

Young People's Quarterly

The Will of God

Quarterly Aim: The student will conclude that God has a purpose or will for every person.

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About the Writer



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After obtaining his Master's Degree in Bible from the Little Rock Seminary, he has served in various capacities for nearly twenty years. Although currently serving as senior pastor of Victory Baptist Church in Sherwood, Arkansas, he continues to be concerned and involved with youth ministry.

Robert's experience with youth began at the Conway MBSF, followed by pastoring the teens of County Avenue Baptist Church in Texarkana, Arkansas. Robert is the camp registrar for National Camp Week Two at Bogg Springs and also assists in the planning and development of camp programming from year to year. Robert's writing experience includes authoring VBS and youth camp teaching materials for the ABA.

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The Will of God in Salvation

APPLICATION

The student will discover it is God's will that all will be saved.

SCRIPTURES TO READ

Text: 1 Timothy 2:3-6.

Related Scripture: Matthew 4:17; 11:28-30; 18:14; Mark 2:1, 2; Luke 19:10; John 3:1-10; 4:28-34; 5:24, 40; 6:26-29; 10:10.

Devotional Reading: Sadly, Many Never See, Believe or Accept the Son of God, John 6:35-40.

Introduction

Clint was tired of the prayer time they had every week in Bible study. They had one request every week that he was opposed to, yet they continued to mention it. Whenever they prayed for it, he felt like they were ignoring evil or wrongdoing in their community. He sometimes believed he was the only one in the room who had any rational sense about what was going on in their town. It seemed like his teacher and the other teens were oblivious to the problem.

What was the prayer request? The teacher had them pray for the local police and other emergency responders in their town. This bothered Clint because of an experience he recently had. He was driving home one evening after work and a policeman ticketed him for running a red light. The light had turned yellow as he was passing under it.

Everyone whom Clint told this story to seemed equally outraged. Then, he learned that others also had experienced the same perceived abuse. He was thinking that it was a hopeless situation. How could he fight the police in his small town? He didn't feel any compassion for them.

When the teacher began expecting the class to pray for the police every week, Clint was stirred in disgust. It was wrong to him to pray for the people who had wronged him.

One Sunday during prayer time, Clint blurted out that he was opposed to praying for people who were doing wrong. He protested that they should not help others who are intentionally harming others and making good people's lives miserable. He accused the police of being harsh in order to make extra money rather than to help them out.

Then, his teacher replied that God wanted the police to be saved. He continued by quoting John 3:16 to prove his point that Jesus died for everyone. The teacher

observed that if the police were corrupt and harmful, the best way for them to change it is by the power of Jesus in their lives. He said that if they were saved, they would want to do the right thing. Clint paused in thought. For the first time, he considered that it is God's will for even his enemies to be saved.

- **Have you ever been so opposed to someone that you did not consider his need of salvation?**
- **Have you ever been corrected by a spiritual leader like Clint was? How did you take it? Did you change?**
- **Is there anyone in your life right now that you struggle with thoughts of ill happening to him? How does it make you feel to face your own desire for his harm or difficulty? Do you think this is a godly attitude?**

In today's lesson, we will observe that it is God's will for everyone to be saved... even those who are in an adversarial relationship with us.

1. Worship (1 Timothy 2:3)

The apostle Paul had sent his protégé Timothy to the church at Ephesus to keep an eye on things there. This church was having some problems with keeping its teaching in line with the Scriptures. It was moving into troublesome areas of thought because it was influenced by philosophers and false teachers. Some of the new converts were flexible in their beliefs because they had not been fully informed; others had not been fully convinced. Timothy's presence there was able to stabilize and instruct them.

In the opening part of the letter, Paul introduces the concept of God's good Law because it deals with those who perpetrate evil (1 Timothy 1:8-11). He sandwiched this teaching between the recognition of false teachers who are not approved of God (verses 3-7), and the teaching and ministry which is approved by God (verses 12-17). Presumably, it was to indicate that the pointing out of error by the Law can lead a man to Christ. Paul himself was once a man who was a sinful murderer, but by facing the Law and meeting Christ, he changed. The hope is that the false teachers at Ephesus would do the same. This indicates an attitude of benevolence, charity and grace toward those who are opposed to the pure Christian faith.

When he begins 1 Timothy 2, Paul instructs Timothy to lead the church to pray in every way for the earthly authorities. These were forces that opposed the spread of Christianity and had often persecuted them in horrible ways. Yet, they were being instructed to pray for them! Prayers had a dual impact: (1) The believers would conform to the laws and not cause any ruckus. They would be left alone and be in peace. (2) They would be doing something that pleased God.

Worship is what is being encouraged here. Most people think of worship as music. Thinking of worship as just music and singing reduces its greatness and life impact. Worship really amounts to doing things intentionally for the Lord's pleasure because He is your God. Sometimes, that may be singing songs to Him, or it may be by praying for those in authority because you care for them. Worship is what a church does together when it unites and obeys the Lord which brings Him pleasure. Prayer time and Bible study together pleases the Lord and is not a function to be underestimated.

- **How often do you pray for those in authority? When do you do it? Does why you pray for them matter?**

- Which do you hear more in your church: criticism of authorities or prayers for authorities?
- Can you think of any reasons why it makes peace between Christians and leaders when you pray for them?

2. Will (1 Timothy 2:4)

Will is a word we do not use often in the same sense that the Bible does. When we see this word, it typically is used to express a want, a wish, a desire or an inclination. When we see that God will have all men to be saved, it is not that the Bible is teaching that everyone will be saved by God's divine purpose. Instead, it is teaching us that God desires for all people everywhere to be saved, but they can still choose not to be.

If we are God's people, would we not want the same thing God does? Of course, we should. If God wants all people to be saved, His people do also—even the authorities who oppose Christianity. Christians also want those who are opposed to the Law of God to be saved. Paul himself is one who fits this category. Since God wants this, He is greatly pleased when we join Him in His desire rather than hope for their harm and destruction.

Being saved is not all God wants of people in a relationship with Him. He wants them to come to a full knowledge of the truth. He doesn't want them to be ignorant of the doctrines of the Bible. If they are, they will be susceptible to the false preachers and philosophers. Simply accepting the gift of salvation is only part of the experience with God. When one turns to God for rescue, it is logical then to want to devote one's life to Him in response. One will desire to know all God has revealed according to the way He revealed it. Growing in knowledge is a natural result of the covenant of salvation. One cannot really be the case without the other in a healthy sense.

- List all the groups of the world that are opposed to you as a Christian. Do you want them to be saved? How would things change if they were?
- Why can it be difficult to want the same thing as God regarding salvation and knowledge?
- How do you show that you want others to be saved? How does it affect you to know that God wanted you to be saved?

3. Way (1 Timothy 2:5, 6)

Why does God want all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of truth? It's because there are thousands of concepts in the world which humans depend upon for righteousness. They think that by doing somethings well and by refusing to do other things they will earn the favor of their god or higher force or order. By being found favorable, they will be granted a better life after death in some form or fashion.

God says this is not going to happen. There is no salvation by works of any kind (Ephesians 2:8, 9). The only way of salvation is through Jesus Christ. He alone is the One who has settled the case God had against all of humanity in their sin. As the Mediator, Jesus was able to bring peace between us. No one else could have done this. The person who could represent the cause of mankind to the Heavenly Father had to be a perfect human, and there is none other than Jesus who is perfect.

In order to settle the offense between God and man, someone had to meet God's demands. In sin, the human race was an offense to God. They had broken His Law and stood in direct defiance against His own person. They could not settle this issue unless

they were not personally an offense to Him. This is why a perfect man had to step in who had no sin. Jesus gave His life to settle the dispute of Adam when He sinned and cast a shadow of guilt upon all his descendants. The Son Jesus appeased God's requirement that One who is perfect and without blemish take the place of fallen mankind.

So, no matter how hard a human may work to earn God's favor and pleasure, he can never do so without Jesus. He is the Mediator who is accepted. He is the One who paid the ransom owed to God. This fact is clearly attested to by the eyewitnesses, the Holy Spirit, the Bible and those who have experienced forgiveness firsthand.

- **Can you name some ways that you have noticed people trying to earn God's favor? Have you also fallen into this behavior at some time in your life?**
- **Why is it good news to know there is only one way for salvation?**
- **How does it affect you to read what Jesus has done for you?**

Conclusion

God's will is for everyone to be saved. He wants this so much that He gave His One and only Son to provide the only way for it to happen. Many people do not like this option. Many Christians are uncomfortable expressing that this is the only way. It is quite unpopular in the world today to be exclusive. There is tremendous pressure to accept anyone's viewpoint and religion as valid. The challenge for the Christian teenager is to be unwavering in his conviction that God wants everyone to be saved His way. He must be obedient and brave when he holds fast to the teaching of John 14:6, "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

- **Why do you suppose Christians teenagers have difficulty expressing that Jesus is the only way?**
- **How can confidently knowing God's will concerning salvation help provide encouragement to hold to the fact that Jesus is the only way to be saved?**
- **Is there someone you know who needs to know God's will concerning salvation?**