

**Christ Community Covenant Church**  
**Setting the right priorities for 2012: Knowing, Doing and Living the Will of God**  
**Pastor Dave Scherrer - January 1, 2012**

Children's resolutions

Charlie, 5 – "I am going to find a new home for my baby sister. I tried to drop her off next door but that didn't work."

Lily, 4 – "I want to learn to start fires."

Mallory, 7 – "I am going to get a credit card. There are things I want that my parents won't buy me."

Brian, 4 – "I am going to learn to eat bugs. Mom won't let me but Dad says it is ok."

Marika, 5 – "I am going to cut my hair. I already have the scissors. My friend Chelsea said she would help and then I will cut her hair. She is sleeping over tonight."

Brandon, 4 - "Daddy says I should get a job."

Do you have any resolutions for this year? Especially a Spiritual resolution?

How many of you have resolved to not resolve anything?

What about a resolution to seek and follow the will of God? Don't you think that would solve lots of the other resolutions? That might not be as easy as you think. I counted 7 books on my shelves on the will of God, and I did an internet search and came up with another 20 or so. RC Sproul, JI Packer, Kevin DeYoung, Dave Swavely, M Blain Smith, Henry Blackaby, Gerry Friesen (Decision Making and the Will of God) – all have merit.

Why is knowing and living the will of God so important? Our very lives depend on it:

**1 John 2:17**

***"The world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever."***

If it is our desire in 2012 to have assurance that we will abide forever with God, we are now left with the simple process of simply knowing the perfect will of God and then doing it – how shall we say it – do it religiously I guess. So let's unpack this for 2012 and see if we can get a little better traction under this idea.

First theologian say that we have to break down the question a bit. You see there are a couple of ways of looking at the will of God. Many theologians talk about the "Two Wills of God." And you are saying to yourself, "I was lost when I was just trying to find one will of God, now I am really nervous." I think I can help this not get confusing:

The "Two Wills" of God:

1. God's Sovereign Will
2. God's Will of Command

God's Sovereign Will is largely God's secret and unknowable in its specific plan for the coming about of all things.

Paul gives a sweeping summary statement of this truth in Ephesians 1:11,

***"In [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."***

The will of God is God's sovereign governance of all that comes to pass. And there are many other passages in the Bible that teach that God's providence over the universe extends to the smallest details of nature and human decisions.

***"Not one sparrow falls to the ground apart from our Father in heaven" (Matthew 10:29).***

***"The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord" (Proverbs 16:33).***

***"The plans of the heart belong to man, but the answer of the tongue is from the Lord" (Proverbs 16:1).***

***"The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the Lord; he turns it wherever he will" (Proverbs 21:1).***

That's the first meaning of the will of God: it is God's sovereign control of all things. We will call this his "sovereign will" or his "will of decree." It cannot be broken. It always comes to pass.

Isaiah 45:11-12

Thus says the LORD,  
the Holy One of Israel, and the one who formed him:  
"Ask me of things to come;  
will you command me concerning my children and the work of my hands?  
I made the earth  
and created man on it;  
it was my hands that stretched out the heavens,  
and I commanded all their host.

Daniel 4:35

"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?'"

Even Jesus was accountable to the Sovereign Will of God.

- He said, in Matthew 26:39 "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as *you will!*" What does the will of God refer to in this verse? It refers to the sovereign plan of God that will happen in the coming hours.
- Then in Acts 4:27-28 God says this: "Truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place."

So the "will of God" was that Jesus die. This was his plan, his decree. There was no changing it, and Jesus bowed and said, "Here's my request, but you do what is best to do." That's the sovereign will of God. And we all bow to it.

Here is my opinion – God doesn't want us to try ferreting out His *secret* will that he *plans* to do. Actually it is pretty easy to know God's Sovereign Will if we aren't in too much of a hurry - we can look back when it is all over and then we will know. You want to know what the specific Sovereign Will of God is for you and for 4Cs for 2012? – I will tell you exactly what it is in 2013. No I think God would rather have us discern the already *revealed* will of God that we *ought* to do.

***How are we to deal with the Sovereign Will of God? I think I have two words of advice for you in 2012:***

First, ***Become What You Are: You are brand new!***

I hope this is review for most of you. Those who believe in Christ Jesus are already blood-bought new creatures in Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:17

“If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation” - But now we must *become* what we *are*.

1 Corinthians 5:7

“Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you *really are* unleavened.”

Colossians 3:10

“You *have* put on the new self, which is *being renewed* in knowledge after the image of its creator.” You *have been* made new in Christ; and now you are *being renewed* day by day.

### ***Secondly, Know the Father and you will do the will of the Father***

I firmly believe this axiom – it only makes sense. The better you know someone the easier it will be for you to know their will:

Husbands and knowing the preferences of their wives (Lindy)

For us to be sure on this we can simply take our cue from our Lord. Jesus was one with the Father and always did the will of the Father. Listen to these words from Jesus’ own lips from the Gospel of John:

Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, saying, “Rabbi, eat.” But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you do not know about.” So the disciples said to one another, “Has anyone brought him something to eat?” Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work (John 4:31-34).

As I said before, I do nothing on my own. My judgment of the world will be based on what I hear from my Father (John 5:30).

For I have come down from heaven to do God’s will, not my own (John 6:38).

When you have crucified me, then you will know that I am the one sent from God and that I am only doing and saying exactly what he has told me to do and say. God is always with me and will never desert me because I always do what pleases him (John 8:28-29).

How did Jesus deal with the Sovereign Will of God? Jesus knew the will of the Father because he prayed, sometimes all night long. There are 17 references to Jesus’ prayer life in the gospels. Jesus modeled a life of prayer for us.

- He prayed often, He prayed early in the morning, late at night, all through the night.
- He prayed before critical events in His life.
- He prayed as He ministered to others.
- He prayed before His miracles.
- And He prayed for others.

And Jesus prayed the Scriptures, He quotes them moment by moment from the hidden places of His heart.

Finally be ready to submit – Jesus was the penultimate submitter to the Father:

And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will.” Matthew 26:39

If you want to be able to deal with the Sovereign will of God, get to know you and get to know God. Life will take care of itself whether you do this or not, but you will be more at peace if you become the person that God has already made you to be and if you know the Father and His character.

### **God's "Will of Command"**

If the sovereign will of God is the secret plan of His unswerving designs – then the will of command is the easy part – this is the overt and perfectly knowable will of God because He has commended it in his word. These are the things of which God has said, “Do this and don’t do that.”

#### **Matthew 7:21**

“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven *will enter*.”

### **That you be saved**

#### **2 Peter 3:9.**

“The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.”

The will of God is not that men perish. The will of God is that men be saved. Now there is another very important passage that we need to consider that covers the same ground in Paul’s letter to his friend Tim:

#### **1 Timothy 2:3-4:**

This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

The design of God in expressing His will is that men be saved. That is the will of God. So God's will then for your life - for the life of any person - begins with salvation. God wanted us saved. So much did he want us saved that He expressed His will in the most amazing way - ***“But God who is rich in mercy, for His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, has made us alive together with Christ.”*** Now you see what God did? God went to the extremities of sending His own Son to die to make His will possible.

And I'll tell you this - if you have never come to Jesus Christ for salvation - you will never even begin to know His will.

Secondly, ***God's will of command is that you be spirit-filled:***

#### **Ephesians 5:17-18**

Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit.

Translation: Do not be stupid! Don’t let the things of the world have control over you like alcohol does when you drink too much – rather let the Spirit of God who indwells you control you. Paul is saying “come under the influence of His power and take on His character.”

I never in my own life had the faintest idea what the walk in the Spirit meant until I committed myself to the saturation of the presence of Jesus Christ. The more I focus on Him and the Word and the more the thoughts of God saturate my mind, the more the word of Christ controls me, the more yielded I am to Him.

[Fizzy Illustration: In other words, if you've got a grape fizzy, you're going to get a glass of grape fizzy juice. Whatever you call it. Whatever that fizzy is, that water becomes. Now what? That's a really simple, humble illustration but maybe it will help. You're a glass of water as a Christian and the Spirit is like that fizzy. The Spirit of God is in your life. The question is not, "Is He there?" The question is, "Do you long to release His power to permeate your life and to turn you into His character?"]

***That you be sanctified:***

God wants you to be set apart and the word sanctification means holy. Let's use the word pure, because I think that illustrates it. God wants you to be pure. That's his will: Sanctified - Saved, Spirit-filled, and Sanctified.

Another word for sanctified is holy or maybe better in this day is purity.

***1 Thessalonians 4:3***

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

God desires us to be different than the world and that difference often puts us at odds with the world. Set apart in behavior, set apart in motives, set apart in priorities, set apart in hopes. And this happens by letting the Spirit have dominion not by trying harder in the flesh. Saved, Spirit filled and Sanctified. And if these aren't tricky enough how about this; it is God's will that you be submissive:

***That you be submissive: 1 Peter 2:13-15***

Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people.

Being submissive is not a very good American idea, but it is a very good Kingdom idea. The US is the only nation that does not dip their flag in the Olympics. But in the Beatitudes, Jesus reminds us that it is the meek that inherit the earth. Paul tells us as husbands and wives to submit to one another, a radical counter-cultural idea. Jesus submitted to the will of the Father, and this passage tells us that in the grand scheme of things all of us have something to submit to. Government, school, parents, the IRS. Like Bob Dylan said, "You got to serve somebody." We submit – we are Christians. And finally there is one more will of the Father – that is that we suffer;

***That you suffer: 1 Peter 4:19***

Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.

Suffering comes with the Christian lifestyle – it is the way of the cross. Scripture doesn't expect anything other than a world filled with hardship. In the world you will find tribulations and persecution.

If you're saved, Spirit-filled, sanctified, submissive and suffering, you know what God's will for you is . . . ? Do whatever you want!

Communion