

Colossians
Lesson 17a

I. The Will of God

- a. WILL (thelema). With the exception of a few passages, it is used of the will of God in a **general sense**. Matt 6:10
 1. Will differs from **counsel/purpose** but is closely related. Eph 1:11
 2. While it is possible to oppose the will of God, His counsel or purpose cannot be **frustrated** Acts 2:23; 4:27-28; Eph 1:11; Heb 6:17
- b. Two **aspects** of the will of God:
 1. General Will: His **plan and purpose** for the life of an individual which includes our sanctification 1Thes 4:3. This would include such things as but not be limited to:
 - a. **Fruitfulness** Col 1:10
 - b. **Growth** in knowledge of God Col 1:9
 - c. **Endurance** to the end. John 6:39
 - d. Our personal **glorification** Rom 8:29-30
 - e. That we should **Endure suffering** 1 Peter 4:19
 2. The second aspect is the **Situational Will** of God:
 - a. Involves the moment by moment **discernment** of that which is godly and then choosing a subsequent thought or behavior which aligns with godliness.
 - b. The difficulty arises when there is no **clear "godly"** choice to be made. IE should I turn right left at the next stop light?
 - c. Where there is no clear Biblical/godly choice we are left to our own preferences and desires; we are free to do as **we choose**. Ps 37:4-5
 - d. The Holy Spirit knows how to get us to where He needs us to go for our **divine appointments**. Acts 8:26-30
 - e. When the Holy Spirit expressly **forbids** a choice He will make it clear. Acts 16:6-7
 - f. Where our **honest intention** is to do the "will of God" we will not frustrate that will. Ps 32:8-9 8 I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.9 Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.

II. The Providence / Sovereignty Connection

- a. The key to understanding that we will not frustrate the will of God is to understand God's **Providence and Sovereignty**.
 1. God's sovereignty refers to the fact that all things are under His rule and control, and that **nothing** happens in this Universe without His direction or permission.
 - b. There are essentially only **three ways** we can view God's involvement with His created world.
 1. The **Deistic View**: God creates the world, winds it up like a watch with built-in secondary causes and simply observes what happens, never intervening and never intruding.
 - a. In this view God is not at any time responsible for anything that happens or doesn't happen. His hands are **tied**.
 - b. This is basically the Pelagian position as it relates to salvation: Man must cooperate with grace.
 2. The second view is an over-reaction to deism. It asserts that there are no secondary causes, that God directly causes **everything**.
 - a. God **causes** my hand to go up, my eyes to blink, car accidents to occur, etc.

Colossians

Lesson 17a

- b. Under this view God is a puppeteer and human free will is an **illusion**.
- 3. The third view is the classical Christian view and **rejects both** of the other positions.
 - a. God gives the power of **secondary causality** to things and people so that we actually do things by our own volition, through our decisions, our own actions.
 - b. However, at every single point God remains sovereign. There are times He works through secondary causes to bring about His will, I.E. **Jonah's storm**.
 - c. Sometimes He intrudes **directly** I.E. the miracles of Jesus and the Jordan river and Red Sea crossing.
 - d. Other times He makes use of our decisions and activities to bring about His sovereign will I.E. the **crucifixion of Christ** John 11:47-53
 - e. We can rest assured that if we are truly desirous of living out God's will He will bring it to pass. All we need do is **trust Him**. Prov 3:6

III. Application

- a. The key to our doing the will of God moment by moment is to **stay focused** on those things that we know from Scripture are his desires for us: like sanctification.
 - 1. What gets in the way of our staying focused on things like our sanctification?
 - 2. What can we do to minimize those distractions?
 - 3. What will you do to minimize those distractions?

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Colossians

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- b. Under this view God is a puppeteer and human free will is an _____.
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