

Loving My Father's Will

By Ginny Larsen

“See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know Him. Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when He appears we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who thus hopes in Him purifies himself as He is pure.” (1 John 3:1-3)

I remember a time when I was in Bible college, earnestly seeking God’s direction and will for my life. I wanted to do something great for Him. Was He calling me to be a missionary? A pastor’s wife? Did He have some fulltime ministry for me? I knew I wanted to give my whole life to serving Him, but how? I was on my knees at a prayer meeting asking Him, “Lord! Please show me what You are calling me to be!” That still, small voice came to me, simply saying, “To be my child.” I had been a Christian for 2 years. I had no idea what the Lord meant by that. “I AM Your child, Lord! What do you want me to be?” was my reply. But in my forty-some years of being a child of God, He has been showing me what it means to be His child. I am His child always, in every walk of life I am in, wherever that leads, and whatever work that calls me to, or whatever circumstance. I AM His child.

What an amazing thing to be actually a child of God – His offspring, His inheritance, His own family. The world wrongfully talks about the “brotherhood of man,” claiming God is the Father of all, but the Bible tells us differently. God truly is the creator of all and calls all to be His children, but only those who are born of His seed and have His Spirit abiding in them have become His children. And we don’t even fathom at this time what we will ultimately be when our redemption is complete. We only know we’ll be like Him!

So what is He like? Sadly, the “church” of today has apostasized from a Biblical Christianity to a postmodern Christianity, and they’ve made their own “Jesus,” whom they’ve decided is a much better fit for their lifestyle, dreams, and ambitions in this life. They’ve thrown out the Bible, and created their own “word,” and they practice new-age mysticism rather than having the Holy Spirit. But those who want to know the real Jesus, those who want to find Him in truth, know that the one source of finding that is the book He gave us to reveal His truth to us, to reveal Himself to us, to give us a revelation of all that He will do and has done from beginning of time to the end of time in this world. Those who are His true children have something in common – they love their Father’s will. They love His Word. It is from this Word and this Holy Spirit that they are born again and receive new life.

When we become His child, it’s because of a new birth. It is not a decision to join a church, or to join a Christian mindset, or an ideology, or to start fixing yourself up to look like what you define as a Christian. It is an act of God. It is not an act of man.

“Jesus answered him, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.’ Nicodemus said to Him, ‘How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?’ Jesus answered, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.’” (John 3:3-6). “But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:12-13).

God Himself has to give you that “right” or “power” to make you His child. You cannot just decide, “I’m going to be a child of God from now on. I’m going to follow God’s law and go to church, and join with other Christians and clean up my life.” But when we see that we are so completely separated from Him, so lost, and so full of sin that He could never call us His own or have anything to do with us, then we see that He alone out of His own love and His own sacrifice by His blood made the only way that we could be justified before Him and cleansed from all our corruption. We see that He being God, is able to, by His power, remove that sin “as far as the east is from the west” and give us a whole new nature, a divine nature, by coming into our hearts, renewing it, and dwelling there, making us a whole new creature in Christ. It is then we are His child. It is ONLY then.

*“You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. **Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Him**”* (Romans 8:9).

If we are His child, it is because we are “of His seed,” just as we are the biological children of our parents because we are born of the seed of our father. Those born of the earthly seed of their father have characteristics of their father. They will resemble their earthly parents and people will recognize them as being a part of that family. Those who are of the seed of God will also have His characteristics growing in them, so that they will be recognized as part of His family.

*“Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as He is righteous. Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, **for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God.** By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother”* (1 John 3:7-10).

These characteristics come about in them because of the “seed” in them. Not because of their strong-enough willpower or their strong-enough faith to keep doing the right things or tow the line but because of the Spirit of God Who now abides in them, Who remains in them forever.

*“And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, to **be with you forever**, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. You know Him, for He dwells with you and **will be in you**”* (John 14:16-17).

Another characteristic of being His child is that the more we grow in this new life, the more we grow to be conformed to His image. We take on His nature, becoming like Him – and like Him, we love our Father’s will. Doing His will becomes our desire, not something we must submit to against our will. We have our fleshly human nature, and there is always a battle with it. The flesh is always lusting against the Spirit and the Spirit strives against the flesh. But His Spirit in us has power to raise us up above those fleshly lusts when we agree with Him and submit ourselves to Him, trusting in His power alone to “raise us up to newness of life.” It’s understanding our position in Him, as His child, and knowing what He has done in us (Ephesians 1 and 2) that enables us to walk according to the Spirit and not the flesh. It is not that we have a strong-enough will, but having been filled with His will through His Spirit, we have a “renewed will” – renewed by the Holy Spirit (Colossians 3:10, Titus 3:5).

“But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law” (Galatians 5:16-18).

The more we walk in the Spirit, the more we love what He loves and the more we desire His

will and to put away our own will. The more we trust our Father's will, the more we will love His will. The flesh desires what makes it feel good and comfortable and satisfies its lust or pride. But when we see God's will and love it, we are empowered to put aside the comforts and desires and pride of our flesh and embrace His will. The more we do so, the more the love for that will grows in our hearts.

Many times we find a conflict in our soul with our will vs. God's will. But as His child, we do want His will. We often let the flesh deceive us, however, in desiring to bring together His will and our own, and find ways to manipulate the Word of God to somehow convince ourselves His will is really the same as ours. We convince ourselves that God wants us to be happy and feel good and have a good life, so He must want what we want for ourselves. Even though the Bible may tell us what we desire is sin, we somehow let our emotions guide us into believing a lie. *"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?"* (Jeremiah 17:9)

How dangerous that is! How dangerous it is to get away from His Word - His light that exposes the Truth. We cannot separate His Word from His will. We cannot separate His Word from Him. When we do, we believe the lie that our flesh and its lust have deceived us with. Sin is extremely deceitful and our only way of overcoming it is to abide in His Word, letting that Word and His will fill our spirits. Many of His children don't resemble Him, sadly, because they have gotten away from listening to their Father's voice and began listening to the voice of a stranger. If they are truly His children, His Spirit will continually be calling them back to the truth of His Word, and though He may chastise them for a time, it is for the purpose of restoring them, as a loving Father Who chastises the children He loves. He will not let His children go. He will chastise and correct. Many of His children suffer needlessly because of following their own heart rather than their heavenly Father's. If they are His children, they will never feel comfortable outside of His will.

As His children, we will also suffer with Him, as Jesus suffered in this world. Because the world rejects God, they also reject His children. Because they hate the truth (which is Jesus Himself and His Word), they will hate those who love the truth, who obey, cling to, and keep His Word. Again we have a choice. Will we love our Father's will, even to suffer with Him, in order to do His will in this evil world? Will we give up our own will's desire for happiness in this world, possibly losing all earthly possessions or positions, in order to embrace our Father's will and share in the same sufferings Jesus did? Will we share in His shame - the shame of the cross - with Him, Who took on our shame? I think of the shame of my past sins and cringe. I am so grateful that Jesus took all my shame. How can I say no to accepting the shame this world gives me for identifying with Him? As His child, I must take humiliation, ridicule, embarrassment, and all that the world does to me because I am His. I desire to do that with thanksgiving, knowing what an honor it is to be counted worthy to do so. I pray more each day that my Father will enable me to grow in my love for His will, no matter what it costs me. I pray for each of us that during this awful dark hour in this world, we will stand in His light all the more, embracing His will, no matter how much the world hates us for it.

Father, give us the power to do so, for it is You Who works in us to will and to do of Your good pleasure always. Amen.

"Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure." (Philippians 2:12-1)