
One incredible principle that we have seen the Holy Spirit emphasize though John's writings so far is that Jesus lived a life in total submission to His Father. In all things, at all times, Jesus lived to do the will of God. I believe the Spirit has so over emphasized this point in order that we might seriously consider the implications of this truth in our own lives. This is not to be some truth that we marginalize away thinking it has little to do with us and everything to do with Jesus; the reality is that it has everything to do with us.

John 5:30

I can do ***nothing*** on My own initiative. ***As I hear***, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.

That word "***nothing***" is so emphatic and so definitive it leaves no room at all for any other possible meaning. Jesus did nothing on His own, but as He heard from the Father so He did. Jesus lived a life of continual submission and obedience to the Father. This is not just some theological point to tuck away in our journals of Biblical knowledge; rather, this has a very profound implication to our lives. The way Jesus lived, as a man, in relationship with His Father is to be "the" example of how we are to live in relationship with Jesus. When we realize this truth, it brings us face to face with the powerful reality that God desires us to experience deep intimacy and continual communication with Him in our day-in-and-day-out experience such that we do ***nothing*** on our own initiative.

Notice that Jesus did not say that He already knows the will of God because He is God. He said that He seeks the will of God and does not seek His own will. Ah, in this statement is the secret or the dynamic that makes this a real possibility in

your life and my life. This word “seeks” is in the present active tense which means that every moment of every day Jesus was in a constant dialogue with His Father seeking to know and understand His will in the details of His life. Since the verb is in the indicative form we are to understand this as a statement of fact, no if’s, and’s or but’s. Jesus always was seeking the will of God; and, inversely, He was always refusing to seek His own will.

Throughout time God has always invited us to be a people who are manically focused on seeking Him with the confident expectation that we will find Him.

Deuteronomy 4:29-30

But from there you will seek the Lord your God, and you will find Him if you search for Him with all your heart and all your soul.

1 Chronicles 16:9-11

Sing to Him, sing praises to Him; speak of all His wonders. Glory in His holy name; let the heart of those who seek the Lord be glad. Seek the Lord and His strength; seek His face continually.

2 Chronicles 15:2-3

Listen to me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin: the Lord is with you when you are with Him. And if you seek Him, He will let you find Him; but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you.

Psalms 105:4

Seek the Lord and His strength; seek His face continually.

Proverbs 8:17

I love those who love me; and those who diligently seek me will find me.

Jeremiah 29:13-14

You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart.

James 4:8

Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.

Most of us either know these verses or have heard them—but as we know knowledge is different than belief, belief is different than faith, and as *Hebrews 11:6* says, without faith it is impossible to please God—in other words, it is impossible to be in alignment with His will. Now whether or not you were familiar with these verses before does not really matter because you have now heard them. So the next step is deciding if you believe what they say and believe that this principle of seeking and finding is true. Now, if you believe it to be true you still have to make the choice to live as if it is true—this is how faith is birthed and how you come into alignment with His will. You can sit on your knowledge, you can sit on your belief and go nowhere with it, but it is only in choosing to live this way will you come to understand and experience its reality in your own life.

Ephesians 5:17

So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

So if we can really know the will of God for our lives through seeking, why do so few people live as if it is really possible? Why do so few people make it their priority to seek, listen, and know the will of God? That is an easy question; we just have to look at the inverse to this principle. We all find it a lot easier to seek our will, our way, our wisdom, and our own version of the truth. It is so real to us and allows us to live in the illusion that we have some control over the outcomes in our life. Then add to that 1) the intangibility of seeking and waiting on God to reveal Himself to us; 2) the fear we have of the paths which He might lead us down; 3) our wrong belief and unbelief which keeps us from trusting that God is going to be who He says He is going to be for us; 4) our demand that God needs to do His part first and then we will do our part; and 5) drawing from last weeks teaching, we must add to the mix the fact that many of us have left so many mats lying on the ground here and there (just in case we need to return to our place of comfort and security) that we have not yet really abandoned ourselves to God. Thus, in too many ways, we are in our own way of hearing and knowing His will.

Maybe you are thinking that the will of God has been disclosed to us in the Bible in broad general terms where it speaks of our responsibilities to love, serve, witness, not sin, and so on. Well that may be true; I would never argue that those are not the will of God. But what we found out over the last few weeks is that even these general descriptions of the will of God must still be applied in our lives in a very specific way; in other words these are not our duties to go and fulfill unless it is in accord with a specific assignment from God.

Hence, that is why Jesus went to Samaria—a place that no self-respecting Jew would even step foot into. But the Father had a very specific appointment for Him with an immoral woman no less—again, a person that no self-respecting Jew, much less a Rabbi, would be caught dead talking to or even acknowledging in public. That is also why Jesus walked into the pool of Bethesda where there were a plethora of sick people who were blind, lame, and paralyzed and passed by this man, stepped over that woman, walked around this other guy and so on until He came face to face with the one person that He was sent to heal—the one person!

Consider for a moment that Jesus had the gifting and the power to heal all of them. He had the perfect opportunity, as the sickest of the sick were all gathered all in that one place. Could you imagine the press He would have received and the immediate boost and validation of His ministry? He had the motivation, as He said He came to earth to serve and not be served. But only one was chosen by the Father for healing and so Jesus healed only one. This brings us to our primary text this evening and a continuation of the discourse that Jesus was having with the religious leaders who were upset because He had healed a man on the Sabbath and because He told the man He had healed to take up his mat and walk (which they also considered to be a violation of the Sabbath).

John 5:19-23

Therefore Jesus answered and was saying to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do ***nothing*** of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner." For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing; and the Father will show Him greater works than these, so that you will marvel.

"For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes." For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son, so that all will honor the Son even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.

There is that word again—"nothing." Jesus can do nothing unless He sees His Father doing it. Based on the tense of the verb in the Greek (the "infinitive"), the idea is not that Jesus was powerless to do what He wanted, rather, He was unwilling. This takes us back to *John 4:4* "Jesus had to go through Samaria on the way." If you remember the teaching on this passage, in the Greek, the word "had" carries the meaning that Jesus had volitionally "bound" His will to the will of the Father. So He had to go through Samaria; He had no choice—it was what the Father wanted. But Jesus did not go through Samaria because the Father forced or coerced Him to go (Jesus was not the Father's puppet on earth); it was because He had willingly bound Himself to the Father's will.

Like you and I, Jesus was a man with a will to choose. He could have chosen His own will and He could have sought His own way, but He didn't. He always chose to subject Himself to the Father in order to stay in perfect alignment with His Father's desires and He always refused to follow His own way.

Notice that the Father loves the Son so much that He was willing to show Jesus everything that He was doing. Do you know what I love about this statement? It reveals to us that the Father truly deals with us, like His Son, on the basis of passion, desire, intimacy and unbelievable affection. In *Chapter 17* Jesus would later confirm that the Father's loves us like He loves His Son.

John 17:23

I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me.

The Father loves the Son; that is why He is willing to show Him all things. The Father loves us as much as He loves the Son and is also willing to show us all things so, like Jesus, we might say that we can do *nothing* on our own initiative. That is why we are told in *Ephesians 5:17* to not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. He wants us to understand, He wants us to know, and He wants to show us everything—all things. It is not only possible to experience God in this way, but Paul tells us that we are fools when we live as if we do not believe that God will lead us in the details of our life.

Psalms 37:23

The steps of the godly are directed by the Lord. He delights in every detail of their lives. Though they stumble, they will not fall, for the Lord holds them by the hand.

Psalms 139:3

You chart the path ahead of me and tell me where to stop and rest. Every moment you know where I am.

For those taking notes, you should also look up *John 7:17; Romans 12:2; Colossians 1:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-3; 1 Peter 4:2.*

Now, I don't want us to make the mistake of thinking that Jesus' ability to see what the Father was doing was automatic. This is such a key and crucial point. I am afraid that our tendency is to always go down a path in our minds where we try to marginalize the truth in our lives by saying something to the effect that "it worked for Jesus; after all, He is God but we are just failed men." It is true; He is God and in our text last week, Jesus made it clear to the religious leaders that He was absolutely equal with His Father in Heaven. This statement of divinity so infuriated the Jews that in *verse 18* we are told that they wanted to kill Him. But we have to remember, and cannot forget, that when Jesus came to earth He was also 100% man.

Philippians 2:5-8

Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Jesus chose to set aside His glory and live as a man and in so doing show us how as men and women we are to live in relationship with God. Therefore, as a man, He had to seek the Father's will and wait for the Father to show Him what to do. I believe this is why Jesus said in *verse 20*: "...the Father will show Him greater works than these, so that you will marvel." This means that the Father did not show

Jesus the entire game plan up front. But just like us, Jesus had to continually abide with God and seek His Father's guidance and instructions for everything He did. Remember, He did *nothing* on His own initiative.

Let's stop here for a moment and consider this concept that we are to continually seek His will. I believe that in His Spirit, Jesus had an ongoing conversation with the Father where He was always asking His Father to show Him, guide Him, and lead Him in what He was to say, what He was to do, and where He was to go. We are instructed to carry on this same kind of ongoing communication with God. In *1 Thessalonians 5:17* we are told to pray without ceasing and in *Ephesians 6:18*, to pray at all times in the Spirit—our Spirit with His Spirit in constant dialogue.

As for me, I have learned that seeking the will of God cannot stop at the alone time that I have with God; but it must continue all throughout my day. When I am meeting with any of you, the entire time we are talking and I am engaged with you, I am also simultaneously asking God to give me His wisdom, to give me insight and understanding, to lead me in what I am to say or do. As you know, I have said and done some crazy things that there is no way I would otherwise say or do if it was not for the Lord's leading. But when I am continually talking to Him in this way, what He asks me to say and do is exactly what is needed at the moment. I know that many of you can give testimony to this reality based on our experiences together.

But this is how we are to live in all areas in every area of our life. Seeking the will of God is not reserved just for big things but it is in all things, all situations, all encounters, and there are no exceptions. We are supposed to bind our will to the Father's will such that there is *nothing* we will do absent His instruction. *Proverbs 2:1-11* and *3:5-6* are such amazing passages which drive home the truth that it is possible to live this way. I want to read these verses and ask you to go home and

study them on your own. We did an exhaustive study of them in the series “How God Speaks” which you can listen to on the pathwayfellowship.org website which might help you in studying these truths. But for tonight let’s just read and consider.

Proverbs 2:1-11

My child, listen to what I say, and ***treasure*** my commands. ***Tune your ears*** to wisdom, and concentrate on understanding. ***Cry out*** for insight, and ***ask*** for understanding. ***Search*** for them as you would for silver; ***seek*** them like hidden treasures. Then you ***will*** understand what it means to fear the Lord, and you ***will*** gain knowledge of God. For the Lord grants wisdom! From his mouth come knowledge and understanding. He grants a treasure of common sense to the honest. He is a shield to those who walk with integrity. He guards the paths of the just and protects those who are faithful to him. Then you ***will*** understand what is right, just, and fair, and you ***will*** know how to find the right course of action every time. For wisdom ***will*** enter your heart, and knowledge ***will*** fill you with joy. Wise choices ***will*** watch over you. Understanding ***will*** keep you safe.

Proverbs 3:5-7

Trust in the Lord with all your heart; ***do not*** depend on your own understanding. ***Seek*** his will in all you do, and he ***will*** direct your paths. ***Don’t be*** impressed with your own wisdom. Instead, ***fear*** the Lord and turn your back on evil.

This kind of life is not only possible; it is the will of God. Can you imagine knowing the right course of action to choose every time? Can you imagine the confidence that you would have? That would be so wonderful. The key is to

actively and continually seek the Lord while continually refusing to seek your own will, refusing to rely on your own wisdom, and refusing to think that you can somehow navigate the details of your life.

Another interesting point that Jesus makes is that the “why” is essential to our ability to hear and understand the will of the Lord. Often we can be so focused on the “what”—what we are to do and how we are to do it—that we miss the whole point and the whole reason we should seek the Lord in the first place. Too often we make our Christian experience about us. But it is not about us or about what we want to experience in this life. It is about Him and His glory and His honor and His will in heaven being done here on earth.

Despite what we have been told so often in the *religion of Christianity*, our aim should ***not be*** to seek His will in order that we might know what “to do” so we can feel good about ourselves and have purpose and meaning in our lives. In that case, the “me,” and not God, is still at the center. Rather, our aim needs to be all about being in right relationship with Him because not only does He love us but He deserves this kind of honor. Our aim should be to always acknowledge with every part of our life that He is God and we are not. Our lives should always be lived for His glory and not our own. In verses 21-23, Jesus gives us the “why.”

John 5:21-23

For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes. For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son, that all will honor the Son even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.

The Son must be honored and the Son will be honored; the Father will see to it. He has given all rule and authority to the Son so that all of creation might look only to Him and honor only Him. And, in so doing, the Father is glorified. In *Philippians 2*, after telling us how Jesus humbled Himself, set aside His glory and submitted to the will of the Father, we are told the following:

Philippians 2:9-11

For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Jesus will be the one to judge all of creation. In fact, even now He is the one who decides who lives and experiences eternity now and who remains in darkness bound to their sin. All of creation falls under the judgment of the Son and we know that His judgment is just and true because He always seeks the will of the Father. And when it is all said and done, no man or woman will glory in His presence; rather, all will bow to His name.

I want you to understand this truth. You and I give honor and glorify to the Father, and thereby honor and glorify the Son, when we know, believe, and choose to live in such a way that we are unwilling to do anything—and God means anything— absent His leading and direction realizing that only He has the wisdom, the visibility into time present, past and future, and the understanding of how all things work according to His purposes. This is how we honor the Son.

Do you realize this means the inverse is also true? We give honor and glory to ourselves when we choose to rely on our own wisdom, understanding, intellect, and emotions for our counsel. To glorify the Son we must live in a state of ongoing and continual desperation for His counsel. He is the One. He is our motivation. He is our “why”!

This statement “He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him” applies not only to how we live as believers, but also to the world of unbelievers. In other words, there is no way around the Son. There is no way that the Father can be appeased or honored except through Jesus Christ. Despite all the spiritual enlightenment out there and all the hopes for participating in and experiencing the divine, if a person does not choose to accept Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior, they are calling the Father a liar. I don’t know about you, but that seems to rank pretty high on the list of things not to do.

1 John 5:9-12

If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater; for the testimony of God is this, that He has testified concerning His Son. The one who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself; the one who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has given concerning His Son. And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.

I have stared at this text long and hard, I have examined the Greek, and there are simply no loopholes, there are no exceptions, there are no quid pro quo’s or deals

we can make with the Father; there is only the Son. I have talked to so many people who are on a journey to know God and to please God, but they want nothing to do with Jesus. In fact, they are actually incensed by the notion that Jesus is the only way to the Father, as if God has a lot of nerve to place this requirement on us. This is in part, I believe, because of the spiritual battle that surrounds the truth, but it is also because you and I have not lived in such a way that our lives bring glory to the Son and thereby proves that He is the One. We do not live as if we are desperate for His counsel. As a result, it is hard to convince others to follow in this truth when they perceive that on the one hand we say, “Jesus is the way” and on the other we live as if we are the way. This should not be the case; we simply must not be the stumbling block which causes others to not believe.

Now, there is a side benefit of honoring the Son and being in right relationship with the entirety of the Godhead. We not only will have the wisdom and understanding that we need to find the right course of action in all aspects of our life, but we will also get to enjoy all the benefits of being a child of God. Yes, His peace, His joy, His favor, His freedom, His strength, His presence, His protection, and His identity are all a fruit of being in right relationship with the Father when we choose to honor and glorify the Son.

In addition, a further benefit is that the areas of sin which now seem to have such a dominant place in your thoughts and in your life will become virtually a non issue. Can you imagine? If you are actively and continually seeking God, refusing to seek your own will, then by default you are giving little to no priority to the voice of your *Old Man* and his attempts to supplant the authority of the Word of God in your life. That is why in *Galatians 5:16* Paul says that if we walk in the Spirit of God *we will* not carry out the desires of the flesh. Don't be misled by what you have experienced so far in your attempts to “battle” sin, this is an

emphatic statement—a truth that will not bend—you *will not* carry out the desires of the flesh.

It is interesting, the Greek word translated “carry out” comes from the root word “*teleo*,” which means to finish, complete, and put an end to. In other words, when we walk in the Spirit you will be finished doing what your old sinful nature desires—done! It is from this word that Jesus while on the cross declared with His last breath, “*tetelestai*” “it is finished,” as He put an end to the power of sin and death to control our lives.

This can be your reality—**it is possible!** You just need to honor the Son by living only for His will while constantly refusing to follow your own. In closing, I would like us to just take a moment to ponder the “why.”

Colossians 1:15-20

Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation, for through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can't see—such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world.

Everything was created through him and for him. He existed before anything else, and he holds all creation together. Christ is also the head of the church, which is his body. He is the beginning, supreme over all who rise from the dead. So he is first in everything.

For God in all his fullness was pleased to live in Christ, and through him God reconciled everything to himself. He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of Christ's blood on the cross.

Jesus is the One. He is magnificent. He is worthy of our honor. He is everything. He is the reason we are to surrender and live in total dependence on His counsel for our lives. He is why we are to actively and continually seek only His will.

As I said over the last couple of weeks; this is radical Christianity. This is how we experience eternity now. This is the will of God for our lives.

Let's Pray