

A "Heart For" Series #3  
**A Heart For God's Will**  
By Bill Denton

**Introduction**

**A. Illustration**

"There are two kinds of people: those who say to God, 'Thy will be done,' and those to whom God says, 'All right, then, have it your way.'" -- —C. S. Lewis

1. I think Lewis is right for I can't really see anything in between the two
2. The problem is that a lot of people seem to think there is a lot of gray area in-between but there is nothing less than God's will that matches it

**B. God's will ought to be the only thing that counts**

1. But there are some immediate problems with trying to achieve God's will
  - a. God's will is perfect, contains no evil, and seeks for ultimate good
  - b. human beings are not perfect, sin contaminates us with evil, and we have trouble seeing good close up, much less at a distance
  - c. it is a far more challenging task to know and do God's will than we can imagine – it is not easy or simple
2. Still, scripture contains enticing challenges for us that have to do with God's will in our lives
  - a. Mark 3:35  
35 "For whoever does the will of God, he is My brother and sister and mother." NASU
  - b. Romans 12:2  
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. NASU
  - c. 1 Peter 4:1-2  
1 Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, 2 so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. NASU

**C. God has a will for your life**

1. Sometimes it is a general sort of thing that applies to all of us, but at other times, it is a more specific thing that might apply only to you
2. Regardless of which one we're talking about, there is one thing that sets the stage of your life and mine that opens us up to God's will – it is our heart

## I. A Heart For God

### A. A heart for God's will begins with a heart for God himself

1. Charles Spurgeon once said that our visits to God's house ought to be inquirers' meetings, in which we inquire as to the will of God and how we may do it.
2. That's an interesting description of people assembled to worship and learn together – inquirers
  - a. an “inquirer” is a person asking a question
  - b. in this case, the question is obvious, “God, what is your will?”
3. If we could learn to ask that question, and be serious about it, then we might discover that our entire approach to understanding God and his will is changed and refocused – off ourselves and onto God

### B. Christian teaching is often full of demands that people obey God, and it is certainly true that God wants us to obey, but we shortchange the message by not putting a priority emphasis on the thing that makes obedience easier to accomplish

1. You can't have a heart for God's will unless you first have a heart for God
2. Fred Wevodau wrote

... obedience must spring from a heart eager to please the Father. More impressive than any single act of obedience in Jesus' life was his continual delight in obeying his Father's will.<sup>1</sup>

  - a. John 4:34

34 Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work. NASU
  - b. John 8:29

29 "And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him." NASU
3. Jesus tried to get his disciples that obedience was a product of their love
  - a. John 14:15

15 " If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. NASU
  - b. it makes little sense to keep on telling people to obey God and do his will if we don't first help them love both the Father and Jesus

### C. This is what makes the “great commandment” so great

1. Matthew 22:37-40

37 And He said to him, " 'YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.' 38 "This is the great and foremost commandment. 39 "The second is like it, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' 40 " On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets." NASU

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<sup>1</sup>*Discipleship Journal* : Issue 12. 1999 (electronic ed.). Colorado Springs: The Navigators/NavPress.

2. Mark 12:30-31

30 AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.' 31 "The second is this, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' There is no other commandment greater than these." NASU

3. Pay attention to the application made by Jesus to loving God (and neighbor)

a. the whole law and the prophets depend on these two commands

b. no commandment is greater than these

c. do you get the idea that we ought to be emphasizing loving God before we emphasize doing his will?

## II. The Power Of Love In Doing God's Will

### A. We need to think a bit about the power of love to produce the doing of God's will

1. It is simply a fact that the Bible teaches that love for God is what produces obedience to God's will

2. It is this heart-shaping attitude that ought to get our attention

### B. There are some very practical reasons why having a heart for God results in a heart for God's will

1. Love for God sets the stage for our interaction with God and his will for us  
a. in a loving relationship, we seek to please and satisfy the one we love

b. love does not produce resistance, negligence, or disinterest

2. Love for God encourages us to want to please God, as he wants to be pleased

a. we're not talking about infatuation or immature love that is often seen in human relationships –these lead to self-pleasing actions

b. real love, a heart for God, yearns to give to God what he wants

3. Love for God, a heart for God, opens us up to the will of God because it creates an intense interest in knowing God and his will

a. love doesn't move us away from God, or cause us to want to be distant from God

b. love encourages us to be inquisitive, to want to know God better, and thus to know and do his will

4. Only a heart for God and a heart for God's will produces the attitude in us that we WANT to do what God wills for us

a. contrast the person who wants to do God's will with the one who has no desire at all to do God's will

b. push that latter person all you want, you won't get cooperation, but you probably won't have to push the first one at all

## Conclusion

### A. Do you have a heart for God's will

1. You need to know that this whole thing about obedience to God and conforming to his will begins with a love for God himself, a heart for God
2. It is the person with a heart for God who yearns to know and do God's will

### B. What we need is not less emphasis on obeying God's will, but more emphasis on loving God first, developing a heart for God

1. John 5:39-44 (We need to avoid legalistic, rule-keeping religion)  
39 " You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me; 40 and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life. 41 " I do not receive glory from men; 42 but I know you, that you do not have the love of God in yourselves. 43 "I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, you will receive him. 44 "How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and you do not seek the glory that is from the one and only God? NASU
2. 1 Corinthians 8:1-3 (We need to avoid the arrogance of "right-answer" faith)  
1 Now concerning things sacrificed to idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies. 2 If anyone supposes that he knows anything, he has not yet known as he ought to know; 3 but if anyone loves God, he is known by Him. NASU
3. The question each of us needs to deal with is how much do we love God?
  - a. in the answer to that question we will also find how much we desire to know and do God's will
  - b. do not miss this point for it will literally shape your eternity

### C. Invitation