

- **\*I John 2:15-17\*** In a text that is familiar to many of us, the Apostle John gives a strong admonition to the reader that they be aware of the different ways in which they will be tempted in this world. They would be tempted in their flesh. They would be tempted with their eyes. They would be tempted in their minds. John demands that the Christian remember who it is that they serve, and who it is that they ultimately love above all else. These admonitions are solidified with what we see in **v.17** when John proclaims that this world is passing away, and the only ones who will live on are those who carry out the will or purposes of God within their lives.
- We tend to hear a lot about the purposes of God, do we not? How often do you hear someone say something to the effect of "well this just seems to be God's purpose for me." Or "this must be God's plan for my life." Many people live with the idea that God has individually planned out life for every person that lives on this earth. For many, this idea gives them comfort. It takes a lot of responsibility off of their shoulders. It allows them to sometimes not give great attention to mistakes because after all...it was all part of God's plan anyways, right? But for some people, this kind of thinking handicaps them because they might not be satisfied with their current circumstances. They might not think that they are being as useful for the Kingdom as they ought to be and they wonder why God hasn't given them better to do. This might even lead to them just freezing up and not doing anything at all.
- Is this type of thinking accurate according to Scripture? Sure there were some people who were handpicked by God to fulfill certain roles within Scripture, but they still had to act accordingly. God never forces anyone to do any particular thing. Sure the Apostles were handpicked by Jesus, but they still had to make correct decisions. These handpicked individuals pale in comparison to the other 99% of Bible characters who were not handpicked by God for any particular purpose. So what about us? What group do we fall in? I believe we fall into the group who God has a general will for. He has not given us individual specific purposes but general purposes for all people to strive to accomplish.
- This morning, I want to discuss the will of God that John says must be accomplished by disciples if we want to live forever. Ken Weliever wrote a fantastic article some weeks back that brought this lesson idea to mind, and I'd like to consider some of that article along with some of my own thoughts. Hopefully, once we are finished this morning, we will all have a clear idea of exactly what God's will is for us in this life. Again, these are general for all people, but we might apply them in different ways depending on the decisions that we make in this life.

### **I. God wills for me to be born again into His spiritual family.**

- A. When Nicodemus goes to Jesus by night to discuss who he believed Jesus to be, Jesus makes a point to cement within Nicodemus's mind the fact that one must be born again if he/she wants to enter into the kingdom of God. **(John 3:1-5)**
- B. The Kingdom, Body, Church, Israel, and others words are used to describe this group of individuals who have put on Christ and are now joined together by His precious blood, but few descriptions give a better sense than when we are described as being God's household/family. **(Eph. 2:19)**
- C. When we commit to Christ, we are adopted by God as sons. **(Eph. 1:3-6)** This is something that God desires for all people. He desires that we all come to be adopted into His family so that we might enjoy the blessings as heirs of the eternal promise of heaven. This all begins with our obedience to the saving message of Jesus. Faith and obedience lead us to be adopted as sons of God through Christ Jesus.

### **II. God wills for me to become like His Son.**

- A. Joining God's family is just part of the process of fulfilling God's will for us in this life. Beyond joining the family, God desires that we continue to grow to become more like Jesus in all that we do. God's purpose in this life is for us all to grow to be like Jesus.
- B. Peter said that this is the reason for which we have been called as disciples to Jesus Christ. We were called to grow in the characteristics that he displayed while on this earth. **(I Peter 2:21-23)** We were called so that we might see His example and strive to live as He lived in all things.
- C. It is God's will for us that we see how Jesus lived and strive to live like Him. It is God's will that we see how Jesus handled even the most difficult of situations and strive to follow His example even in those times of our own lives. God desires that we first join His family, and then He wills that we grow to be like His Son in all that we do.

☆ You might notice that our last three points will fit in very nicely with our second point about God desiring for us to become more like Jesus in our lives. All of three of these wills that God has for us were perfectly exemplified in our perfect example of Jesus Christ.

### **III. God wills for me to praise Him.**

- A. Back in the **103rd Psalm (103:1-5)**, David exclaims that he will bless the Lord and praise Him all the way down into his soul. From his soul he would praise God and never cease to remember all of the amazing things that He had done for him in his life.
- B. Certainly doing so will fulfill God's purpose for us to be a praiseful people. We are to be a people who recognize everything that God has done for us. If we take the time to acknowledge such, then surely we will honor and praise God as He would have for us to do.
- C. Like mentioned a moment ago, Jesus was a wonderful example of someone who praised God during His time on this earth. We find our Lord and His disciples stopping to sing a hymn to God from time to time, and then we also find Him specifically praising God in **Matthew 11:25**. Jesus praises God for His plan of revealing the mystery of the Gospel to those who would actually be humble enough to receive it. Jesus fulfilled God's desire to be praised and certainly God desires us all to follow in His example.

### **IV. God wills for me to serve others.**

- A. This will of God has been our congregational focus for this year. We have recognized many times that God desires for all of His people to humble themselves to be like Christ and serve others in the ways that they have ability to do so. **(Phil. 2:3-8)**
- B. Peter encouraged those reading his first letter to be sure to employ their special gifts in serving one another. **(I Peter 4:10)** The NIV puts that verse in this way. **"Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms."** As Bro. Weliever mentions in his article, "In Bible times every member was a minister. The idea of just THE MINISTER in a church is not really Biblical. Elton Trueblood once wrote, 'If you are a Christian, then you are a minister. A non-ministering Christian is a contradiction in terms.'"
- C. The point from both of these men is well taken. God has purposed for His people to be servants just like their King. This is God's will for us. Each and every one of us. We might not have special gifts of miraculous means, but we each have different gifts/abilities that we can employ to serve one another. This is God's will for us, let's all strive to meet it.

### **V. God wills for me to be His messenger.**

- A. Finally, God wills for all of us to be messengers of His saving Gospel. Paul was not ashamed of it, and we ought not be ashamed of it, either. **(Rom. 1:16)**
- B. Like our last point, we can all serve in different ways. The same is true for the ways in which we can be messengers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. All of us ought to be messengers of God by living in such a way that people see God living through us. **(Matt. 5:13-16)**
- C. Others of us can take that a step farther by publicly proclaiming God's Word. Now, I don't believe that I have been divinely called forced to serve in this role as a public proclaimer and messenger, but I made a decision to take advantage of my perceived personal talents and serve God in this way. This isn't for everyone, just like there are other ways in which I am not a messenger because I don't have that talent. I'm not a great writer for example, but others like Bro. Weliever are extremely talented in this way.
- D. God desires for all of His people to be messengers, but our specific application is up to us as to how we decide to use our personal talents. But we must all strive to fulfill God's will for us in this way.

Certainly, we ought to recognize that God does have a will and purpose for each and every one of us. In fact, His will and purpose is the same for each and every one of us. He desires that each of us be reborn into His family and that we all strive to be like His Son. Then we can all grow to be like Jesus by praising God, serving others, and being God's messenger. None of us ever need to feel helpless as if we don't know what God desires of us. We all can know what God desires from each of us. May He help us to all recognize His will, and then may we all strive to fulfill that desire for us in our lives.