

**Walking as Children of Light:  
Understanding the Will of the Lord**

**Ephesians 5:15-21**

**May 18, 2008**

# How do we Walk in the Light?

- (1) Look carefully how you walk, not as unwise but as wise (v. 15);
- (2) Make the best use of your time, because the days are evil (16);
- (3) Do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is (v. 17);
- (4) Do not be drunk with wine, but be filled with the Holy Spirit (v. 18).

# Deuteronomy 30:11-14

*“For this commandment that I command you today is not too hard for you, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that you should say, ‘Who will ascend to heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?’ Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, ‘Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?’ But the word is very near you. It is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can do it.”*

## Ephesians 5:17

*“Therefore, do not be **foolish** but understand what the will of the Lord is.”*

-Foolish means “to be without reason,” or more broadly “not to use common sense, or not to employ one’s understanding particularly in practical matters.”

# Luke 12:13-21

*“Someone in the crowd said to him [Jesus], ‘Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.’ But he said to him, ‘Man, who made me a judge or arbitrator over you?’ And he said to them, ‘Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.’*

## **Luke 12:13-21**

*And he told them a parable, saying, 'The land of a rich man produced plentifully, and he thought to himself, "What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?" And he said, "I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.'*

# Luke 12:13-21

*And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.” But God said to him, “Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?” So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.””*

# Hebrews 9:27

*“...it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment.”*

## Ephesians 5:17

*“Therefore, do not be foolish but **understand** what the will of the Lord is.”*

-“Understand” literally means “to bring things together,” but more practically it means “to perceive something clearly, or to employ one’s capacity for understanding and thus to arrive at insight.”

## **Romans 12:1-2**

*“I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”*

## **A Key Question...**

What does the Bible mean by the phrase, “the will of God”?

-The Greek word for “will” means “one’s design or intent or purpose,” and therefore the phrase “the will of God” simply means the design or intent or purpose of God for anything and everything.

# Isaiah 53:1-10

*Who has believed what he has heard from us?*

*And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.*

## **Isaiah 53:1-10**

*Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

# Isaiah 53:1-10

*He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people? And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.*

## **Isaiah 53:1-10**

*Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him;  
he has put him to grief; when his soul makes  
an offering for guilt, he shall see his  
offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will  
of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.”*

## **Acts 2:22-23**

*“Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know—this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.”*

# **A Crucial Distinction...**

1. Sovereign will and permissive will;
2. Hidden will and revealed will;
3. Will of decree and will of command.

# God's Will of Decree

God's will of Decree refers to God's ultimate control over everything that comes to pass, even things that God abhors and expressly forbids.

*A. W. Pink, an early twentieth-century pastor and scholar, says it is "his eternal, unchanging purpose concerning all things which he hath made, to be brought about by certain means to their appointed ends."*

# Isaiah 46:8-11

“Remember this and stand firm, recall it to mind, you transgressors, remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,’ calling a bird of prey from the east, the man of my counsel from a far country. *I have spoken, and I will bring it to pass; I have purposed, and I will do it.*”

# Daniel 4:25

*“...you shall be driven from among men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. You shall be made to eat grass like an ox, and you shall be wet with the dew of heaven, and seven periods of time shall pass over you, till you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will.”*

# Daniel 4:34-35

*“At the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High, and praised and honored him who lives forever, for his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom endures from generation to generation; all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, ‘What have you done?’”*

# Ephesians 1:11

*“In him [Christ] we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will...”*

# Romans 9:15-20

*“For he [God] says to Moses, ‘I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.’ So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy. For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, ‘For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.’*

# Romans 9:15-20

*So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills. You will say to me then, 'Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?' But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, 'Why have you made me like this?'"*

# God's Will of Command

God's will of command refers to that moral aspect of the will of God that he has made clear and that he has made incumbent upon us through direct orders.

A. W. Pink describes it: "God's revealed will is the definer of our duty and the standard of our responsibility. The primary and basic reason why I should follow a certain course or do a certain thing is because it is *God's will* that I should, his will being clearly defined for me in his Word."

# 1 Thessalonians 4:3

*“For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality...”*

# 1 Peter 2:15

*“For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people.”*

# **One Possible Reconciliation...**

*In the sovereign will of God over all things,  
he has thought it good and wise to let some  
of his commands to be broken.*

# Romans 11:32

*“For God has **consigned** all to disobedience, that he may have mercy on all.”*

# Ephesians 2:7

*“...so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”*

# Romans 11:33-36

*“Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! ‘For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?’ ‘Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?’ For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.”*

# Which Does Paul Mean?

- God's will of Command (see vv. 3, 11, 17)

*He's calling us to understand the difference between darkness and light, and choose, by the power and grace of Christ, to walk in the light.*

# **Prayer & Benediction**