

Russell Kelfer

Absolute-ly the Will of God

(Part 2)

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Series: The Will of God

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(Part 2)

Oh, the frustration, oh, the grief,
When decisions we try to make,
Only to find when it's said and done
We think we made a mistake.

We agonize for days and days
And ask everyone in sight,
Then, when we do what they tell us to
We are overtaken with fright.

For something appears from out of the blue
And we begin to wonder,
If the very thing we thought was right
Was only another blunder.

Is there a way to really know?
Can we actually ever be sure
That God really has a plan for us,
A plan that will endure?

That is what we are studying;
And this we are finding true:
The will of God is ours to know
And it's also ours to do.

And what we are finding is often,
Once we've been cleansed and prayed,
If we really have studied God's absolutes,
The decision is already made.

That pretty much sums up our study on the will of God thus far. We have decided that the issue of Christian decision-making is not some vague, unattainable shadow that God allows us to see a glimpse of, but never really grasp. The will of God is good, acceptable, and perfect, and it is something we are to *know*.

In order to know it, three things must preface our search. First we must be born-again. That transaction places God's Spirit in us, who promises to "lead us into all truth." But "the natural man (the unbeliever) receiveth not the things of the Spirit; neither can

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he know *them* for they are spiritually discerned.” So if you want to know the will of God, and you are not yet a child of God, the will of God for you is that you recognize your need for a Savior, and meet God at Calvary, and receive the Lord Jesus Christ. Want to know God’s will? “It is not God’s will that *any* should perish.” That includes you. “You must be born-again.” That is the will of God.

Once we have received God’s Spirit through the new birth, however, finding and doing the will of God is not automatic. We are to commit our bodies as living acts of worship, once and for all; this is well-pleasing to God, and is the reasonable thing to do. But as we progress through this Christian pilgrimage, sin stains our relationship with God, and we are tempted to ignore it by comparing ourselves with others, rather than with the Holiness of God. So John reminds us:

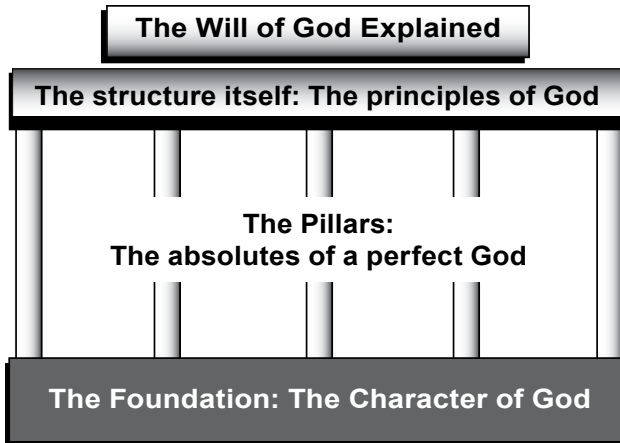
If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
(1 John 1:8,9 NKJV)

So to find the will of God, we must be continually being cleansed of all known sin. For:

If I regard iniquity in my heart, The LORD will not hear [when we ask for direction].
(Psalm 66:18 NKJV)

With those things understood, we turned in our last study to the specifics of finding the will of God. And we learned that first of all, we must practice learning to get *all the facts at any price*. Decision-making based on partial information can lead to total disasters and untold embarrassment. (As with the case of the man in Luke 14:28 who was going to build a tower, but didn’t amass enough of the facts to realize that he couldn’t finish it. So he got the thing halfway built, had to quit, and became the laughingstock of the community from then on.)

We touched last week on placing that information on paper in the form of “pros” and “cons”, and were reminded that what is a “pro” or a favorable bit of information about that decision is determined, not by man’s standards, but by God’s. And God’s desire is that we learn to pray... “Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven.” So our decisions cannot be made based on the principles of man, but rather on the absolutes of God. Those absolutes make up the heart of our search for the will of God.



The foundation of every act of God's will, we found, is God's character. We are not to lie, because God is Truth. That aspect of His nature demanded an absolute. He gave it to us. It is: "You shall not lie." And that absolute generated dozens of principles which teach us how to apply that Truth to our everyday lives. One such principle is: "Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD" (Proverbs 12:22). So we *know how our lying affects our relationship with God*. That principle spawns a second: "Dishonest scales [false balance] are an abomination to the LORD" (Proverbs 11:1 NKJV). So we know that any act or attitude that *in order to express itself must compromise the truth*, is a lie to God, and we cease to delight God when we do. That principle expresses itself in Luke 3:13 (NKJV): "Collect no more than what is appointed for you." In other words, to take from anyone in any situation, more than you are due, is to defy truth, and is, in essence, a lie. Add to that the principle found in Matthew 22:21: "Render to the government the taxes that are due," and you have an immediate answer to the decision of how to declare your taxes. So the foundation is the character of God: He is Truth. That character expressed itself in an absolute: "You shall not lie." That absolute reveals His will for us by applying principles in Scripture to choices we have to make. If, in order to take that job, or make that deal, or raise that money, or *even accomplish that ministry*, we must bend the truth, then we defy that absolute, and violate *that aspect of the nature of God*. So our decision is made. We don't do it.

Today we come to look at the application, in a practical sense, of these truths. We will begin to look at some of the absolutes in

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Scripture and the principles that spring from them, and apply those absolutes and those principles to the kinds of decisions we are each faced with on a day-to-day basis. On the back page of this lesson, there is a worksheet which you can begin to use that expands the assignment sheet in last week's study to include the references, the reflection of the nature of God that each absolute represents, and the areas of application most likely to be affected. Let's begin by looking at just one.

THE ABSOLUTE OF SOVEREIGNTY AND PROMOTION

There is an absolute in Scripture, found in Psalm 75:6,7. It says this:

For exaltation [or promotion or success] comes neither from the east nor from the west nor from the south.

But God is the Judge: He puts down one, And exalts another.
(Psalm 75:6,7 NKJV)

That is an absolute. God is the final authority and judge, and as such He, and He alone, will ultimately determine who gets exalted, or promoted, or elevated to a position of authority in this life, and who doesn't. You may think you are in control of your future, but you're not. There are things you are called upon to do: you are to work diligently, as unto the Lord; you are to humble yourself under the mighty hand of God; you are to deal truly; you are to be constantly grateful. Those are commands. But *even if you do all those things*, God does not guarantee that you will rise to be president of General Motors, or governor of Texas, or even the supervisor in the plant you work in. It does not mean that you will prosper, while those who don't love God as you do will suffer. It may well mean the opposite. Only God has the heavenly perspective on your life and, therefore, only God can properly judge who to elevate and who to humble.

That is the absolute truth about promotion. It will never change. Man will never take that responsibility from God. It is based on that aspect of His character which we know as *His Omniscience*. He knows everything; therefore His choices are right. So the absolute is that God is sovereign in promotion; and it is based on His omniscience. How does that help us make decisions?

Let's look at a few examples. Luke 14:11:

"For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."
(NKJV)

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That truth stems from an absolute. The absolute is: “God is sovereign, only He has the wisdom to know who to promote or exalt.” Therefore, when we exalt ourselves, we take the place of God, and He has no option but to humiliate us. So, Beloved, if there is going to be a promotion in your office, and you are bucking for the job, stop it. Do what you were sent there to do, and let a sovereign God, who sets up one, and puts down another, promote you or exalt you as *He sees fit*.

And don’t exalt or promote the ministry or the church or the organization you represent. That’s not your job. Your job is to elevate the name of Christ, the name which is above every name, and if *He chooses to elevate or enlarge your church or your ministry*, He will do it. If not, leave it alone. God alone knows what you can handle, and God alone knows what the world around you needs. The principle is: “Don’t exalt yourself, lest you be humiliated.” It comes from a Biblical absolute which says that God is sovereign in promotion, which is the expression of God’s quality of omniscience. He knows all, therefore, He selects all. Therefore, when we select or promote or advance our own cause, *Beloved, we are playing God*.

It ought to break our hearts every time we hear a man, or a church, or anyone else “tooting his own horn”, and promoting his own cause. And if you have to do that to do what you *think is God’s will*, then, beloved, *you have misinterpreted God’s will*. His will never violates absolutes.

Another principle that stems from this same absolute is found in Psalm 37:1. It is the “principle of the prospering wicked.” And it is a big help when we are trying to decide what to do because someone evil has gained prominence or success at our expense... and we want to retaliate. It says:

Do not fret because of evildoers, Nor be envious of the workers of iniquity.

For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, And wither as the green herb.

Trust in the Lord, and do good; Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness..

(Psalm 37:1-3 NKJV)

In other words, your decision is already made. Leave it in God’s hands. He sets up one, and puts down another, and if He has allowed the wicked to prosper, it’s His business; but it’s not His final Word. One day, they’ll get theirs. In the meantime, you put your trust in a God who is sovereign, and concentrate on doing His

will. He'll meet your needs, and you'll be at rest.

Another principle rises to the surface as well. It is the "principle of anxiety". In Matthew 6:34, The Living Bible commands us:

So don't be anxious about tomorrow. God will take care of your tomorrow too. Live one day at a time. (TLB)

You're in a contest where you work, or you work on commission, and you're doing the best you can, but somehow someone keeps whispering "what ifs" in your ear, and you begin to churn inside about how indefinite the future is. And somehow you begin to think that worrying about it will pressure God into providing for you. Beloved, God needs no pressure to provide for you. If you, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, won't your loving Father care for you? You needn't worry about your future. Number one, worry is sin. Number two, you are violating the absolute of the sovereignty of God in success or promotion, which simply states that it's His business, and His alone, and that absolute is based on His nature, which is perfect wisdom. He alone knows what's going to happen tomorrow and He alone controls it. So when you take it on your shoulders to help Him, *you're playing God*, and denying His absolute sovereignty in your life. Stop it. The decision is made.

And if you have to bend your ethics or morals, even slightly, to get that job, or to get that promotion, or to make that sale, then that decision is made as well. You do it God's way. God will see that you're taken care of *as He sees fit*. I've seen so many who were angry at God because they feel they did it His way, and still didn't get recognized. You got recognized, Beloved, by God. And He has told us in Matthew 7, that we either get rewarded here or in heaven, not in both. Which do you want? Ten years of prosperity? Or an eternity of joy that you have pleased the heart of God? This is the absolute of sovereignty and promotion. Memorize it. Study the principles it generates. It will make many of your decisions for you.

THE ABSOLUTE OF THE TEMPLE OF GOD

Another absolute that will make dozens of decisions for you seems to be an unlikely one on the surface. It is the absolute of the temple of God. It is found in I Corinthians 3:16:

Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? (NKJV)

That's an absolute, if you're a Christian. Nothing you can ever say will change it. Nothing Satan can ever do will change it.

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Nothing God will ever do will change it. He has spoken. It is done. The minute you received Christ, the Holy Spirit came to dwell in you, and you became the living temple of the Living God. You say, "Okay, I accept that." But how will that affect these decisions I have to make? They will if you learn the principles that stem from that absolute. Remember, that absolute will never change, because it is based on the nature of God. *God is Spirit, and they that worship him must worship Him in Spirit.* As Spirit, God is everywhere. And being everywhere, He does not dwell in a temple made with hands. He dwells in all His splendor, in the hearts of His children.

That means you can never run from God. He is in you, and where you go, He goes. The Psalmist figured that out in Psalm 139:7. He said:

Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?

If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there.

If I take the wings of the morning, And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,

Even there Your hand shall lead me, And Your right hand shall hold me.

(Psalm 139:7-10 NKJV)

If you are contemplating a decision to leave your present circumstances so you can flee the pressure God has put on you, I've got news for you...you're not going alone. You are the temple of the Living God. He doesn't live in your city, He lives in your body.

It also means God will never leave you or forsake you. (Hebrews 13:5) So if you are dreading a decision because it will take you from your Christian friends, Beloved, *there is a friend who will be going with you...the dearest friend you've ever had...* He will be with you, for He lives in you, and your very body is His Temple.

It means you must not commit adultery. Paul reminded us in I Corinthians 6:18 and 19. He said, "Flee fornication." The reason? "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your Spirit, which are (both) God's."

It means you must not enter into a relationship or a partnership with an unbeliever. II Corinthians 6 is specific. It says:

Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For

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what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? ...

And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?

...For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people."

"Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord...
(II Corinthians 6:14-17 NKJV)

The absolute of the Temple of God. It spawns the principles of not running from God; of not fearing being alone; of not committing adultery; and of not being unequally yoked, *just to name a few*. All of these principles are based on one absolute. "You are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God lives in you." That absolute is a perfect reflection of the nature of God, who is Spirit. Because God is Spirit, He lives in you; because He lives in you, you must not run from Him, you must not fear His leaving you, you must not join your body to another's in immorality; you must not enter into a relationship with another who does not likewise have the person of God living in them. And you don't guess at it. You don't wonder. If you don't know, you don't do it.

THE ABSOLUTE OF THE COMFORT OF GOD

Or how about the absolute of the "comfort of God". II Corinthians 1:3,4 says:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort,
who comforts us in all our tribulation... (NKJV)

That's an absolute. God, through His Spirit, the Comforter, is in the process of comforting us, *anytime we are in trouble*. You say, "Well, He didn't comfort me last night when I was suffering." Not true. You are making God to be a liar. Maybe you did not accept His comfort last night, but, Beloved, *if you were in trouble*, God was comforting you. That is an absolute. It is not subject to change. Now if you were out of fellowship, or out of intimacy with God, you probably did not feel His comfort. Or if you were filled with self-pity or bitterness, you most certainly did not receive His comfort, *but it was not because He was not comforting you*. He was. And He is. This absolute is based on the character of God, which is mercy. The mercy of God demands that the heart of God comfort the child of God each and every time he or she is tested or troubled. Because

we deserve it? No, because His nature demands it. And because of that absolute, we can see things much more clearly, where the will of God is concerned. For instance, it ought to teach us how to pray, and how to act when the sky is falling. That's when we make *most of our wrong decisions*. We are troubled at work, so we quit. We are hampered in our ministry, so we give up. We are discouraged in relationships, so we run. We feel helpless and hopeless, so we turn to the energy of the flesh or the wisdom of man for solutions. That's dumb. That's the one time we ought to be falling at the feet of God for His Mind to be made one with ours.

Principles simply pour from that absolute. One is found in the next verse. *It says that our ministry will one day result from the comfort we appropriate when we're in trouble* (vs. 4-6). Other verses develop other principles that are just as incredible. Principles that guarantee us that the more we suffer, the more we grow; the more we suffer, the more we'll reign; the more we suffer, the more of His likeness we'll reflect. Why? Because *as we suffer*, He is in the process of *making Himself known to us*. When we struggle, He comforts. When He comforts, we are transformed.

So we ought not to be looking for ways to escape the problems we face; we ought to be looking for ways to maximize the grace we are receiving, and the comfort we are receiving, whether we realize it or not. God is comforting us. Therefore, we ought to rejoice. Our ministries, our spiritual growth, our potential in the kingdom all hang in the balance. Be careful what decisions you make when you are in the dungeon of testing. If you are devising ways to escape, you may be devising ways to weaken the effect of that testing in your life.

THE ABSOLUTE OF THE LABOR IS NOT IN VAIN

One final one for this lesson. The absolute of guaranteed labor. The world longs for this. We have it. Look at I Corinthians 15:58:

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. (NKJV)

That is an absolute, written to all believers. Your labor is not in vain in the Lord. That absolute stems from the character of God. He is *perfect faithfulness*. Because He is faithful, He will reward you according to what you have done in the Spirit. Period. No "ifs", "ands" or "buts." Your labor is not in vain. You may be discouraged,

but your labor is not in vain. You may see no fruit, but your labor is not in vain. You may feel unappreciated, but your labor is not in vain. Why? Because God said so. And from that absolute, that absolutely demonstrates God's faithfulness, we see principle after principle emerge from Scripture, principles that will literally make your decisions for you.

There is the principle of treasures. You can't always see what God sees, because He is laying up for you rewards in heaven, and you're looking for tangible proof that He's using you, here on earth. There's the principle of jealousy. There's the principle of sowing and reaping. There's the principle of one planting, and another watering. And on and on it goes. So before you make a decision based on what you can *see God doing*, you'd better memorize I Corinthians 15:58. And stop being weary. That's a commandment. What you can see God doing is incidental. One thing *you know God is doing*. He's seeing to it that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. It's an absolute. And it's absolute...ly guaranteed.

Your assignment (should you choose to accept it) is to take one or more of the absolutes listed below, find the verse or verses from which they come, and then search for the principles that will help you to make wise decisions. List the absolute; then that aspect of God's nature that it represents; then the principles and references that surface from that absolute, and finally the kinds of decisions you might be called upon to make that will be made for you, because you can be absolute...ly sure of the will of God. Here they are:

- 1- He who sows sparingly, reaps sparingly.
- 2- The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but spiritual.
- 3- Let him who glories, glory in the Lord.
- 4- Evil companions corrupt.
- 5- Whoever will save his life will lose it.
- 6- If a kingdom be divided against itself it will not stand.
- 7- He that is not with Me is against Me.

In the next lesson we will look at how to thread the principles into a Scripture Memory program, so that as decisions come your way, God's Word will weave its way through your heart and absolute...ly tell you what to do.

The will of God. It is absolutely clear. And it is absolutely wonderful.

