

In all the years that I've been involved in Christian ministry, the desire that Christians most often express, and what they consistently ask me about (more than anything else) hasn't changed...

“How can I know what God's will is for my life?”...

And most of us have pondered this... How do I know God's will???

And some of you are going to be very glad to know that I'm going to answer that today: How to know God's will for your life... But then, after I've done that, some of you are going to go home very disappointed with the answer. And the reason you'll be disappointed is because of the disconnect between the fleshly human question that's being asked, and the Spiritual biblical answer that's being given.

You see, when we humans are seeking the will of God, often our minds get all focused on “What's God's will for my life program?”

- What career should I pursue?
- Who should I work for?
- Who should I marry?
  
- Where should I live?
- What school should I send my kids too?
  
- What farm should I buy?
- When should I plant my crop?
- Things are getting a bit dry,,, should I buy cattle or sell them???

- Where should I retire?
- What church should I join?
- What doctor should I trust?

Alright, and all these things are valid things that we should bring to the Lord in prayer...

But the thing is, often, when we pray about these things, underlying our prayer, is our fleshly desire for things to go well in life... I'm wanting God to show me what decision to make, so that everything will work out, and go well for me in life...

But when the Scriptures reveal to us, the will of God, most often, it's not so much about our individual life program. The will of God (what's most important), and what God reveals in His word, is about:

- knowing God;
- making Godly decisions;
- living a holy life

From the day Paul & Timothy heard about the faith and the love of these Colossian Christians, they've been praying for them. And today's reading, is about **what** they've been praying for. And if the Apostle Paul and Timothy were to be praying for **us** today, I reckon this is what they would be praying for us.

that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding

Some people are of the opinion that to become a Christian (Disciple of Jesus), you have to turn your brain off. Nothing could be further from the truth...

Jesus said: **Matthew 22: (ESV) <sup>37</sup> ... "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. <sup>38</sup> This is the great and first commandment.**

To be a person of faith doesn't mean that we switch our minds off. It means we start worshipping/loving God **with** our minds, that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding ,, and that ain't going to happen unless we love Him with our minds.

So, when it comes to the "knowledge" of God, what is it??? Is it an airy-fairy 'esoteric' thing???... I'm going to explain that word, because the first time I ever heard the word "esoteric", I had to look it up... Some churches today are heading down the New Age Spiritual mysticism line... And that's all tangled up with claiming to have an esoteric knowledge.

"Esoteric" means "only a few special people have this knowledge"... Only the initiated or the special spiritual ones... It's a knowledge that only gets revealed to the special few, and everybody else is in the dark...

Is that the sort of knowledge that Paul's talking about? No, and yet that's the sort of knowledge that many people are looking for...

And as we continue studying this letter, we're going to learn that a false teaching that Paul is warning the Colossians about, is something called Gnosticism... "Gnosticism" (gnosis – knowledge), was a combining of Greek philosophy with Christianity. And so the ones who saw themselves as 'the spiritually elite' were the ones who believed they had a special secret spiritual knowledge that not everybody else could have... They had their own revelation that wasn't given to everybody else...

But the knowledge that Paul and Timothy are praying for, for this church, isn't an esoteric secret revelation – it's the **known** and **taught** salvation will of God.

- In V5, Paul said, You have **heard** it (word of truth);
- In V6, You have **heard** it; and **understood** it (the **grace** of God in truth);
- In V7, You've **learned** it (the grace of God in truth)...

And this is the knowledge that he's talking about. There's nothing secret about it. It can be heard/understood/learned... We can be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding

But why???

Why do we want to hear it; understand it; learn it??? What's the purpose of filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding???

The purpose is to live Godly lives...

In this passage, there's a bit of a circular pattern, but it's not a circular pattern – it's an upwards spiral...

*We used to live just outside of Dalby. And the Dalby district has become quite the hub for gliders. And when I was working at the Ag College, we used to farm the Airport lease, and so I used to get a pretty good view of all sorts of aircraft..*

*And for a while there, they had a tow-plane based at Dalby, and they'd tow up the gliders, and once they were up, they'd look for a thermal – something that creates 'lift' ... So, on a hot, sunny day, a big black paddock gets heated up by the sun, and the air rises, causing 'lift' ... Glider pilots like to see those little cumulonimbus clouds, because they've been caused in the same way – caused by the uplift.*

*And so they find a thermal – they find a patch where the air is being lifted, and they stay in that, going round and round, but going up as they do – spiralling upward.*

And that's what's happening here:

- Knowledge of God's will (in all Spiritual wisdom and understanding)
- means we walk in a manner worthy of God
- We bear fruit in every good work.
- And this increases our knowledge of God's will

You see, it's an upwards spiral –

- the more we know God's will
- the more spiritual wisdom and understanding we have
- means we make Godly decisions and we walk in a manner worthy of God (it's about Godly living), and
- this increases our knowledge of God's will...

Do you see how, when it comes to God's will, our focus shouldn't be (so much) on our life's program – our focus should be on what is already known. Our focus should be on the will that God has already revealed to us...

Most Christians I know, want to know, "God, show me Your will, and I'll do it". But often, God has already shown us His will, and we've neglected it...

God's will, that He very clearly reveals to all, (there's nothing secret about it), is about Godly living. So, how about we start with that... Paul uses the phrase, "bearing fruit in every good work". A few months ago as we studied Galatians, we learned about the fruit of the Spirit:

Galatians 5: (ESV) <sup>22</sup> ....love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, self-control.....

This is God's will – for us to keep in step with the Spirit...

And as we bear fruit in every good work, and as we increase in the knowledge of God, do you know what happens??? We are <sup>11</sup> **being strengthened** with all power, according to

his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy

Now, there's a lot of talk about "the power of God", and experiencing the power of God. It appears as if some people want to become mini-gods themselves. What they crave, is to be able to wield spiritual/miraculous power... But that's a complete **mis**understanding of how God intends us to be strengthened with all power...

He strengthens us with all power (according to His glorious might) WHY???, for all endurance and patience with joy.

A common Christian term, is to be a conqueror, or an overcomer. What do you think that means – to be a 'spiritual conqueror'? Or to be an 'overcomer'?

What often gets taught, is that to be an overcomer, is to have enough faith to get rid of all the hardships, so we can have a glorious and trouble-free life... It sounds good, doesn't it... The trouble is, that's not true.

It's when we were studying the last book in the Bible (Revelation of Jesus Christ), that it really struck-home to me, what it **really** means to be an overcomer/conqueror... The one who conquers/overcomes, is the one who stands strong in His faith, always being a witness for Jesus, no matter what troubles/persecutions they endure...

Overcoming isn't about 'removing' the troubles – It's about continuing to be a faithful witness for Jesus Christ, through the troubles.

And my prayer, is that every one of us would be a conqueror/overcomer for Christ... When Jesus prayed for His disciples, He acknowledged that the world would hate us, and yet He sent His disciples out into the world, as witnesses for Him (He didn't say, "I'm going to stop them from hating you")... This, is the real power of God – to be a witness for Jesus – to take the good news of Jesus Christ, to the world that hates the Christ... That's the power of God in action.

The word that's translated as "patience" here, is μακροθυμία (makrothymian) makro (big) thymia (suffering)... And the power of God that strengthens us, means our endurance and long-suffering, is something we do with joy, but not only joy, we do it, <sup>12</sup> giving thanks to the Father....

Why would we ever have joy in suffering??? Why would we give thanks to the Father through our suffering??? *Probably the best example I can give, is the pain of labour (because {as a bloke} I obviously know so much about it, don't I ladies)... But the pain of labour, is leading to the joy of the birth of a child... And if you ask a mother, "Was it worth it?" Absolutely...*



So, what do we know, that makes suffering for Jesus, all worth it??? The mother knows her baby's about to be born. What do we know?

We know that our heavenly Father has delivered us from the kingdom of darkness, and He's transferred us to the Kingdom of Light – the Kingdom of His beloved son.

- V12 says he has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.
- V<sup>13</sup> He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son,

How???

- in Jesus Christ, we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

*Not anyone can become an Australian Citizen.*

*To become a citizen of Australia, you're either born as a citizen, or you have to go through a whole process of becoming a citizen. And during that process, it gets decided if you are of the right character, and you make a citizenship pledge, giving your loyalty to our Country.*

But to become a citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven, no one is born to that. We all have to make the transfer. We all make to make the transfer from the Kingdom of Darkness to the Kingdom of Light. And that transfer, is to have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, to have redemption and the forgiveness of sins.

Redemption means He's bought us back.

*The other day, I needed (in my household there's always the discussion "Did you **want** it or did you **need** it?" – I needed) a new cordless tool... It just so happened, there was a deal on at the time, that if I purchased 2 different skins (cordless tool without a battery or charger), And if I bought 2 skins instead of just the one that I needed, they'd give me a free battery with it... So that meant I no longer needed only 1 tool – I needed 2 tools. So I bought the 2 skins, and then I had to "redeem my battery"... I redeemed my battery, by providing evidence that I had purchased these 2 skins...*

Sin, has a cost to it. The wages of sin, is death. And so, for Jesus to save me from my sin, the redemption price has to be paid. And so Jesus Christ died on the cross, to redeem us from sin and death.

I said last week, this whole letter is unashamedly about Christ.

In Christ, we have redemption and the forgiveness of sins. It is through what Jesus has done on the cross, that we are qualified to be citizens of the Kingdom of light...

And so God's will, is for us to know this. And knowing this, we walk in the light. We walk in a manner worthy of the Lord... And as we do that, He gives us strength. Strength to endure and to be long suffering...

And so, humanly speaking, when we are seeking the will of God, we are most often wanting Him to give us a plan for our

life program... But the answer that God is giving us, is how to live a godly life where we are, and in every circumstance we find ourselves in.

And the better we know God – the more we grow in Spiritual wisdom and understanding, the more spiritual fruit we'll bear, and the better witnesses we'll be for Christ.

And the better we know God, the more we will be overcomers – the more we will be faithful witnesses for Christ, no matter what troubles, persecutions or hardships we endure.

Let's pray.

Heavenly Father,  
We give You thanks,  
because You have qualified us  
to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

You have delivered us from the domain of darkness;  
and transferred us to the Kingdom of Your beloved son.  
We praise You,  
that in Him we have redemption,  
the forgiveness of sins.

Lord, our desire, is to love You with our minds.  
Help us to know You better.  
Help us to hear, understand and learn  
Your merciful act of grace and redemption.

Remind us of these things.  
Help us to know Your Gospel of Grace,

and to articulate Your Gospel of Grace,

And Lord, help us to live according to Your will.

That we wouldn't just seek Your will to know our life  
program,

But help us to live by Your will.

Help us to honour You with Godly living.

Help us to know Your will, so we bear fruit of righteousness.

To You,

be all glory, honour and praise.

Amen.