

God's Will - the Only Good Will

By Nathan Warner

God is perfectly good, and His will is perfectly good. In His perfect will, God made all of creation to take part in His will *for their good*. As the Elders in heaven declare, “*Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created*” (Revelation 4:11 NASB), “*and behold, it was very good*” (Genesis 1:31b). It is not natural for the creation to do anything but God's will, because God's will provides the only good way for all of creation.

When Adam and Eve sinned, they disobeyed God's will for them, instead indulging their own will. This harmed them because only God's will kept them in life: “*There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death*” (Proverbs 14:12). As Adam and Eve's children, we bear the nature and traits they passed on to us. To this day, each one of us “*is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death*” (James 1:14-15).

In our lives, we have a hard time accepting God's will over us, even though it is good for us, because our sin-nature is self-centered, self-willed, and narcissistic. Like young children, we are predisposed to care only for our immediate desires and wants, regardless of whether they will cause others harm or harm us later. In a child's limited understanding, their parent's “will” may not seem right or even make sense. They may think,

“Why can't I eat ice cream instead
of broccoli?”

“Why do I have to go to bed? –
I'm not even tired!”

“I don't want to put my toys away,
I like them out!”

“Why am I getting disciplined? –
he started it!”

The will of the parent often frustrates a child, because it is frequently in opposition to the child's own will. Children may think their parents don't understand, or maybe they think they know what is better. Wouldn't it be great if children could do what they “knew” would make them “happy” or feel good? If they were in charge, there wouldn't be bedtimes or discipline— they'd have ice cream for every meal and leave their toys wherever they wanted to. Everything they'd do, they would do for their own pleasure. Wouldn't that be great?

There is a problem, however. Because of the fall, “*the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God*” (Romans 8:20-21). This means that the consequence of self-willed behavior is all manner of futility. It is fruitless, pointless, useless, barren, unprofitable, hopeless, empty, failure – and ultimately death.

After spending a great couple days eating nothing but ice cream and staying up all night, the children would most certainly get sick. Then, rather than feel good, they would feel horrible. All that willful pleasure was pointless because it ended in pain. Yet in the futility of willful behavior, they'd start all over again once they felt better, “*indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind...by nature children of wrath*” (Ephesians 2:3b). Good parents know that indulging

the will of a child prevents them from maturing and flourishing. Sure, they'll still physically grow to have the strength of an adult body and the powers of an adult mind, but those powers will be ruled by their destructive and self-centered childish indulgences – destructive to themselves and destructive to others, spreading their fruitless, pointless, hopeless, empty works wherever they go and leading others into futility. Rather than provide support and stability to those around them, they become dangerous in their so-called “freedom.”

What freedom? Disobedient children think they are enslaved to obedience, so when they disobey their parents, they think they are experiencing freedom, but in actuality they have simply exchanged one master for the other – they have become enslaved to disobedience: *“Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin [disobedience to God] resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?”* (Romans 6:16)

People who think that disobedience is freedom are self-centered, self-willed narcissists and *“fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil”* (1 Timothy 3:6b). Lucifer was the first of creation to declare, *“I will”* (Isaiah 14:13-14) – he was the first created being to be self-centered, and like a disobedient child, he put his will above God’s will, because he thought his way would be better for him than God’s way. How wrong he was! For although he has acted willfully in the short history of earth, the judgment he will face for all eternity is a terrible one— *“tormented day and night forever and ever”* (Revelation 20:10).

The truth is that a parent’s boundaries and discipline create a framework for children to grow and mature in the good will of their parents. Obedient children learn to obey their parents regardless of whether they always understand why they must. They learn that they can’t always get what they want AND that often what they want isn’t good for them in the long-run anyway. In the same way, a Child of God learns that it is better *“to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin”* (Hebrews 11:25), *“for the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord”* (Romans 6:23). *“For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death. But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life”* (Romans 6:20-22). *“Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God”* (Romans 6:12-13).

Jesus is God’s only begotten Son. His purpose in coming into the world was the purpose of His Father: *“My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work”* (John 4:34b). Jesus gives us who are adopted children the greatest example to emulate for obeying the Father’s will while living on this earth. Jesus said, *“I have come in My Father’s name”* (John 5:43a), *“not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me”* (John 6:38b). *“I can do nothing on My own initiative...because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me”* (John 5:30). Jesus did nothing that was self-centered or self-willed. He *lived* to do the will of His Father and nothing else. May we emulate Him!

And what is our Father’s will that Jesus so single-mindedly focused on to accomplish? It is the good of all, for the Father *“desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth”* (1 Timothy 2:4), *“not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance”* (2 Peter 3:9b). God is forgiving, and He desires the disobedient children of the world to be

reconciled to Him through obedience to His Son, whom He has given all things— *“All things have been handed over to Me by My Father”* (Luke 10:22).

Only through obedience to Jesus may self-willed mankind return to the will of God, which is the only good way for them, and so be saved from eternal death, *“for this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day”* (John 6:40). *“This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day”* (John 6:39). Even so, Amen.