

# Prayer That Pleases God

## The Lord's Model Prayer Part 3

Your will be done,  
On earth as it is in heaven.

**MATTHEW 6:10**

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**Main point:** The kind of prayer that pleases God is the prayer His children offer in the right manner, about the right matters, and with the right spirit.

### INTRODUCTION:

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See if you can complete the following sentences.

- If you don't **breathe**, you will...
- If you don't can't **see**, you are...
- If you can't **hear**, you may be...
- If you don't know and do **God's will**, you are...

Great confusion exists around the subject of *God's will*. For some, the will of God is like a ghost, which only appears in the darkest hour. For others, God's will is like an appendix—something at the back of the book of their lives which they never get to read. For others, the will of God is like a robber—someone you dread encountering and hope you're prepared to escape from. But for Jesus, Himself and those who follow Him in faith, the will of God is the heart and motivating force of His mission and ours.

James Hastings once said, "We do not sincerely own Him as King unless we set His will above our own and every other."

- How do you feel about the will of God? When you hear about God's will, do thoughts of delight rush to your mind? Or, is the will of God an inconvenience for you—a ball and chain to your dreams; a rule and intrusion on your plans? Do you know God's will for your life? And are you submitting to it and seeking after it today?

In the first two petitions concerning in our Lord's model prayer, we have considered, *God's honor* and *God's kingdom*. Now, in the third, we come to *God's will*. **Prayer that pleases God** is concerned with *the glorifying of God's name*, *the coming and consummation of God's kingdom*, and *the knowing and doing of God's will*.

Someone has said that "the first three petitions in the Lord's model prayer are to one another as root, stem, and fruit; as beginning, middle, and end." No doubt, God's name, kingdom, and will are the foundation of all prayer. It is not enough that the Kingdom be established (that its boundaries be enlarged, and its glory

delighted in). *There is an end for which all this is brought about, and that end is that the will of the Ruler may be done.*

We have no greater example of the *necessity of knowing and doing* the will of God than the Lord Jesus Himself.

Think about what was said of Him in the Old Testament. The foundation of the whole glorious work of the salvation of the church was laid in the sovereign will, pleasure, and grace of God. The coming of Christ in the flesh and His fundamental motive in undertaking the work of mediation was the will and glory of God. Here is the record of divine promise prophesied through David of the Messiah in Psalm 40:7,

- THEN I SAID, "BEHOLD, I HAVE COME (IN THE SCROLL OF THE BOOK IT IS WRITTEN OF ME) TO DO YOUR WILL, O GOD."

Think about the start of His ministry. You remember the account in John 4 when Jesus and the disciples were traveling through Samaria? Apparently, before meeting the woman at Jacob's well, the disciples went into the city to grab some take-out from Pete's Fish-Chips, and when they came back, they were amazed that Jesus was holding a conversation with a woman. After she left to go into the city to tell the people to come out to see the Messiah, the disciples were urging Jesus to eat.

- **John 4:32-33**—But He said to them, I have food to eat that you do not know about. <sup>33</sup> So the disciples were saying to one another, "No one brought Him anything to eat, did he?" Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work."

Or think about as He was praying in the Garden of Gethsemane, with the shadow of the cross just days away.

- **Luke 22:39-42**— And He came out and proceeded as was His custom to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples also followed Him. <sup>40</sup> When He arrived at the place, He said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation." <sup>41</sup> And He withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and *began* to pray, <sup>42</sup> saying, "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done." (Cf. Acts 21:14)

From the Old Testament to the inauguration of His ministry, to His sacrifice on the cross, the heart and motivating force of His mission was to do the will of God.

## EXPOSITORY OUTLINE:

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In this third petition, let us ask, what did Jesus mean when He said, "*Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*"?

### A. God's will defined—*Your will*.

What is God's will and why does it matter? Many people shrink from God's will because they think it always means pain, sorrow, or bereavement. And if that is what you think of, it's time for a change of mind. Jesus would have us to know three things about the will of God.

1. **Jesus would have us to know that the will of God is the will of a good, good Father.** It is the Fatherhood of God going out in action. The devil wants you to believe that God's will is not good, but rather, it is something bad or negative from someone who is distant and unfair.

In Matthew 25, in the Parable of Talents, Jesus tells a story of a wealthy man about to go on a journey, and he entrusted three of his servants with talents or wealth according to their ability. When he came back to settle accounts and to see what they had done with the stewardship they were given, two of them invested wisely and used what they had, but the last one squandered his opportunity. And why did he do it? Well, listen to what he said to the Master, "*Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you scattered no seed...*" In other words, he misjudged his master's character (vv.14-30).

And that's what Satan wants you to do too—misjudge God's character. He wants you to think of God is some tyrant, or some harsh law-giver or cosmic killjoy. But Jesus shows us *what Father is like*. He is good, gracious, loving, sovereign, and holy. But listen to how Jesus prays in John 17:1, "*Father, the hour has come...*" and in verse 5, "*Now Father, glorify Me together with Yourself...*" and in verse 11, "*...I come to You...Holy Father...*"

One of my favorite verses in the Bible, especially before standing to preach, is Luke 11:13,

- If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him

The secret of prayer is the filling of the Spirit, and the Spirit is given in Jesus' name, by a heavenly Father so that we can enjoy spiritual food, experience spiritual fire, and endure the spiritual fight!

2. ***Jesus would have us to know that the will of God is sovereign and efficacious.*** If you look at both the Old and New Testaments and study the teaching of the will of God, you will see that there are multiple meanings, but they all boil down into two basic concepts.

The first one refers to what we call "*the sovereign, efficacious will of God.*" This is the will of God that comes to pass according to His decree or His eternal counsel.

- **Ephesians 1:11**—also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will,

R. C. Sproul once said, "When God created heaven and the earth, He did not ask permission. When God said, 'Let there be light' there wasn't any debate; the lights came on."

That is a manifestation of the sovereign will of God. Whatever God wills must necessarily come to pass. This is how Daniel spoke of it:

- **Daniel 4:35**—All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing,  
But He does according to His will in the host of heaven  
And *among* the inhabitants of earth;  
And no one can ward off His hand  
Or say to Him, "What have You done?"

God's will is *sovereign* and *efficacious*, that is, God has the adequate power to produce effects that He desires and intends.

### 3. *Jesus would have us to know that the will of God is revealed in the Word of God.*

When most people ask, what is God's will for my life? They are really seeking to understand something about *the permissive will of God* like: *where should I work? Whom shall I marry? What church should I go to? What purchase shall I make?* But these are really questions of liberty, freedom, and wisdom, and in a sense, they are *secondary*. The *primary* thing that we should be concerned about is what God has prescribed or revealed in His Word. In other words, what is His commanded or revealed will?

So, when Jesus is instructing us to pray, "*Your will be done...*" He was not speaking about the *sovereign, efficacious will* of God, because we do not need to pray about that, but rather, He is speaking of *God's revealed or commanded will in our lives.* We are praying, "God may Your commanded and revealed will be done in my life as well as by everyone."

#### **What is God's commanded or revealed will for each of us?**

There are five places in the word of God where we are specifically told: this is the will of God.

- **John 6:40**—For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day."

It is God's will that we repent, believe and be saved.

- **1 Thessalonians 4:3**— For this is the will of God, your sanctification; *that is*, that you abstain from sexual immorality;

It is God's will that we live set apart for His purposes. Whether on the job or in the home, in this state or that, God's will for us is to live a life that is holy and distinguished from the world.

- **1 Thessalonians 5:18**—in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

It is God's will that we give Him thanks in all things.

- **1 Peter 2:13-15**—Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority,<sup>14</sup> or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right. <sup>15</sup> For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men.

It is God's will that we are submissive to governing authority.

- **1 Peter 4:12-19**—Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; <sup>13</sup> but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation. <sup>14</sup> If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. <sup>15</sup> Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; <sup>16</sup> but if *anyone suffers* as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name. <sup>17</sup> For *it is* time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if *it begins* with us first,

what *will be* the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? <sup>18</sup> AND IF IT IS WITH DIFFICULTY THAT THE RIGHTEOUS IS SAVED, WHAT WILL BECOME OF THE GODLESS MAN AND THE SINNER? <sup>19</sup> Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.

It is God's will that we suffer for righteousness sake. Peter has three words for the suffering Christians in that day, and they apply to you if you are a Christian today.

1. Don't be surprised by your suffering—never be surprised by suffering.
2. Don't be the cause of your suffering—never be the cause of your suffering.
3. Don't be defeated by your suffering—never be confused about your suffering.

Are you living in the will of God? Can you pray, "*Your kingdom come, Your will be done?*"

### **Someone may ask, what is the benefit of doing the will of God?**

Jesus said that one benefit is illumination or understanding of His teaching.

- **John 7:17**—If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or *whether* I speak from Myself.

Jesus said that another benefit is assurance of His relationship.

- **Mark 3:35**—For whoever does the will of God, he is My brother and sister and mother."

The Apostle Paul said that another benefit doing the will of God is a renewed mind and a clear testimony.

- **Romans 12:2**— And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

### **B. God's will decided—*be done***

**Explained:** The verb "***be done***" (literally means "*come to pass*"). It is in the form of a command (aorist imperative). It is a call for *effective action* and can even convey a sense of urgency.

In our own lives, we will never be *happy* nor *holy* until we have gotten to the point of saying, like our Savior, "I delight to do your will, O my God." But we cannot begin here. The first step before delighting in the will of God is *to choose the will of God*.

Proverbs 8:13, "*The fear of the Lord is to hate evil,*" and as we sing,

"He who delights in the Word of the Lord shall be blessed in all of his ways,  
for the friendship of God is with those who fear Him.  
So, we choose the fear of the Lord. We choose the way of the Lord  
We choose the Word of the Lord."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Maranatha! Music, *We Choose the Fear of the Lord*

In Alexander Solzhenitsyn's, *"A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich,"* Ivan endures all the horrors of a Soviet prison camp. One day he is praying with his eyes closed when a fellow prisoner notices him and says with ridicule, "Prayers won't help you get out of here any faster." Opening his eyes, Ivan answers, "I do not pray to get out of prison but to do the will of God."

Prayer is not manipulating God to get what we want but discovering what He wants us to do, and then asking the Holy Spirit to enable us to do His will. Prayer is not a way to get what we want but the way to become what God wants.

What God wants us to become, is so that His will is done HERE, on earth—and NOW. We are not to wait for another life, and better circumstances to do the will of God. Our circumstances and service here now are actually preparing us for our service for all eternity.

### C. God's will demonstrated—on earth as it is in heaven

**Explained:** How is God's will done in heaven and by whom? The reference here is no doubt speaking of the angels specifically and the glorified saints in general.

- **Psalm 103:21**—Bless the LORD, all you His hosts, You who serve Him, doing His will.

How do the angels do God's will?

- They do God's will *flawlessly*.
- They do it with *fervently*.
- They do it with *singularly* (undivided attention).
- They do it *perfectly*.
- They do it *readily*.
- They do God's will *unceasing*.

John Piper—On the personal level that must mean, "Father, please cause me to obey your will the way the angels obey it in heaven.

**Applied:** When we pray, "Your Kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven...", we are praying that the earth would be filled with people who do the will of God the way the angels do it in heaven.

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