

## 15. Learning to Understand the Will of God

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to avoid the sins of the flesh. Instead, we saw that we want to help them learn to walk in the light. We saw that they are able to walk in the light as they walk in the Spirit. The Holy Spirit gives them the power to practice goodness and do those things that are right in the sight of God. He helps them learn to speak the truth of the Word of God. In our topic today, we are going to see that God wants us to help our children understand the will of God for their lives.

We want to help our children learn to understand what is well-pleasing to the Lord as they serve Him in their lives. In Ephesians 5:11-12, we read, “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose *them*. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret.” The word that is translated “fellowship” here is not the normal word for fellowship. In fact, the word is used only two other times in the New Testament, one positive and the other negative. Since this one is also negative, the other negative use is in Revelation 18:4 where we read, “And I heard another voice from heaven saying, ‘Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues.’” This verse is talking about the final destruction of Babylon and the word is warning tribulation saints not to share in the sins of Babylon.

As a result, this passage makes it clear that Christians are not to share in the unfruitful works of darkness. The works of darkness are the works of Satan. Instead of bearing fruit, the works of Satan are designed to carry out his evil plans. John 10:10 says, “The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly.” Here, we see that the goal of Satan is always to steal, to kill and to destroy. A Christian can never bring glory to the Lord by sharing in the works of Satan because his works have as their goal destruction leading people to the eternal misery of eternal judgment.

Those who are practicing the works of Satan do not like to come to the light. John 3:20 says, “For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.” As we teach the Word of God, we expose the works of Satan. However, even though we are to expose the works of darkness, we are not to reject the people who are still in bondage to Satan that are committing those evil works. Christ was known as a friend of sinners. In 1 Corinthians 5:9-10, we see that we are also to be a friend to sinners. Those verses say, “I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. Yet *I* certainly *did* not *mean* with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world.” Here, we see that we are to be a friend to sinners so that we can lead them to Christ. However, 1 Corinthians 5:11 says, “But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner--not even to eat with such a person.” Here, we see that the person we are not to fellowship with is a Christian brother who continues to practice the works of Satan.

That is why Ephesians 5:13-14 says, “But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the

light, for whatever makes manifest is light. Therefore He says: ‘Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light.’” Here, we see that it is the Word of God that exposes sin. That is the very reason why we are to share the Word of God when we speak to others because God is the only One who truly knows what is in their hearts. 1 Corinthians 14:24-25 says, “But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an uninformed person comes in, he is convinced by all, he is convicted by all. And thus the secrets of his heart are revealed; and so, falling down on *his* face, he will worship God and report that God is truly among you.” Notice this is prophesy with an “s” and not prophecy with a “c”. To “prophesy” means *to share what is already written down in the Word of God*. The Word of God will expose the secret sins of the heart of both the unbeliever and the believer.

The word “manifest” means *to make known, to reveal or to expose what has been hidden*. In this verse, we see that the Word of God reveals the unfruitful works of darkness. As a result, when we share the Word of God, it shines the light of the Word of God on the heart of mankind. When the light of the Word shines in the heart of a believer, it exposes to that Christian the thoughts in his heart that are sinful so that he can confess and forsake them. Proverbs 28:13 says, “He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes *them* will have mercy.” When a Christian has unconfessed sin in his heart, he cannot be blessed by the Lord. However, 1 John 1:9 promises, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” God will use His Word to reveal hidden sin in a Christian.

We also see that the Word of God will bring light to those who are not Christians. Paul quoted from a combination of Isaiah 26:19 which says, “Your dead shall live; *together with* my dead body they shall arise. Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust; for your dew *is like* the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead”, and Isaiah 60:1 which says, “Arise, shine; for your light has come! And the glory of the LORD is risen upon you.” Here, we see that Paul uses these verses to show that the Word of God will also draw those who are not Christians to Christ because the Father will use the Word to draw them and give them the faith to believe in Christ.

Ephesians 5:15-17 then goes on to say, “See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord *is*.” Here, we see the way that we are to walk if we are Christians. The word that is translated “circumspectly” means *to understand accurately or to walk diligently*. Luke used the word when he said in Luke 1:3, “It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus.” He also used it when he spoke of Apollos in Acts 18:25 where we read, “This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, though he knew only the baptism of John.” Here, we see that to “walk circumspectly” means *to walk as wise and not as fools*.

A fool is a person who leaves God out of his thinking and actions. Psalm 14:1 says, “The fool has said in his heart, ‘*There is no God.*’ They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none who does good.” Here, we see that because a fool leaves God out of his thinking, his works are corrupt and abominable. In contrast, Proverbs 1:5 says, “A wise *man* will hear and increase

learning, and a man of understanding will attain wise counsel.” Then, Proverbs 1:7 adds, “The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of knowledge, *but* fools despise wisdom and instruction.” When we have a reverence and respect for the Lord, He will give us wisdom and instruction.

That wisdom will cause us to redeem the time. The word that is translated “time” speaks of a fixed period of time. For the Christian, that would be the time from the moment of salvation until the Lord takes us to heaven. The word that is translated “redeeming” is only used four times in the New Testament. It is used in Galatians 3:13 and Galatians 4:5 to speak of the fact that Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law. The only other use is in Colossians 4:5 where we read, “Walk in wisdom toward those *who are* outside, redeeming the time.” In both Ephesians and Colossians, we see that we are to be making the best use of the time that we have on this earth. Since we have a fixed amount of time on this earth, we are to make wise and godly use of our time in all of our contacts with those who are not Christians to help them come to the knowledge of Christ so that they can turn from the works of darkness to faith in Christ.

In order to redeem that fixed period of time that we have remaining in our lives, we are to understand what the will of Lord is. In 2 Peter 3:9, we read, “The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.” Here, we see that God wants all people to come to repentance. Then, in 1 Timothy 2:1-2, we see that it is the will of God that we pray because 1 Timothy 2:3-4 says, “For this *is* good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” Here, we see that we also want to help our children to learn to pray for the salvation of others who are not yet Christians because God desires all people to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.

We also see that it is the will of God that we and our children are filled with the Spirit. Ephesians 5:18 says, “And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit.” We see the result when we pray and are filled with the Spirit. Acts 4:31 says, “And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.” Then, we see that we are to pray this same thing for others. As Paul asked for prayer in Ephesians 6:19-20 he said, “And for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.” We see that as we help our physical and spiritual children understand the will of God, we can then pray for each other that God will help us all to carry out His will of sharing the Gospel boldly with those who are not yet Christians. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children to understand the will of God.