

# THE WILL OF GOD

## Lesson 14

Do you know God? Like, really know Him? What is your criteria for “knowing” God? Should we even be concerned with knowing God? The simple answer to the last question is, Yes! Another passage in our study of the will of God makes it very clear that God wants us to know him. Colossians 1:27 tells believers that God desires that all believers would know “Christ in you the hope of glory”. This is not merely factual knowledge but a knowledge based on experience. God doesn’t desire a mere head knowledge rather He wants every believer to have a hands on working knowledge of “Christ in us”. We find in scripture that it is because Christ is in us that we can know what God is like and that is something that He wants for every single one of us.

*“Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; [Even] the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what [is] the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:” - Colossians 1:25-28*

- I. God made Paul a minister of, or one who dispenses, the truth according to the dispensation of the grace of God
  - A. *“According to the dispensation”*
    1. Dispensation - a stewardship, management
    2. Paul was given the job of managing and distributing teaching that He received from the resurrected Christ
  - B. *“To fulfill the word of God”*
    1. Fulfill - *pleroo* - to make full, to fill up; to fill to the top: so that nothing shall be wanting to full measure”
    2. There was more revelation that needed to be provided for God’s Word to be made complete - NT revelation

QUESTION: If, according to Paul’s statement, God was still “filling up” or revealing new truth to the early Church, did the Old Testament provide everything the Church needed to know about their salvation and their relationship to other believers?

- II. Paul was entrusted by God with dispensing truth about a mystery that had been previously hid from the spirit realm and mankind
  - A. Mystery - *mustarion* - “hidden thing, secret; hidden purpose or counsel; secret will”
    1. Ages - spirit realm - 1 Cor. 2:7-8
    2. Generations - mankind - Jo. 16:12-13; Ro. 16:25-26
  - B. Hath been hid (Perf. Pass. Ind.) - *apokrypto* - “to conceal away, to keep secret”

This must have been a pretty heavily guarded secret. God chose to keep His plans regarding the indwelling of believers hidden from the likes of Noah, Abraham, David, and Isaiah. Even the spirit beings in heaven were not privy to this revelation that God provided Paul and other New Testament prophets.

### III. “*BUT NOW!!!*” - At this very moment

- A. Made manifest to the saints (Aor. Pas. Ind.)
  - 1. Manifest - *phaneroo* - “to make manifest or visible or know what has been hidden or unknown”
    - a) God made known this previously hidden truth at this moment in human history (early in 1st century A.D.)
    - b) “*To his saints*” - This truth was for believers and not the world
- B. The “but now” statement points to a very significant and definitive change of events occurring at that time

Many times Christians do not appreciate the significant difference between themselves and Old Testament saints like Abraham, David, and Isaiah. While we are all equally fallen and all saved by grace through faith, God has revealed that the content of our salvation is much different from that experienced by believers in the Old Testament. A lack of understanding regarding the drastic change of events which occurred as a result of Christ's death and resurrection can result in a Christian missing out on living in God's desirous will.

### IV. “*To whom God would make known...*”

- A. Paul states that it is God's desirous will that believers have an experiential knowledge of this mystery, “*which is Christ in you*”
  - 1. Would - *thelo* - desirous will
  - 2. Make known (Aor. Act.) - *gnorizo* -
    - a) “to make known; to gain or have a thorough knowledge of”
    - b) “Gnosis is conscious, experiential knowledge, not merely intellectual or conceptual knowledge”
- B. “*Hope of glory*” - the believer's confidence that we can be what God intends for us to be

It was, and still is, God's desirous will that believers have a personal and experiential knowledge of the incredible value of this mystery which was being revealed among the Gentile believers. The true value of this mystery is that for the first-time ever, a believer's salvation consists of “*Christ in you*”. Paul phrases it to the Corinthians in this way, “*For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to [give] the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.*” (2 Cor. 4:6-7). It is because God has chosen to indwell those who have put their faith in Christ's finished work that we can really know what He is like. This truth is not intended to be academic but life-transforming.

### V. “*Christ in you*”

- A. Jo. 14:20 - Christ introduced the promise that He will indwell New Testament believers
  - 1. “*Christ in you*” was not something Old Testament believers experienced
    - a) OT - the Spirit came upon (and departed from) select individuals to perform a function for the nation of Israel
    - b) Jo. 10:38 - the idea that a man could be indwelt by God was blasphemous concept
    - c) Jo. 14:16-17, 26 - In the Upper Room, Jesus stated that the sending of the Spirit would happen in the future - Pentecost

- B. 1 Jo. 5:11-12, 20 - Eternal life is in the Son of God, and the Son is in every believer
  - 1. Jo. 10:10 - The emphasis of Eternal life is a quality of life, not a length of life
  - 2. Jo. 17:3 - Eternal life = experiential knowledge of the Father and the Son
  - 3. 1 Jo. 3:9 - New Testament believers are provided with a quality of God's life
- C. The believer is also indwelt by God the Father - Eph. 4:6; 1 Jo. 4:12
- D. The believer is also indwelt by God the Holy Spirit

Never before had men served as a dwelling place for God. But now, because of the finished work of His finished work, Christ promised that He would indwell all those that believed on Him for salvation. Because Christ is indwelling each believer, a quality, or a sampling, of His life has been made available them. It is this life that is in Christ, eternal life, that provides every believer with the confidence that we can live a life that matches up with God's opinion of Himself.

QUESTION: Can we know that we know God? YES!!!

- I. We know what He's like because we've experienced a quality, or sampling, of His love
  - A. A believer can know that they are experiencing a quality of God's life when they sacrificially love other believers - 1 Jo. 3:14
  - B. A believer can love because they have been born from God and when they love as He loves they are knowing Him - 1 Jo. 4:7
  - C. When a believer is not loving others they are not experientially knowing God
- II. We can really know God and what He is like when we share in His character - "So this is what He's like!"

QUESTION: So how can we love like this?

- I. Eph. 5:18 - The believer must learn to be spiritual and allow the Spirit to fill them
- II. Col. 3:16 - allow the word concerning the Christ to dwell in you richly
  - A. One's relationship to Christ with all other believers together with Christ as our head
  - B. When this serves as the believers frame of reference they will be spiritual and able to love with a quality of God's love

QUESTION: So what's the big deal?

Paul stated that he taught about "Christ in you" wherever he ministered, "*Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:*" (Col. 1:28) It is clear from this verse that this teaching was not some theological footnote but it had real implications for each believer's life. When Paul said he taught "*every man in all wisdom*" it means that there was a way to apply this knowledge to one's life. The result of experientially knowing "*Christ in you*" was being "*perfect in Christ Jesus*". In other words, experientially knowing "Christ in you" was the means to spiritual maturity. Christ's indwelling was how every believer could be transformed into all God desired them to be. This was something the Law, or any kind of religious checklist, could never accomplish. Law was never designed to transform fallen men and women into all God intended for them to be, only a gracious God indwelling His people could.

- I. The Law never had the potential to make anyone spiritually mature
  - A. Heb. 10:1 - the Law with its sacrifices never made anyone perfect
  - B. Heb. 7:19 - the Law made nothing perfect
    - 1. Perfect - *teleioo* - “mature, complete, what something ought to be”
    - 2. At no point in time did the Law make anyone all that God intended them to be
    - 3. But a better hope provided to believers in Christ has made it possible
- II. What is the better hope?
  - A. Paul preached, taught, and warned every believer about “Christ in you”, our hope of glory
  - B. Paul states that the purpose behind teaching believers about “Christ in you” was so that they could be presented perfect (*teleioo*)
    - 1. Phil. 3:8 - what Paul wanted more than anything was the “excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus”
    - 2. 2 Pe. 3:18 - Peter encourages Christians to grow by an experiential knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ
- III. Conclusion - our becoming what God intends us to be is not tied to the Law, or outward religious observance (i.e. - the checklist), but rather to a working knowledge of the inestimable riches and power of “Christ in you”

Today, believers often try to make Old Testament believers as the standard for their behavior. In doing so they fail to recognize that as part of their salvation, God has graciously provided them something that He never gave to any Old Testament saint, “Christ in you”. It is only because He now resides in us that we can really know him by sharing in a quality of His life. It is also because He is in us that we can become all He intended for us to become. It is God’s desirous will that we having an experiential understanding of this promise.