



## Brown Community Group Discussion Guide

“Prayer” Series Lesson 6 – March 13, 2016

Praying According to God’s Will

### I. **Starter Points on God’s Will and Prayer:**

Scripture never says that we can know all the answers, but does promise that if we seek God’s will and plan for our lives, we will find it. Knowledge of the will of God is the pivotal building block to the very way we see our lives and pray.

1. Why Does God want us to Pray?
2. The Effectiveness of Prayer
  - a. Does Prayer Change the Way God Acts?
  - b. Effective Prayer made possible through Jesus
  - c. Who are we supposed to pray too?
  - d. Role of Holy Spirit
3. Important Considerations for Effective Prayer
  - a. **Pray “According to God’s Will”**
  - b. Praying with Faith and Obedience
  - c. Forgiveness and Humility
  - d. Praying Continually and Earnestly
  - e. Waiting on the Lord, What about Unanswered Prayer?
4. Praise and Thanksgiving

### A. **Review of God’s Will from the series “Personal Choice within God’s Sovereignty”:**

1. **There is His sovereign will.** This is His overall plan for the world. It will be done.

#### **Isaiah 46:9-11**

*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.*

#### **Isaiah 55:8-9**

*“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the LORD. 9 “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.*

There is an element of timing and revelation in understanding His sovereign will. Although we know that will cannot be altered, some of it is *secret* and cannot be known yet.

2. **There is His moral will.** This is clearly spelled out in the Bible and in nature. It can be displayed in our love for others, our worship habits, and what we establish as priorities for our lives. It is His will for our behavior, even if we do not obey.
3. **There is His personal will for each person.** This is God’s desire for how we live, make decisions and serve Him.

#### **Jeremiah 29:11-13**

*11 For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. 12 Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. 13 You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.*

God's personal will for our lives is not the same for all people. Each person must discover this will by God's revelation, and that comes only when the first two components have been fully subscribed too.

## **Discerning His Will**

At each level, sometimes known only to God in His wisdom for how our lives will be lived, He will definitely have an influence/direction/presence upon our everyday walk with Him. God's will is not always hidden from those who follow Him closely. He wants us to know of His presence, and for true believers, this is the desire of our hearts.

### **II. Scripture Study**

#### **1 John 5:13-16**

***13 I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. 14 This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. 15 And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.***

So how do we know God's will when we pray? If the matter is covered in scripture, it becomes much easier: His will is that His perfect obedience to God's "moral will" on earth so that God's will may be done. For this reason:

- Knowing scripture is a tremendous help in prayer, enabling us to follow the pattern of the scripture
- Christian life will increase the depth, power and wisdom of our prayers
- Jesus encouraged us to "have his words within us" when we pray

#### **James 1:5-8**

***5 If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. 6 But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. 7 That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. 8 Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.***

- Seeking wisdom in an important decision or prayer, we do not have to wonder whether it is in God's will, scripture has already settled that question through the promise above
- This ties back to being in God's "moral will" and "sovereign will", then enlightenment through prayer for our "personal will" to direct our personal lives.
- We should have confidence that God will answer our prayers when we ask him for something that accords with a specific promise or command of Scripture

#### **John 15:7-8**

***7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8 This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.***

Many times in life that we simply do not know the "Will of God". We may not have a specific scripture or promise, we can tie to our personal prayer request:

- Bring to bear as much scripture as we can understand to provide some basic principles to frame prayer
- Must admit that we may not know God's will in all situations or prayers
  - Pray for deeper understanding
  - Pray for and act for what seems best in your understanding

- Sometimes God will grant what we asked for, sometimes we gain a deeper understanding, sometimes He influences us through the Holy Spirit to change our hearts

Does praying “if it is your will” destroy our faith or is it a cop-out praying? Does this only express our uncertainty about what we are praying for? Asking this seems to be in conflict with James 1:5-8.

Another important item for understanding the will of God, many times involves waiting on the Lord (Psalms 27:14, 38:15, 130:5-6)

- God may change the desires of our hearts
- Provide us additional insight into His Word or plan
- Bring a passage of scripture to mind to enable us to pray more effectively
- Impart a sense of assurance of what His will is
- Greatly increase our faith so that we are able to pray with more confidence

### **III. Group Questions:**

1. Discuss the different levels of “God’s Will” being Sovereignty, Moral and Personal? How does this relate to your typical prayer?
2. Discuss the commentary above that we must satisfy the Sovereignty and Moral components of God’s Will in our live before he will reveal His “personal Will” for our live”? Do you believe this? Does this help us as Christians understand certain requirements on us before God reveals His plan for us?
3. Discuss what using the phrase “if it is in your will” in your prayers implies? Does this statement align with James 1:5-8?
4. Why do we usually have such a big problem waiting on the Lord for an answer to prayer? How do we know if we should act on a decision if we have not received clear direction from prayer?