

Doing the Will of God or Practicing Lawlessness?

Understanding the Will of God (Part 4)

Introduction

- Though there are obviously aspects of the will of God that are more difficult to discern, the Bible speaks in absolute terms regarding obedience – Matt 7:21-23.
- Many in the religious world tend to downplay the importance of works, but obedience has always been required by God – see Rom 6:17-18; 2 Cor 5:9-10.
- In this study, we will note the contrast between the will of God and “lawlessness, recognize the importance of obedience, and some of the “rewards” of both choices.

The Problem of Lawlessness

- The word “lawlessness” (Gr “anomia”) simply means “without law,” though it also conveys thoughts of “ignorance, contempt, or violation of law” – Matt 7:23.
 - divine acknowledgment of past, present, and future (universal) law – see 1 Cor 9:21; Gal 6:2; 1 Jn 3:4
 - eternal destiny dependent of recognition (and obedience) of biblical revelation and authority – see Matt 7:24-27; Col 3:17
- In the New Testament, “lawlessness” is associated with hypocrisy and sin and is contrasted with righteousness and holiness – see Matt 23:28; 1 Jn 3:4; Rom 6:19.

The Problem of Lawlessness

- How do we know if we are engaging in lawlessness? We would do well to ask ourselves questions such as these:
 - “Does the Bible generally or specifically condemn this belief or practice?” (If so, it is lawless.)
 - “Does the Bible generally or specifically authorize this belief or practice? (If not, it is lawless.)
- Even declared Christians can be guilty of lawlessness. It is vital, therefore, that our confession, profession, and expression be consistent with Scripture – Matt 7:21-23; Titus 1:16; Lk 6:46.

The Necessity of Obedience

- Without denying the need for grace nor suggesting the sinlessness of Christians, we must affirm the necessity of obeying the will of God – Heb 5:8-9; 2 Thess 1:8-9.
- The word “obedience” (Gr “hupakoe”) means “compliance, submission.” God expects us to obey Him immediately, completely, and continually – Ps 119:60; Matt 7:21, 23.
- Our obedience, however, must not only recognize and externally conform to the biblical pattern but also fully engage the heart – Rom 6:17; 2 Tim 1:13; Matt 23:23.

The “Rewards” of Both Choices

- It is important that we recognize the “rewards” (i.e. blessings and consequences) of both obedience and lawlessness – see Matt 6:1-18.
 - knowledge of God vs. unknown to God – 1 Jn 2:3; Matt 7:23
 - eternal life vs. eternal punishment – Matt 7:21, 23; 1 Jn 2:17; 2 Thess 1:6-10
 - stability vs. instability – Matt 7:24-27; Ps 1:1-6
 - access to God vs. separation from God – 1 Jn 3:22; 5:14-15; Prov 28:9; Ps 66:18