

Decision making and the will of God—(1)

Having finished our short studies on spiritual leadership and the virtuous woman, I want to spend the next 5 or 6 weeks considering the practical subject of Decision making and the will of God—or, How are we to know God’s will for us—I personally believe there are fewer subjects that have been plagued by all forms of confusion than this one—Where are we to look for His will, Does He have an individual perfect will for every person, Is it possible for a Christian to be outside of God’s will—these and many other questions will be addressed as we consider—Decision making and the will of God...

But before we get more directly to our subject, it’ll be necessary to spend the first few sermons addressing some preparatory matters—in fact, I want to begin this evening with an all-important overarching presupposition—The ultimate purpose and will of God is His own glory—this in a sense serves as a blanket answer to the question—What is God’s will for my life—answer—His own glory—God’s will for you and for me is that we glorify Him on this earth...

This of course is found in the first question of the Shorter Catechism—Q. What is the chief end of man? A. Man’s chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever...”—and so long before we get to such questions as—What job should I take, what woman should I marry, what church should I join—it has to be clearly established, that God’s ultimate will for us is His glory...

Accordingly, I make no apology to begin our study by giving this first hour over the presupposition that God’s for man is His own glory—and thus, it becomes necessary for us to begin with some simple definitions—what is meant by glory, what does it mean to glorify God, and what are the ways in which we glorify God...

I. The meaning

II. The means

III. The motives

I. The meaning

A. What does *glory* mean?

1. The word glory in its noun form means splendor or majesty—it’s root means “heavy” or “weighty”—and so the basic idea of God’s glory refers to “the sum-weight of His splendid character...”
- 2.
3. Ex.33:18-19—“And he said, Please, show me your glory. 19 Then He said, I will make all my goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion...”
4. Notice [1] there is an intimate connection between God’s glory, His goodness, and His name—these are inseparable if not identical...
5. Notice [2] these three, His glory, goodness, and name concern the sum-total of His attributes, v19b—“I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion...”—here we have a sampling of His attributes...
6. This is elaborated upon in 34:5-7—“now the LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD [in other words, this is the very essence of this name, goodness, or glory]...”
7. V6—“and the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, ‘The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children’s children to the third and the fourth generation...’”
8. Thus we find what God’s glory is—the sum-total of who He is—the total weight of His divine perfections...
9. But sometimes the word “glory” means more than the sum-total of His attributes but refers to “the special felt or seen manifestation of His presence...”

10. For example, Lk.2:9—"and an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear..."
11. Here we find that God's glory shone around the angel and that the shepherds seen or sensed this glory and were filled with awe...
12. What they saw and/or felt was a visible manifestation of His divine glory or character—they tangibly experienced God's glory...
13. Rev.21:23—"the city has no need of sun or moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb..."
14. Here we have a description of the heavenly Jerusalem, the final state of the righteous—within this city the glory of God is its light...
15. That is to say—within this city their glory of God will be manifested in a bright and evident manner, so that it is perceived and experienced...
16. Thus at times the Scriptures use the term glory to describe the visible or tangible manifestation of God's character but usually to the sum-total of His character...

B. What does it mean to *glorify*?

1. Simply put, to glorify God is to make known His glory—it is to live in such a way so as to draw attention to His person or character...
2. Thus when God is glorified, nothing is added to His essential glory—but instead attention is drawn towards it...
3. Thomas Vincent—"to glorify God, is not to give any additional glory to God; it is not to make God more glorious than he is...to glorify God, is to manifest [or make known] God's glory..."
4. Now before I continue I must here restate something that was briefly mentioned in the introduction, and that is that God Himself purposes in all that He does to glorify Himself...
5. Question three of The Children's Prove it Catechism—Q. Why did God create you and all things? A. For His own glory..."
6. Rom.11:36—"for from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen..."
7. That is—all things exist because of Him and all things exist for Him—they ultimately serve a single purpose—to glorify God...
8. Creation, providence, redemption, heaven, and hell—all have a single dominant purpose—the glory of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit...
9. Ps.19:1—"the heavens declare the glory of God..."—that is they reveal or draw attention to the powerful and wise character of God...
10. But while creation reveals something of God's glory, we find that redemption is able to reveal even more of God's attributes...
11. For example, the Messiah in describing the purposes behind His coming, says in Isa.61:1-3—"to preach good tidings...to heal the brokenhearted...to proclaim liberty...to give the oil of joy for mourning...that they may be called tress of righteousness...that planting of the Lord...that He may be glorified..."
12. That is—all of redemption had this single purpose—that God would be glorified—that His power, justice, mercy, grace, wisdom, patience, and love would be made known...
13. Eph.1:5-6—"...having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself...to the praise of the glory of His grace..."
14. That is—the predominate reason behind predestination [in eternity past] and adoption [in time] is that grace would be glorified...
15. Rom.15:7-9—"therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God. 8 Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises *made* to the fathers, 9 and that the Gentiles might glorify God for *His* mercy, as it is written: "For this reason I will confess to You [give thanks to your or praise you] among the Gentiles, and sing to Your name..."
16. Notice two relevant phrases for our purpose—[1] the latter part of v7—"just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God..."

17. Christ received us—that is He saved us, converted us, keeps us, and will return for us, all for the glory of God—all that God will be glorified...
18. Notice [2] the first part of v9—“and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy...”—here we have a specific attribute singled out which is the cause of our praise...
19. The latter half of v9 is a prophecy taken from Ps.18:49, where it was foretold that God would take to Himself a people from the Gentiles...
20. And when they are converted, they will glorify God for His mercy—that is, they will draw attention to God’s mercy and praise Him for it...
21. This appears to be done through singing or worship, which we shall soon see, is one means whereby we glorify God...
22. Thus this is where we must begin in seeking a knowledge of God’s will—fundamentally and foremostly His will for us is very simple—that we would glorify Him...
23. You and I have been created and redeemed with the same “chief end”—“to glorify and enjoy God forever...”
24. All that we do, either indirectly or directly, is to be purposed to this single and grand end—the glory of God...
25. Brakel—“To glorify God is to acknowledge Him, praise Him, and to make Him known unto others with love, joy, and reverence, in response to beholding His perfections...”

II. The means

A. We glorify God inwardly

1. Here I mean we can glorify God within our hearts and minds as we think upon Him, trust Him, and love Him, 1Cor.6:20—“glorify God in your spirit...”
2. That is, glorify Him within the realm of your spirit—or put another way—glorify Him within your mind and heart...
3. We find the same thing in 1Pet.3:15—“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts...”—that is, sanctify the Lord by setting Him apart from all others...
4. Exalt, praise, prize, and esteem Him above and beyond all others—magnify and glorify Him—“in your hearts...”
5. Notice Ps.145:5—I will meditate on the glorious splendor of your majesty, and on your wondrous works...”
6. Here the Psalmist commits to glorify God within the confines of his mind and heart as he meditates upon His character and works...
7. Oh my friends, how often do we overlook this possible means of glorifying God—of giving Him glory and honor by thinking deep and accurate thoughts about His person and works...
8. I think in our overly busy culture we need the constant reminder to slow down, and to give ourselves to things of greater importance...
9. And this goes back to what I was saying this morning—that we need to take time to be holy—that we need to slow down and give ourselves to such disciplines as meditation and contemplation...
10. Brakel—“We glorify God when we observe Him in all His works, occupying ourselves in the beholding of the perfections of God which manifest themselves in these works...when between God and our own souls we in adoration loose ourselves in the glories of God...when with holy motions within, we exalt the Lord above everything and praise His name is solitude...”

B. We glorify God outwardly

1. By this I mean that we act in such a way so as to draw attention to the name and character of our heavenly Father...
2. Matt.5:16—“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven...”

3. 1Cor.10:31—"therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God..."—notice two things—[1] the extent—"whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do..." and [2] the purpose—"do all to the glory of God"

C. We glorify God verbally

1. By this I mean we open up our mouths and share with others all that God has done on our behalf—we verbally testify to the glory of God...
2. Ps.145:10-12—"All Your works shall praise you, O LORD, and your saints shall bless you. 11 They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom, and talk of your power, 12 to make known to the sons of men His mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of His kingdom..."

D. We glorify God desirously

1. This point is very akin to the previous, with this obvious difference—here I refer to our desires for God's glory as expressed by our prayers...
2. Let me suggest a couple of the many places throughout the Psalms where this can be illustrated, Ps.57:11—"be exalted, O God, above the heavens; let your glory *be* above all the earth..."
3. Ps.115:1—"not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but to your name give glory, because of your mercy, because of your truth..."

E. We glorify God worshipfully

1. Here I refer to the actual act of worship—when we come together as a church before the throne on His appointed day...
2. Ps.96:7-9—"Give to the LORD, O families of the peoples, Give to the LORD glory and strength. 8 Give to the LORD the glory *due* His name; bring an offering, and come into His courts. 9 Oh, worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness! Tremble before Him, all the earth..."

III. The motives

A. Failure to glorify God is open rebellion

1. Man was created to glorify God and regardless what he accomplishes if he fails to do this he fails to really live...
2. Rom.1:21—"although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God nor gave Him thanks..."—that is although they had a general knowledge of God through creation they failed to purposefully and consciously glorify Him as Creator...
3. But how contrary is this to a true Christian, who now desires, not to bring glory to himself, but to Him who alone is worthy...
4. Before he is concerned with how his decisions affect him, his first concern is—Does this thought, act, or word bring glory to God...
5. But now his "chief end" in life is to willingly and whole-heartedly, glorify and enjoy God forever—this is his supreme purpose...
6. Ps.50:23—"He who offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving glorifies me..."

B. God is infinitely worthy of glorification

1. Notice two reasons—[1] because of who He is, Ps.86:8-10—"Among the gods there is none like You, O Lord; Nor are there any works like Your works. 9 All nations whom You have made Shall come and worship before You, O Lord, And shall glorify Your name. 10 For You are great, and do wondrous things; You alone are God..."

2. Notice [2] because of what He has done, 1Cor.6:20—"for you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's..."