

Transforming Our Wills

“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” (Gal.2:20)

The heart is the center of our being, the essence of who we are and the result of what we have chosen to believe is true. God has a plan for us, a plan to transform our hearts so that we can take up our full inheritance as his children, co-heirs in Christ. The goal is for us to grow into the fullness of all God has created us to become. Since God will not override our wills to bring this about, our wills become central to our achieving maturity. Our wills, like muscles, grow stronger with use. We must practice choosing to submit our scattered desires to God, aligning them to God’s perfect will.

Although full identification with God’s will may not come in our lifetime, we are invited into this adventure the moment we become Christ’s disciples. Dallas Willard, in his book Renovation of the Heart, describes the progression of our wills as they come into complete identification with God’s.

- First, there is **surrender**, choosing to make God ruler over every aspect of our lives. We may not be able to do his will, but we are willing to will it. Perhaps, at the start, we are only willing to be made willing. This involves a conscious choice to align our lives with God’s will for us.
- **Abandonment** to God occurs, beyond intellectual agreement, when we become totally surrendered in all the circumstances of life. Although some things that happen to us are not God’s desired will for us, he has allowed them— for example, a tragic loss, a broken relationship, an illness or being wrongly treated. Since we concede that he has allowed it to happen, we no longer struggle, trusting that God will work good in every situation. (Romans 8:28) As Willard writes, “*Irredeemable* harm does not befall those who willingly live in the hand of God.” Our mind has been transformed by the truth, God’s word; our perspective is eternal.
- **Contentment** with the will of God means not only letting God be God and being satisfied with what he ordains, but also actually being content with the life that he gives us. Thankfulness and joy are the marks of the contented life. We are assured that God’s will toward us will *always* be for our good. We live by faith, allowing God to fill us with his joy.
- **Participation**, actively embracing God’s will and seeking to bring it into our world, follows. No matter how tragic our personal circumstances, we look and act beyond ourselves to accomplish God’s will in his power. We devote ourselves to bringing righteousness into our surroundings.

With surrender comes single-mindedness. Our desires and motivations become focused habitually on God. Kierkegaard wrote, “Purity of heart is to will one thing.” This mindset is totally contrary to the modern mind. To overcome the temptations that draw us from God’s best, from following Jesus into the rich, deep places and enjoying all he has for us there, we must be

conscious of the desires that war against us. We confront them and take steps to be rid of them through spiritual disciplines and accountability.

PRAYER: *“Father God, I believe your will for me is good and perfect. (Rom. 12:2) I believe that as I align with your will I will fulfill the purpose for which I was created. So I choose to surrender my life, every part of it to you. I surrender my mind that your thoughts and truth would become my thoughts. I surrender my body to become an instrument of righteousness, a holy temple for your Spirit. I surrender my spirit to become one with yours that I might truly worship you in truth and glorify you in all I am and do. I surrender my will, LORD. Make it one with yours. I now commit to loving you with all my heart, mind, strength and will. Only you can do this, so enable and empower me, Lord, in your way and in your time. Thank you for loving me so much. I pray this in Jesus’ name. Amen”*

SUGGESTIONS:

- ❑ Make a plan to set aside specific time to listen to God.
- ❑ Determine where you are in the process of surrendering. Ask God to show you what would you have to do to improve.
- ❑ If you do not keep a spiritual journal, begin one now. Daily, if possible, record what you hear God telling you.
- ❑ God’s general will is found in his word, the Bible. Memorize scripture that will guide you along the way.
- ❑ It is our job to obey; God’s job is to keep us in his will as we do. Take note at how well you obey what he is asking you to do.
- ❑ Ask a trusted friend or mentor to keep you accountable to a specific area God has directed you to improve.
- ❑ Celebrate the *victories you have*.