



# The Lord's Prayer

## Part 5 – Nevertheless, Not My Will

### Matthew 6:10

*Your will be done on earth as it is heaven.*

"The will of God means death to our own will, and resurrection only when we have died to all our own plans."  
- Sinclair Ferguson

The Lord's Prayer is not meant to be an easy prayer. Certainly the words are rather easy to memorize. And it is not hard to imagine the ease with which the Lord's Prayer may be repeated with little or no thought. But if we pause to carefully consider what Jesus is inviting us to pray we will see that not only is he calling us to ask for high and lofty

things – like the hallowing of his name – but he is calling us to do very hard things like forgive those who have done harm to us.

However, at no point in the Lord's Prayer does Jesus call us to a more challenging task as when he calls us to pray, "Your will be done..." This third petition of the Lord's Prayer is a direct frontal assault against that thing in us which rises up again and again to oppose the will of God. When we pray, "Your will be done," we are praying for God to overcome our own will; that our love to have everything our way would crumble and be replaced with a love to see God's will be done. Never does anything fall so hard as a stubborn sinful will.

**Main Idea:** While we wait for the day when God will bring about the full consummation of his will on earth, we are to pray that he will be glorified by the doing of his will here and now.

### 1. The Will of Man

**John 6:65** – "No one can come to me unless the Father draws him."

**Philippians 2:13** – "For it is God who works in you both to will and to do his good pleasure."

- Outside of Christ, the human will is in bondage to sin. Indeed, the Scriptures calls us "slaves" to sin (**Jn. 8:34; Rom 6:17, 20 2 Tim. 2:26**). That does not mean that people are not accountable for what they do. Everyone possesses moral agency, that is, we all act in accordance with our desires. But apart from the work of the Holy Spirit to change our hearts none of us have the desire to do that which pleases God.
- In answer to the question, "What about free will?" we would say that all people have the ability to will that which they are able to will. But just as no one has the ability to swim across the Pacific Ocean, so those who are outside of Christ do not have the ability to understand, believe, and live in obedience to the gospel. For that, the gracious work of God to change the heart is required. We call this gracious work "regeneration" or "the new birth" (**Jn. 3:1-8**). The Bible tells us that we are born again not by the will of man but by the will of God (**Jn. 1:13**). The same point is emphasized in **Romans 9** where we are told that salvation comes not by man's will but from God who shows mercy (vs. 16).
- "The will of man without the grace of God is not free at all, but is the permanent prisoner and bondsman of evil since it cannot turn itself to good." - Martin Luther
- Even after conversion, the Christian is not free from the battle of wills. While the binding power of sin has been broken in the Christian's life, the influence of sin remains strong. This is why we experience sanctification as a process in our lives rather than an immediately perfected work. The Christian, whose heart has been set free to love God will nevertheless still struggle against a stubborn will (**Rom. 12:2; Eph. 5:17; 1 Thess. 4:3; Heb. 10:36; 1 Pet. 4:2**).
- In his incarnation, the Son of God took on a human nature which meant he adopted a human will. Of course, Jesus never sinned in any way by thought, desire, word, or deed. But in identifying with our frailty Jesus took on a human nature and experienced what it was to submit his will to the Father. How remarkable that, for our salvation, the eternal Son of God who had only known perfect equality of power,

glory, will and authority within the Godhead (the Trinity) took on a will that required submission to the Father (**Lk. 22:42; Jn 4:34; 5:30**).

## 2. The Will of God

- God's will is not meant to be a mystery hidden from his people. Certainly there are many things which belong only to the Lord and cannot be known by us (**Deut. 29:2**). However, God has shown us clearly from his Word how we are to live as his people. The Bible is filled with commands, wisdom, and exhortations for how to live lives that abound in love for God and neighbor.
- Too often, however, we avoid what God has made clear concerning his will and instead spend our time speculating about those things which remain hidden. Christians have often been promised that with the right use of various spiritual techniques they can discover God's special will for their lives. The assumption seems to be that if we can locate "the center of God's will" for our lives then surely we can reduce the pain and disappointment that we would otherwise experience.
- But this is not what we are praying for when we ask for God's will to be done on earth. We are not praying for the Lord to give us a special roadmap to find his "wonderful plan" for our lives. Rather we are praying for God's will as it is revealed in Scripture to be done more and more in the lives of his people. In this way God's will, like his kingdom, will advance deep into territory seemingly owned by the enemy.
- To pray for God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven is a prayer that will not fail. The day is coming when every eye shall see the Son of God return in all his glory. On that day every knee will bow and tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of the Father (**Phil. 2:10-11**). But while we wait for that great day we pray that even in this sinful world God will be glorified in the doing of his will throughout the earth.

## 3. God's Will Be Done

**Matthew 6:10** – "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

**Luke 22:42** – "...Nevertheless, not my will, but yours be done."

- The third petition of the Lord's Prayer is one that will not fail. There is no possibility that God will not accomplish his will on earth. So why do we pray for something that God has promised to do without fail? There are at least three reasons why we ought to pray for the very thing God has eternally decreed. First, we pray for God's will to be done because Jesus calls us to pray for it. Second, because in his sovereign design God has chosen to use the prayers of his people as a means toward the working out of his will. Third, because in praying for God's will to be done God will incline our hearts to love and submit to his will.

a) Submit to God's will for your spiritual growth.

**John 17:17; 20:32; 1 Cor. 6:11; Eph. 5:26**

- We are sanctified (or, made holy) through the means which God provides. Part of our submission to God's will is embracing the means he provides for our spiritual growth.

b) Submit to God's will for your design

- God has made us according to his own perfect will. While we may be dismayed over our various frailties and weaknesses we must not despise the way in which God made us. This of course is not a justification for any of our sins. Nor is this an excuse to not seek greater maturity or strengthen areas of weakness. But from our gender to our physical characteristics to our emotional make up; from our various strengths to our many weaknesses God did not err in his design for us.

c) Submit to God's will in your trials.

- Christians are able to submit to God's will in their trials because of their faith in God's goodness (**James 1:2; 1 Peter 1:6**).

d) Submit to God's will for your salvation.

**John 3:15-18; 3:36; 5:24; 6:40; 20:31; Acts 10:43; 16:31; Rom. 1:16; 10:9; 1 Cor. 1:21**

- In no other matter is the sinful will of man so obstinate than in his opposition to the will of God for salvation.