

Lesson 4

Putting God's Will First (2)

In part one of this study we saw that man must learn to suppress his own will and yield to the will of God. That's part of denying self. Those who do not obey God, whether the alien who refuses to be baptized or the child of God who refuses to live right, have not denied themselves.

Reasons for Putting God's Will First

1. God is smarter than we are. God's ways and thoughts are higher than our ways and thoughts (Isa. 55:8-9). Who among men is wise enough or smart enough to give God counsel, telling him that he has a better way (Rom. 11:34)?

2. Our way leads to death. Though what we think seems right and feels good, it leads to separation from God and eternal damnation (Prov. 14:12; 16:25).

3. God's will is for our good. We do not always see how some command or restriction that God has laid upon us can be for our good. However, his commands are for our good always (Deut. 6:24).

4. If we do not submit to God's will, we are against God. Jesus said, "He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad" (Matt. 12:30).

5. Man is not qualified to be his own guide. "It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps" (Jer. 10:23).

Examples

Let's consider some examples of those who put God's will first in their lives.

1. Abraham was so dedicated to doing God's will that he was willing to sacrifice his own son because that's what God told him

to do (Gen. 22). Talk about someone who would have to really suppress his own will—Abraham surely had to do that! It wouldn't be easy for anyone to kill a child he loved.

2. Post-exile Israel had married the strangers from that land in violation of God's law. Ezra preached the will of God to them which said that they must separate from their wives (Ezra 10:9-10). Obviously, that wouldn't be easy. Surely, they loved these women. After all, they had married them. Many of them had children by these wives (v. 44). And yet, as hard and as painful as it would be, they said to Ezra, "As you have said, so we must do" (v. 12).

Those who do not obey God have not denied themselves.



Ancient Corinth was known throughout the ancient world for its immorality. The temple of Aphrodite, that overlooked the city from the Acro-Corinth (pictured here), once had 1000 ritual prostitutes sent down into city below in honor of the goddess.

4. List some other reasons for putting God's will first (other than those in the book): _____

5. List six examples of those who put God's will first in their lives.

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

e. _____

f. _____

7. What did the Israelites (of the post-exile period) do that shows they suppressed their own will and yielded to God? _____

8. What did the Corinthians give up that shows they denied themselves? _____

9. Write from memory Proverbs 16:25. _____

10. What practical lessons have you learned from this study? _____
