

GOD'S WILL IN MYLIFE.

Part 4: A time, a place and a sphere.

Surely, we can only marvel at God's greatness; His precise planning, His perfect timing, His awesome power and His infinite wisdom. Whether it's in the natural creation, with its celestial glory and earthly splendour, or the spiritual creation of men and women redeemed and justified by the blood of the Lamb; we can surely only stand in awe and exclaim, "My God, how great Thou art!"

With intricate detail and pin-point accuracy our God designed and created the heavens and the earth. He measured the waters in the hollow of His hand and the heavens with the breadth of His hand; He calculated the dust of the earth in a basket and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance (*Isaiah 40:12*). He numbered the stars and called each by name (*Psalms 147:4*). Likewise, with infinite wisdom our God conceived and executed the plan of redemption to deliver man from the power of sin and reconcile him to Himself in righteousness. The Bible says that the wisdom of God in redemption was so beyond the comprehension of men and angels that none of the rulers of this age, spiritual or natural, could grasp it; if they had understood God's plan, they wouldn't have crucified the Lord of Glory (*1 Corinthians 2:7-8*). Whichever way you look at it, our God is an immaculate Creator and a Master of strategy; no wonder Paul wrote in adoration and amazement:

Romans 11:33: "Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgements, and his paths beyond tracing out!"

As we begin to appreciate the scope of God's wisdom and the extent of His power as revealed in His creative and redemptive acts, we can understand what a simple thing it is for God to plan and direct our lives. Isaiah says that God knows the end from the beginning (*Isaiah 46:10*), how easy then for Him to number our days, prepare our ways and guide our steps.

The will of God has to do with a time and a place. God's plan extends to and includes our daily lives; where we're to go, what we're to do, who we're to meet and what we're to say. Moreover, the secret of being in the right place at the right time to do God's will doesn't lie in our ability or cleverness, but rather in the ministry of the Holy Spirit who has come to guide us into all truth. If we'll learn to rely on the Spirit, yield to the Spirit and obey the Spirit, the will of God will become a moment by moment reality for us. The Holy Spirit leads us progressively into the fullness of the father's plan and purpose for our lives. *Romans 8:27* tells us that the Spirit makes intercession for us according to the will of God and *1 Corinthians 2:10-12* says that it's the Spirit who reveals to us the things freely given to us by God. We must enter into a new dimension of dependence on and obedience to the Spirit if we're going to discover and fulfil the will of God in our lives.

As Paul was seeking to know the will of God concerning the timing and placement of his ministry, the Holy Spirit forbade him to preach in Asia. Then, when he sought to enter Bithynia, the Spirit again prevented him from doing so. Shortly afterwards, the Spirit gave Paul a vision of a Macedonian man pleading for him to come over and help them. Concluding that this was God's will, Paul and his companions set sail for Macedonia and began ministry in Philippi. Little did they know that this was to be a strategic turning point in world missions that would forever

alter the course of history. It was the beginning of the spreading of the Gospel to Europe (*Acts 16:6-10*). It always pays to obey God!

As for God, His ways are perfect, He knows and has already prepared the right time and place for every purpose under heaven. Be assured that He who set the stars in orbit, who foreordained the life-span and boundaries of the nations, has a will for our lives that encompasses every day, every decision and every dilemma that we face.

1 Corinthians 12:29-30: "Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret?"

The obvious answer is, "No". Although the church is made up of many individuals, each with different gifts and callings, yet through the unity of the Spirit we are one body, called to glorify God with one mind and one voice. If we're to grow up spiritually into the image of the Lord Jesus, it's essential that we come to recognise our identity as believers in Christ and our place of membership in His body, the church. No person can live to himself and no person is complete in himself; God has structured life in such a way so as to make us inter-dependent:

1 Corinthians 10:17: "Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf."

Not one of us, on our own, constitutes the "whole loaf".

Paul explains in Ephesians that the church is the instrument of God's revelation to the nations; the vehicle through which God reveals His glory to the world. For this to take place effectively, the church must come together as a unified body, with each member understanding and fulfilling their God-appointed function. The will of God for each one's life is that sphere of ministry for which you have been equipped by the grace of God. To each one God has allotted a deposit of gifts and abilities in accordance with His will and purpose.

1 Corinthians 12:4-17, 11, 18, 28: "There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one just as he determines. But in fact God has arranged the parts of the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues..."

Please note that the initiative rests exclusively with God. He is Sovereign over His church. When He calls He doesn't give us a list of options; He's not the God of multiple choice. Our only choice is to obey or disobey God's call; to accept or reject His good will.

Romans 12:2-6: "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve that God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will. For by the grace given me I

say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgement, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body,, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith..."

Once again, the will of God for our life is spoken of in terms of our God-appointed place and function in the Body of Christ.

Paul indicates that God deals to each member of Christ's Body a certain measure of faith, that is "functioning faith" as opposed to "saving faith", and that the measure of faith varies from person to person and is in accordance with the will and purpose of God for each life. For example; if God calls you to be an evangelist, He'll give you faith to function as an evangelist. Our spiritual gift or grace operates in proportion to our measure of faith. Our measure of faith will certainly increase as we walk in obedience to the revelation of God, thereby enlarging the sphere and increasing the fruitfulness of our ministry. However, the measure of faith is limited to the calling and gifting of God in our life; you'll not have an evangelists' measure of faith if that ministry wasn't part of God's calling upon your life.

It's so important, both for our own sake and for the sake of the church, that we learn to function within the sphere of ministry to which God has appointed us. It's also important that we recognise and accept the limits of our God-appointed sphere and don't try to extend ourselves into another's area of ministry. God's word makes it clear that of we're faithful in doing what God has called us to do, He'll not only reward us but will also enlarge our sphere and increase our measure of faith:

2 Corinthians 10:12-16: "We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise. We, however, will not boast beyond proper limits, but will confine our boasting to the field God has assigned to us, a field that reaches even to you. We are not going too far in our boasting, as would be the case if we had not come to you, for we did get as far as you with the gospel of Christ. Neither do we go beyond our limits by boasting of work done by others. Our hope is that, as your faith continues to grow, our area of activity among you will greatly expand, so that we can preach the gospel in the regions beyond you..."

What will it take to reach the world for Jesus in this generation? Simply this; every believer fulfilling the will of God in his or her life; doing what God's called them to do. Discovering their place in the Body of Christ and ministering in their God-appointed sphere. This would result in two things happening. The Body of Christ would be at full stature and the world would be turned upside down with manifestations of the power of God, up until now unknown in our generation!

