shining protege. And really all of that came crashing to the ground, this little pyramid of self-worth when he encountered who? Actually, it was a little before that. What set him off? Stephen. He met his match in this young man named Stephen there in Jerusalem. And Stephen was talking about worship in the temple and how you actually can worship God anywhere, that you don't have to be in the temple, and Paul is listening to this and you remember the Jews got so angry at Stephen because he denounced their execution of the Lord Jesus, that they condemned him and picked up stones to kill him. And where did they put their tunics? Right at Saul's feet and Saul watched as they killed that young man. And that set Paul off. I think there was a form of covetousness in his heart that he desired to know God the way that Stephen did. Remember Stephen before he was killed, looked up and he says, "I see, I see the Lord in heaven standing up," and Paul, his heart was just filled with jealousy. He wanted to know God like that young man did. But instead of coming to Christ and humbling himself, he set out to persecute the church of Christ. He says in 1 Timothy 1:13, "I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent." He was the one throwing people into jail. He was the chief opponent of the church. And he received essentially a note to go to Damascus and to get Christians and to throw them into jail, and on his way to Damascus on the road, the Lord Jesus himself confronted him and he said, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" Saul said, "Who is that? Who is it?" And Jesus said, "It is me. It is the Lord that you've been persecuting." And he can't see and the people that are with him have to help him into Damascus. He's blind for three days. He has a vision, and you know the story. Ananias comes to him and he receives his sight and he becomes this apostle.

And so what Paul never forgot, get this, is the mercy of God on his life, that God had changed him, that God had interceded in his life at a certain point and that had altered the trajectory. And if you're a Christian, that's also your story. You see, you're not born a Christian, you're not born a holy roller, you're born a sinner, you're born a rebel, and at some point the Lord Jesus Christ, if you are to be saved, must intervene. It's called conversion. You have to repent, you have to believe, and your parents can't do that for you. And that happens for each and every one of us in our lives that we're converted and what Paul is saying is that you have to remember as a Christian the mercies of God. You must remember what God has done in transforming you.

And for Paul, this was the motivation for his ministry. He says 2 Corinthians 4:1, "having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart." It's the mercy of God and the grace of God in Christ Jesus reconciling us to the Father that becomes the motivation for living the Christian life and honoring him. And I think, quite honestly, that's one of the great failures of the modern Christian is that we don't understand the mercy and the grace that's been given us in Christ Jesus because it's this sweetness of grace and the sweetness of mercy that propels us to live this life of honor. We don't look at the cross enough, quite frankly, but God demonstrates his own love for us that while we were still sinners Christ died for us. Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all.

That's the motivation. So if you don't get grace, you don't understand mercy, you will be a legalist because you don't get the right motivation. That's where we have to start. But when you get that motivation, we're not just called to be lackadaisical Christians. We're not called to be lazy Christians. We're called to live a life that is honoring to God. Let me just read you just a few verses that, Paul exhorts Christians with very quickly. Ephesians 4:1, Paul urges the Ephesians "to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called." Colossians 1:10, "walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him." 1 Thessalonians 2:12, "we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God who calls you into his own kingdom and glory."

So we are called understanding God's mercy to then live for his honor, and that leads to the totality of honor. So we've seen the motivation of honor, now you see the totality of honor and by totality I mean how much of our lives are to be given to God for his honor. Answer: all of it. All of our lives are to be given to God for his honor. Look back at verse 1. He says this is the imperative, you are to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God. This language of presenting is the picture of the Old Testament sacrifices when someone would present a goat or a bull as an offering of worship to God, only here in the new covenant the difference is this, you're not offering a goat or a bull, what are you offering? Yourself. He's saying you present your own body.

Why does Paul say body? Lots of people debate why does he say specifically your body and not just yourself or your soul? Well, I think why he mentions the body is because Paul means the totality of our existence. At this point in history, some people taught this platonic idea that the soul is good, and the body is bad. Now, if our soul is holy, that's

fine, but because the body is bad, we can do whatever we want with it. And what Paul is saying is, "No, no, no, no, the body, it's not bad. God created the body and you have to honor God also with your body, not just your soul." And Paul really emphasizes this to his hearers. He says in 1 Corinthians 6:13, "the body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord and the Lord for the body." 1 Corinthians 6:19, "do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body."

We are to glorify God with both our body and our soul. We are to present all that we are as a sacrifice to God and Paul describes this sacrifice three ways. So if you look right here, he says living holy and acceptable. In this Greek sentence, all three of those are just listed as adjectives. So the translators often put living before sacrifice but really, you could put all three of these words before sacrifice. They all describe the sacrifice that we are to make. It's to be a living sacrifice, that means that our worship to God is to be perpetual. It's not a 9 to 5 job where you can work in the day and take the evenings off, or take the weekends off. It's all to be lived for him. In the Christian life, there are no off days. There are no days in which we don't have to flee temptation, no days in which we don't have to live in dependence upon God and prayer. There are no days in which we can lay our worship aside for another.

The Christian life is a constant and daily honoring of God. It is a living sacrifice. And then he says, look at the second word, it is a holy sacrifice. That means that this worship is a dedicated worship holy to God. Holy means to be separate or distinct. It means that you are separating your worship to God apart from any other. There are no other allegiances. There's no double-dipping between God and the world. There's no two-faced hypocrisy. How often have you seen those who honor God with their lips on a Sunday morning but deny him by their lives on her Friday night? That's what Paul's saying, he's saying your life is to be completely set apart to God not just on the Lord's Day. Peter says, "Be holy, for I am holy," 1 Peter 1. That is the charge to the Christian, that your life is to be completely dedicated to God.

Do you see how this worship, Sunday morning is an expression of this worship. This worship is completely total. Your life is to be lived for his honor. The worship doesn't stop when you leave these doors. All of your life is to be dedicated to him, and then the third adjective is that when you do this, it's pleasing to God, that God receives this type of worship. It's a fragrant aroma to him.

And then look at the last phrase there in verse 1, he says, "which is your spiritual worship." That word "spiritual" is actually the word *logikos*, you hear our English word logic there. It means rational or logical. It's the idea is when you understand the mercy of God in your life, it's only rational, it's only logical then for you to worship God this way. When you understand the depths from which he's pulled you, then it becomes a rational thing for then for you to worship God like this, for you to serve God like this. Paul says it's only rational. He says nothing is too insignificant to not be given to God, so everything must be offered to him, to sacrifice everything to God.

Incidentally, I was reading about Martyn Lloyd-Jones, a preacher who became a doctor. He was the assistant to the king's physician. He had everything you could possibly imagine in terms of potentiality for wealth and fame in London and he left it all to go be a pastor in Wales, to blue collar people. People would often ask him, "I can't believe you left medicine to go do that. How could you do that? To be amongst the elite, to go be a pastor to blue collar Welsh?" And Lloyd-Jones said, "I sacrificed nothing. I gained everything." When you sacrifice to God, you realize that what you thought was loss is gain.

So that's the totality of honor. So we've seen the motivation of honor, the totality of honor, now we see the practice of honor. Okay, so the motivation is the mercy of God, the totality is it's all of our lives. How do we do this? How do we honor God? How do you leave this room and go and do this? How do we do this practically? Look at verse 2. He says, "do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind." Very simple, very simple statement. It's a negative followed by a positive. And this is how you are to live for the honor of God, very simply: do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. That is how you live for the honor of God.

Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. First, the negative. Let's look at these. Do not be conformed to this world. Underline that word "world." That word is not the normal word that's used for world, for example, in John 3:16. It's not the word cosmos, it's the word aion, which means age. And the way that the Jews understood this is right now we're in the present age, but then there is an age to come. So what Paul is contrasting is the age of the kingdom which is coming with this present evil age. He's not talking about renouncing your possessions, he's not talking about "just going and living in a cave," right? He's talking about renouncing what is evil in this current age, in this world. That's what he's said.

That word "conformed," the Greek word where we get our word schemes. Schemes. The idea is to not allow yourself to be shaped by the schemes of the day. J. B. Phillips, he did a paraphrase of the New Testament, he said, "Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold." Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold. Paul says Galatians 1:4, that Christ "gave himself for our sins to deliver us from this present evil age." And then John says in 1 John 2:17, "The world is passing away along with its desires but whoever does the will of God abides forever."

So the command is this: don't let the world and what's evil in this world be the primary thing that's shaping you. In fact, you don't want it to shape you at all. You don't want to be conformed to the image of the world. The world's passion right now, it's a very simple religion. I mean, Satan couldn't have got any more basic with the religion that he's using to deceive people right now because the religion that has risen to the surface is the worship of self. I mean, is that not the most basic and fundamental form of idolatry? I mean, he's not even using idols. He's convinced people to worship, look inside themselves and worship their own desires. I mean, this is the secular age we live in. It's the rise of the worship of the individual self. Remember that phrase, "I'm the master of

my fate, the captain of my soul"? That's it. "I worship me and I'm going to do whatever I want to do. And there are no boundaries that can stop me." And you see this, I think, very pervasively in the sexual revolution, don't you? "I will not wait for marriage. I will not be forced to marry a member of the opposite sex. I will not be forced to identify with my physiological gender. Oh, and by the way, I will not be forced to even identify with a binary of male and female. I'm going to make up a gender." No boundary can possibly contain the modern self and it's foolish, and it's idolatrous.

This isn't a new religion, it's as old as Satan himself. It's the simple pride of the flesh and Paul says, Romans 13:13, he said, "Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires." I mean, this is so basic. We don't need someone from Hollywood or Harvard telling us how to live our lives, what we need is an open Bible and a heart ready to submit to God. "The world has been crucified to me and I to the world. I don't ask the world favors, and it doesn't ask favors from me." That's how you have to live your life in regards to the world. You can't have one foot in and one foot out. It has to be total. You are no longer a part of this age. Your citizenship is where? In heaven. In heaven.

Positively, look at the second injunction, "But be transformed by the renewal of your mind." Be transformed by the renewal of your mind. So negatively we're to avoid being conformed to the world's image, but positively we're to be transformed, metamorphosthe, long Greek word. Here our English word metamorphosis. It's this transformation that happens. He says that the way we live for God's honor begins where? Where? In the mind. Be transformed by the renewing of your mind. It begins right here in the mind. What Paul's saying, this is so insightful and so brilliant because it's inspired by God, but he says that the way you begin to live a life that honors God is through the mind. You get as much of God, you get as much of God and the things that are in this age to come in your mind as you possibly can and what that does when you get as much of that in your mind as you possibly can, is it bathes your mind and then it begins to affect how you live. And I think the problem is that so much of modern Christianity has just tried to babysit believers and entertain them rather than getting the kingdom into our minds. What you need is you need as much of this as possible to be injected into your heart and your soul. We need to think Christianly. Tozer said that modern religion focuses on filling churches with people, the true gospel emphasizes filling people with God. You need this in your mind. Paul says Colossians 3:2, "set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on this earth."

So what we have to do if we're going to be successful in living for the honor of God, is we have to put more of this in our minds than what the world is putting in our minds, the filth and the falsehood that the world is putting in your minds. I mean, that's just blatant. Most believers are more influenced by Instagram than they are the book of Romans and we have to change that. We have to get the truth into our thinking. How do you do that? Let me just give you seven just practical ways to do this. 1. Everybody goes outside basically every day, right? Creation is meant to point you to a Creator, so when

you're outside, when you're out on the fishing boat, when you see the sunset, worship God. It's all supposed to point you to him. So think about God's work of creation.

2. Listen to expository preaching/ There is a reason why Paul told Timothy, 2 Timothy 4, to preach the word in season and out of season, is because we all need to sit underneath the word of God. Sunday is like a reset. You're going through your life and so many things are hitting you and so many ideas are coming at you, and then you come on the Lord's Day to the church, and you hear the word of God preached, and God convicts you and re-alter your thinking/

3. Read and listen to the Bible daily. Read and listen to the Bible daily. We have so many opportunities to read and study the word of God that are at our fingertips, our fingertips. You know, you can listen, no kidding, you can listen to Johnny Cash reading the New Testament on Audible. It doesn't get any better than that. How many of you have study Bibles right there in your living room? I mean, we have the word of God at our fingertips. Study and show yourself approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed. Studying the word of God. Listen to the word of God. My wife loves to listen to the word of God. She listens because we've got little kids. She's always listening to the word.

4. Memorize scripture. Memorize scripture. Psalm 119:11, "I've stored up your word in my heart that I might not sin against you." Memorize Scripture.

5. Meditate on scripture. Roll it over in your mind to ask what does it teach you about God? What does it say about yourself? What does it say about how you are to live? What does it say about Christ? Think about scripture. The godly person's delight is in the law of the Lord and on his law he meditates day and night.

6. Sing great songs, great hymns. There's a reason why over and over in the New Testament we're exhorted to sing Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs because we learn theology through singing, because songs are lyrical and they get caught in your head. I mean, how often have you gotten a bad song in your head? Like, man, I just can't stop singing that bad country song. Because the music is learnable. It's teachable. And so we're doing our best here to sing the best rich theological songs that we can. So every song that the lyrics are getting truth into your mind.

7. This is so important, so important is that you have to learn to exercise a biblical worldview. You have to learn to exercise a biblical worldview, and what that means is that you see the world through Christian eyes. You see the world in eyes that are instructed by the word of God, that you're not going out into the world as a neutral bystander, just in-taking stuff non-critically. When you sit down and watch a movie, especially today, not talking about Andy Griffith, when you sit down and watch a movie, you have to ask yourself where does this movie contradict the word of God? Where does this go against the grain of what we've been taught in the word? You have to watch everything, read everything, look at everything with the mind of Christ. We have the mind of Christ. Develop this biblical worldview. Paul says, 2 Corinthians 10:5, "We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take

every thought captive to obey Christ." God and his word must occupy our thoughts and our minds.

It's really quite simple. Here's the battle: you have to endeavor to put more truth in your mind than the world does falsehood. It's really that simple, and in the outflow of that is that you begin to live a life that honors the Lord because God is so heavy upon you, and it happens, you live for his honor. So that's third, the practice of honor and then, fourth and finally is the vindication of honor. The vindication of honor. The result of a life of honor is that it's proven to us to be good in our actions. You realize that when you start living for the honor of God, that it's the best possible life that you can live. It's the best possible life. It doesn't get any better than living for the honor of God. "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain it." It becomes you realize the best life. And what it does is this mindset of renewing your mind erupts into our actions and our conduct, and we discern in so doing that the life of honoring God is the best life.

Look at Romans 12:2, the second part of the verse. He says when you do this, "that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect." Now notice that word "testing." This is a very in some ways complicated translation way to understand it. It doesn't mean that you test to see if God's will is good. It means that you find as a result of living out God's will, that it passed the test, okay? We prove the will of God in our lives, we see that it's good, we don't test it to see that it's good, it's that we experience that it's good.

And by "will" here, underline that phrase "the will of God," the will of God is used three ways in the New Testament and the way that it's being used here is not the secret will of God. You know, you talk about, "I want to understand God's will. I want to understand what God has for me." What you mean by that is you want to understand God's secret decree about the future. It's not what he's talking about. He's talking about God's revealed will in his word, the law. He's talking about what he has just said, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and inseparable to God, which is your spiritual worship, and to not be conformed to this world but to be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

Paul says that when you do this, you find that God's will is verified in your life experientially as good, as acceptable, as perfect. Those three adjectives, good, acceptable, perfect, are ways that Paul is describing the will of God. He says that by living this way, you test experientially and you see as a result that the will of God is good, is acceptable, is perfect. And this really is the mindset of the believer, that God's will is proven to be good to you. It's proven to be acceptable to you. It's proven to be perfect to you. Probably one of the places you see this most is Psalm 119 where over and over and over again the psalmist is saying that the will of the Lord, the commandments of the Lord, the law of the Lord is good, it's right, it's perfect. Lord, help me walk in your law. Help me walk in your way.

David says in Psalm 19:7, "The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple." He says in Psalm 19:8, "the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart." Psalm 119:35, he says, "Lead me in

the path of your commandments, for I delight in it." In other words here's what he's saying, that the life of honor is vindicated in our own lives, is that when you do this and you begin walking in the will of God, being transformed by the renewing of your mind, not conformed to the world, you find that it's good and you love it, and you begin to wonder, how could I have ever pursued any other course of action? How could I have ever lived any other way? And you look at people that are living their lives contrary to the word of God and you have pity on them. You have mercy on them. You pray for them. "God, I pray that they would come to know the Lord, because, yeah, they're on the broad way, it looks good to them right now, but its end is destruction. But you have shown me the path of life and by testing it, by walking in it, I have discerned that it is good, it is acceptable, and it is perfect." That's the mindset of the believer.

I want to close just by reading a brief statement, a prayer from Calvin. He said, "Lord, grant Almighty God, that as thou wouldest have our life to be formed by the rule of thy law and hast there revealed to us what pleases thee that we may not wander in uncertainty but render the obedience. Oh, grant that we may wholly submit ourselves to thee, and not only devote our whole life and all our laborers to thee, but also offer to thee as a sacrifice our understanding and whatever prudence and reason we possess, so that by spiritually serving thee we may really glorify thy name through Christ our Lord. Amen and amen."

Heavenly Father, we desire to honor you, to live for your honor and your glory, and Lord, we understand that this is the result of the mercy that we have received, the mercy that we've seen at the cross, the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ which was given for us, the love that you have demonstrated. And so, Lord, we pray that we would be motivated to serve you and to honor you, that we would not be conformed to the world, but we would be transformed by the renewing of our minds, that we would give all of ourselves as a living sacrifice, a holy sacrifice that is pleasing and acceptable to you. And Lord, may we see in our own lives that the will of God is good, acceptable, and perfect. For the honor of Christ's name. Amen.

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