

**PP The Power of Kingdom Living *Becoming a People of Prayer***

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Illus From among the finest athletes in the Roman Empire, Nero selected a group called The Emperor's Wrestlers. Their motto was: "We, the wrestlers, wrestling for thee, O Emperor, to win for thee the victory and from thee, the victor's crown." They were also soldiers and were often sent out on special military campaigns. Many of them converted to Christ and upon hearing this news, Nero ordered the commander, Vespasian, to execute any wrestler who refused to renounce Christ and swear religious as well as military allegiance to the emperor. The emperor's orders were received in the dead of winter, as the men were encamped on the shore of a frozen lake. When Vespasian assembled the soldiers and asked how many were Christians, forty men stepped forward. Hoping not to lose any of them, many of whom were his friends, he gave them until sundown the next day to reconsider. But all of them refused to renounce Christ. The commander ordered the forty men to disrobe and walk naked out onto the ice. All night, the soldiers on shore could hear the forty sentenced men singing triumphantly, "Forty wrestlers, wrestling for Thee, O Christ, to win for Thee the victory, and from Thee, the victor's crown." The singing grew fainter as morning neared, and at dawn a lone figure walked back and approached the fire. He confessed that his faith was not strong enough to face death. Vespasian then heard the faint strains of "Thirty-nine wrestlers, wrestling for Thee, O Christ." He was so moved that he threw off his armor and clothes and marched out to join the others, shouting as he went, "Forty wrestlers, wrestling for Thee, O Christ, to win for Thee the victory, and from Thee, the victor's crown."

What happens to God's people when they latch into the purpose of kingdom living?  
When they realize that praying for God's kingdom to come is asking God to powerfully  
redeem the lost, give His people a divine purpose and hasten the day when  
Christ will come again?

This understanding of and growing desire for the kingdom of God produces a powerful  
result in the lives of Christians

A life that yearns to live out God's will

**"your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."** Matthew 6:10b

Martin Luther called this a 'fearful prayer' because one cannot pray this objectively  
without intending that God changes his own will

It isn't a prayer asking to know the will of God, rather that God's will would become our  
will and be done perfectly

**PP "For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."  
Matthew 12:50**

This is now the third petition that Jesus teaches in this model prayer

We are to *ask* that God's will would be done here on earth as it is in heaven

But what really does that mean?

**PP1-We are asking that we would learn to be obedient**

Haven't you ever wondered that if God is the sovereign King, then isn't it a contradiction

to pray for His will to be done?  
How can a sovereign King's will not be done?  
God's sovereignty is absolutely shouted from the whole of Scriptures  
Yet, if God did not act in response to human prayers, then Jesus' teaching on prayer  
would be futile and meaningless  
The best solution, I think, to this seeming contradiction of a sovereign God and our  
ability to ask of God is that praying that God's will be done is to first of all ask that He would move in  
our hearts to desire to do His will

We see here more plainly than anywhere that prayer's purpose is not to convince or  
manipulate God to doing our will, but that our wills would come in line to His  
God wants us to learn to be obedient  
Our squirming, sin-saddled flesh consistently, and powerfully seeks to do our wills rather  
than God's  
It is, and will be on this side of heaven, a battle to put our will to death and obey the will  
of God  
When we pray 'your will be done' we are praying that God's will become our will  
We are asking that God would give us the desire to obey His will

In Jesus' day, there was a group of philosophers called the stoics  
They taught that things cannot be changed so to accept God's will is to put yourself in  
line with the whole universe  
To not accept it is to refuse the will of God and batter your head against the walls of the  
universe and be wretched and unhappy  
So the Stoics taught their disciples to utterly empty themselves of care: for themselves,  
others or things  
You begin with a broken cup, go on to a torn robe, move on to an animal that dies, and in  
the end you will be able to watch your dearest loved ones die and say, *'I don't care, I will not care, for  
this is the will of God.'*  
Stoic resignation to the inevitable will of God produces dead obedience  
It kills prayer by stripping it of faith  
When obedience is separated from right desires, it is empty, powerless religion involving  
a quagmire of shame and guilt  
God doesn't just want obedience, He wants us *to want to obey Him*

We have seen the destructiveness of stoicism, but there is an opposite extreme  
**PP** *"In some congregations the Gospel has been diminished to the mere art of self-fulfillment."*  
Elton Trueblood

These people treat God as a cosmic vending machine and prayer as the quarter to activate  
It  
**PP** In a poem entitled, *A Prayer For God's Will*, Amy Carmichael wrote *"And shall I  
pray to change Thy will, my Father, until it accord to mine? But no, Lord, no; that shall never be.  
Rather I pray Thee blend my human will with Thine."*

That is what He is bent on creating in our hearts, a blending of our wills with His

That we would want what He wants, hate what He hates, and live obediently to His commands

The result friends? A greater experience and display of kingdom living!

There are not too many clearer passages in Scripture that teaches this principle of God's working in us to will what He pleases and that results in obedience than Philippians 2:12-13:

**PP** ***"Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure."*** **Philippians 2:12-13**

The result of this work of Christ through the Holy Spirit Who lives in us is a peace and contentment that embraces God's will for our lives

Lord, change our hearts so that Your will becomes our will, so that Your will be done

**PP2-We are asking that God's will prevails over all the earth as it does in heaven**

***"on earth as it is in heaven."***

This is a prayer of active participation in God's will, not passive resignation  
God, accomplish Your will through me

Do you know how God's will is done in heaven?

**PP** ***"Bless the LORD, O you His angels, you mighty ones who do His word, obeying the voice of His word!"*** **Psalms 103:20**

In heaven, the overriding and prevailing desire is to bless the Lord

The chief desire of the angels is to glorify God, to honor Him, to bless Him and bestow on Him their favor

Out of that desire, they live obediently, doing His will

No arguing, no vacillating, no stoicism, no cosmic vending machine

This is what we are asking God for in this prayer

That we, and the world would live out His will: *unwaveringly, completely, sincerely, willingly, fervently, readily, swiftly, and constantly*

This is the power, the force behind living in God's kingdom

***"Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."***

This is a prayer of kingdom warfare

To pray that God's will be done is to pray that Satan's will would be undone

Every wicked or sinful thing that comes to us in this world comes from the hand of Satan, not the hand of God

It is to pray against all evil and those who represent it

So why don't we pray with this kind of boldness, this kind of effectiveness and confidence?

There have been more than a few believers who have lost their confidence in the power

of praying by wondering why, if God is sovereign, is His will not done now  
**PP** There are three distinct aspects of God's will as He reveals it to us in His Word:  
(*I will only briefly scratch the surface*)

**PP** a) First is what may be called God's **will of purpose**

This is God's ultimate will, the power He has to unfold His sovereign plan that embodies the entire universe, including heaven, hell and earth

**PP** "*The LORD of hosts has sworn: "As I have planned, so shall it be, and as I have purposed, so shall it stand..."*" **Isaiah 14:24**

Sin may run its course and Satan has his day, but God will bring both sin and Satan to an end exactly according to His plan and foreknowledge  
Our hallowed Father holds the power to bring devastation to glory

**PP** b) Second is what can be called God's **will of desire**

Unlike God's will of purpose, God's desires are not always fulfilled

**PP** Jesus cried out that day He glimpsed Jerusalem "*O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not!"*  
**Luke 13:34**

Divorces, lies, and murders are all things which God hates and detests  
It is not God's pleasing will that people should die, or why would Christ have come to destroy death?  
God, "*Who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth*"  
is not pleased that anyone should reject Him and go to hell  
God never desires that a child be abused, or that a drunk driver robs a family of their father  
But despite His desires, they often go unfulfilled

**PP** c) Finally, there is what can be called God's **will of command**

God's will is what He commands us to do, made clear to us from His Word  
It is the powerful desire of the heart of God that His children obey Him completely and immediately with a willing heart

**PP** "*But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.*" **Romans 6:17-18**

God's will of purpose assures us while we often do not see it, God is in absolute and complete control  
What about bad, difficult and painful things that have happened in my life?

Were they part of God's will?

In a fundamental and real way, they were not part of His will of desire

God hates sin and abuse and suffering, and desires that no one should inflict it

He has made His desires clear through His commands in the Word of God, and He wants  
people to honor one another and to treat each other with kindness

Yet His will of purpose, while able to stop it, allowed it, for reasons we don't always  
understand but learn to trust Him for

So why pray '*Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven*'?

We are praying that God will bring about His perfect purposes in all the earth which  
opposes Him now because of sin

While He doesn't desire the atrocities that are being committed presently, instead of  
tyrannically forcing people to do His will, He does a work in their hearts to change their desires away  
from their own selfish will and toward His

He does this by giving new birth through Jesus Christ, creating a new man from the old  
with new desires for righteousness and obedience

God begins to powerfully change their desires through His Word enabling them to want  
to live out His will in obedience

His will is done on earth as it is in heaven person by person who turns to Him in faith and  
begins to live in obedience

**PP** *"To experience the glory of God's will for us means absolute trust. It means the will to do  
His will, and it means joy."* Elizabeth Elliot

This is how those in the kingdom of God have the strength to endure in this hostile world  
Lord, bring about Your purposes in this world, even through the evil that I have had to  
suffer

Let me know that You desire and will turn all things to my good and make me more like  
Christ

And help me to want Your will so that I may obey it

This is the way that Jesus lived

**PP** *"Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him Who sent me and to accomplish His  
work."* John 4:34

Lord, You will bring all things under Your dominion, power and purpose

Start with my heart and blend my will to Yours that I may live in obedience to You

Start with me, and extend your reign to those who have hurt me, those who caught up in  
sin, those who are under the dominion of Satan

Use me to declare and live out the power of the kingdom of God and the hope of glory to  
rescue them and bring about the fulfillment of Your desires

Change my heart so that I will want what You desire

We pray this prayer and we are saying to God, '*Change me so You can use me to  
accomplish Your will on earth as it is in heaven.*'