
THE MYSTERY AND MAJESTY OF GOD'S WILL

STUDY NOTES FOR CARE GROUPS

The following are resource questions that you can use with your Care Group for discussion. They are based on the sermon preached on Sunday, January 24, 2010 by Rev Dr Arnold Wong at the Grace Baptist Church, Singapore. The sermon is available online at <http://www.gracebap.org.sg/worship/series.html>.

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Challenge: The past messages have been talking about who God is – His attributes, omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient; His holiness – the awe and reverence that mortal man cower under when God confronts us; His love showered upon us when we go to Him in a contrite heart. Perhaps the question that may confront many at this juncture is, “We are so amazed that God is so intricately woven His love into our lives...we want to serve Almighty God...but how?” “What does God intends for my life?” “What can I offer unto God this very life that He has redeemed from the clutches of death?”

With this in mind, we begin our quest to know God's will and plans that He has for me. A quest that will open up many possibilities that may require some changes to my family, my work, my school, and ultimately, my life.

“HOW DO WE GO ABOUT ATTEMPTING TO FIND OUT GOD'S WILL?” When we embark on this quest, we will come face to face with the following facts; and unless we recognize and overcome them, we will not be able to make any progress. What are they?

A. THREE FRUSTRATING “UNKNOWNNS” IN OUR QUEST FOR GOD'S WILL:

I. Attempting to know God's will is crucial for every believer. Why?

- Complexities of life – modern living is no longer concerned about the simple bread and butter issues of yesteryears but include other areas such as education, work, leisure, relationships, etc.
- Choices of life – we are inundated with a wide range of choices for every step we take in life; so many voices are calling out for our attention; we are overwhelmed into paralysis.
- Consequences of Life –every choice we make in life impacts upon our time, effort and commitment.

II. Attempting to know God's will is difficult – even for the believer. How?

- Non-believers in the past and present looks to astrology, human or animal body parts
- Believers today go for “Bible roulette,” i.e., flippantly turning to the bible and whatever verse or passage that catches their attention first, will be the message from God. Other believers may go for spiritual disciplines such as fasting, in the mistaken belief that such action will bring a person closer to knowing God's will. A timely reminder for many believers living under such a notion of consulting the astrology or superstition is *“Let no one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the LORD, and because of these detestable practices the LORD your God will drive out those nations before you.”* Deuteronomy 18:10-12, NIV.

III. Attempting to know God's will raise many important questions. What are they?

- What is God's will or what is not?
- If there is indeed a will of God in my life, will I miss it?
- How can we know for sure that a particular move will be in line with God's will?

B. FOUR ASSURING FACTS AS OUR FOUNDATION TO KNOWING GOD'S WILL:

I. We need to know the nature of God

- He cannot be fully understood by us.
- Refer to Job 9:10-12; Isaiah 55:8-9; Romans 11:33-36. Acknowledging this fact should undergird us and leave us with the idea that even if we do not understand what God is doing, we should not let ourselves be perplexed and in danger of being snowed under. Our response is to recognize God's ways and timing are absolutely perfect; and the faster we get used to it and accept God's hand in our lives, the better it is for us.
- He fully understands and knows everything about us.
- Refer to Deuteronomy 4:39; Psalm 111:10; Psalm 139:13-16. God has revealed many things about Himself and about our relationship with Him. But God has not revealed everything to us. We must recognize and accept that with the assurance that God is intimately concerned and cares for us.

II. We need to know the nature of God's will

- God has revealed He has a sovereign will
- ...absolute and unchangeable...
- Refer to Deuteronomy 29:29; Ephesians 1:11. God has pre-determined His sovereignty – He has willed things to happen that is unchangeable, unstoppable.
- ...unconditional...
- Refer to Psalm 115:3. God acts according to His will and as He pleases; not dependent on any outside influence.
- ...in harmony with His nature...
- Refer to 2 Tim 2:13. God cannot go against His attributes and nature (love).

III. God has revealed He has a Permissive Will

- He allows certain things to happen
- Refer to Job 1:8-12; Acts 4:22-23; James 1:2-4. These things include both the good and bad; because God has His reason (for His glory; for our good).

- He allows and wants us to make choices
 - Refer to 1 Thessalonians 4:3; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18; 2 Peter 3:9. We are created with a free will to make a free choice. We have to make a response to God's invitation and leading.
- IV. God has revealed both His Sovereign Will and Permissive Will can and will work together.
- Refer to Acts 2:22-23. A saying goes like this, "*God is not limited by our choices. God can work in our choices, through our choices and in spite of our choices...to accomplish His will*" (Haddon Robinson). It is refreshing and comforting that God has the ultimate control over all things.

Conclusion: What can you do?

1. Be Comforted – God is holy, wise and just. He will do what is right (Genesis 18:25)
2. Be Courageous – God is in control, not us. Therefore, wherever He leads us, we will go.
3. Be Committed – God reveals His will progressively. We ought to seek Him day by day, obediently and patiently.

Discussion:

The central idea in today's study is that believers ought to seek God's will for our lives and not live our lives haphazardly and aimlessly. Our lives matter to God on earth and not just in eternity; there, we ought to make our lives count.

1. What are useful ways and attitudes that we should adopt in discerning God's will?
2. What are the possible causes that contribute to a believer in danger of being overwhelmed by life's challenges?
3. Ask yourself: Is God's will stronger or is your self-will stronger?

Prayer:

Lord, we are people very much in control of our lives; for we like to live life with a measure of certainty and stability. But today's study reminded us of You having absolute control of our lives. Help us to be submitted to Your will – for it is perfect and it is for your Glory and for our Good. Thank You for the Comforting note that You love us and desire to give us the best. Help us to be Courageous when things appear out of control, for it is not, so long as You are in it. Finally, help us to stay Committed to following after You as You reveal Yourself and Your plans in our lives, and for our church. Amen.