

Introduction

We must work the works of Him who sent me, as long as it is day: night is coming, when no man can work

John 9:4, NASB

Only one life,
'twill soon be past.
Only what's done for
Christ will last.

—Author unknown

Every Christian wants his life to count for Christ. When he comes to the end of his life and looks back, he wants to know that he glorified God and helped build God's Kingdom. For this to happen, one must first recognize that God's plan is best. The famous songwriter Phil Kerr penned these words:

If the dreams that I dream would come true,
and the schemes that I scheme I could do,
then I know there would be
contentment for me.
[This is as far as some go,
but Phil Kerr had deeper insight:]
But I know that He knows
what is best for me.
So I'm His to command. . . .

—Phil Kerr, "I'm His to Command"

(Hollywood: Fiesta Music, 1974) **Human-Motivated Activity**

One easily recognizes that evil works are out of the will of God. Murder, lying, adultery, the practice of homosexuality, stealing, slander, libel and such are clearly morally wrong. Not so easily recognized, however, are "good works" that are out of the will of God. For instance, if God calls someone to be a missionary and that person disobeys, it is sin. Even if that person works hard, attends church, treats his fellow man right and does good deeds, his disobedience is sin. One must seek God's will for his life and fulfill it. King Saul is an example of disobedience.

Both kinds of works are dissipation, vain and a waste of effort. Solomon cuts to the heart of the matter:

Be warned, my son, of anything in addition to them [the Word of God]. Of making many books there is no end, and much study wearies the

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body. Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.
Ecclesiastes 12:12-14, NIV

Divine-Led Activity

How does one find the will of God for his life? First, one cannot find God's will by self-effort:

When I applied my mind to know wisdom and to observe man's labor on earth—his eyes not seeing sleep day or night—then I saw all that God has done. No one can comprehend what goes on under the sun. Despite all his efforts to search it out, man cannot discover its meaning. Even if a wise man claims he knows, he cannot really comprehend it.
Ecclesiastes 8:16-17, NIV

Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! "Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?"
Romans 11:33-34, NIV

The Holy Spirit knows the will of God and reveals his will to believers:

. . . those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.
Romans 8:14, NIV

Of course, the Holy Spirit leads one within the framework of the scriptures, which he inspired.

Once one discovers the will of God for his life, it is important that he fulfill God's plan for his life. Time is a precious irreplaceable commodity, and very short:

Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for in the grave, where you are going, there is neither working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom. Ecclesiastes 9:10, NIV

A Call for Decision

There is no neutrality in this spiritual warfare in which we are engaged. Jesus said,

"He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters."
Matthew 12:30, NIV

Solomon teaches,

One who is slack in his work, is brother to one who destroys.
Proverb 18:9, NIV

Therefore, one who attempts to remain noncommittal, or one who does not actively do the will of God for his life is fighting Christ!

There are several ways that people fail to cooperate with the Holy Spirit. When sinners *resist* the Holy Spirit, they align themselves with Satan. Stephen, the first Christian martyr, speaks to "religious leaders" who were not true followers of God:

"You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: You always resist the Holy Spirit! Was there ever a prophet your fathers did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him—you who have received the law that was put into effect through angels but have not obeyed it."
Acts 7:51-53, NIV

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Believers may *quench* the Holy Spirit:

Do not quench (suppress or subdue) the Holy Spirit.
1 Thessalonians 5:19, AMP

Quenching the Holy Spirit is failing to yield to the Holy Spirit—the sin of omission. It is failing to do or say something that the Holy Spirit leads us to do or say.

Also, believers may *grieve* the Holy Spirit by personal impurity:

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, (do not offend, or vex, or sadden Him) by Whom you were sealed (marked, branded as God's own, secured) for the day of redemption—of final deliverance through Christ from evil and the consequences of sin.
Ephesians 4:30, AMP

This sin includes a sinful thought life as well as actions. It entails yielding to the lust of the flesh, the pride of life and the lust of the eyes.

Let us now move to the more positive action of fulfilling the will of God. Believers must *actively yield to the Holy Spirit* and then resist the Devil:

Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.
James 4:7, NIV

Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.
1 Peter 5:8-9, NIV

Notice that believers must

1 Submit themselves to God. We submit ourselves to God by yielding our will to his.
2 Resist the devil. We resist the devil by our faith in God and his Word.

When believers submit themselves to God and resist the Devil, God assures victory in their own personal lives. Jesus defeated Satan two thousand years ago: this is the guarantee of the believer's victory today!

Another hindrance to serving God is the flesh or the Adamic nature. God gave believers a new "inner man" and the ability to overcome the "old man" through the new birth.

God has accomplished his part. The responsibility now rests with believers to resist the old man and follow the new man:

You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.
Ephesians 4:22-24, NIV

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!
2 Corinthians 5:17

We have made a choice to leave the old way of life and to begin living according to the new godly nature Christ has given us. This new mind set will make us more and more into the image of Christ. Also, it gives Christ a greater opportunity to pilot us through the storms of life:

Storms

One ship drives east
And another drives west,
With the self-same winds that blow;
'Tis the set of the sails,

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And not the gales,
That tell them the way to go.
Like the winds of the sea
Are the winds of fate,
As we voyage along through life;
'Tis the set of the soul
That decides its goal,
And not the calm or the strife.

—Author Unknown

The more intense the storm—the stronger the gale—the more quickly we arrive at our destination of becoming Christlike.

A Call for Action

Once believers discover the will of God for their lives and overcome Satan and the flesh, they must begin to work. Jesus charges believers,

We must work the works of Him who sent Me, as long as it is day; night is coming, when no man can work.
John 9:4, NASB

Not only did Jesus command us to work to fulfill our Father's will for our lives, he set an excellent example. Isaiah prophesied concerning Jesus:

The Sovereign LORD has given me an instructed tongue, to know the word that sustains the weary. He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one being taught. The Sovereign LORD has opened my ears, and I have not been rebellious; I have not drawn back. I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard; I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting. Because the Sovereign LORD helps me, I will not be disgraced. Therefore have I set my face like flint, and I know I will not be put to shame. He who vindicates me is near. Who then will bring charges against me? Let us face each other! Who is my accuser? Let him confront me! It is the Sovereign LORD who helps me. Who is he that will condemn me? They will all wear out like a garment; the moths will eat them up.
Isaiah 50:4-9, NIV

Usually proper belief induces proper action. However, this also may work in reverse. Proper action will induce proper belief. Myers advises:

If we want to change ourselves in some important way, we had best not depend exclusively on introspection and intellectual insight. Sometimes we need to get up and act, despite the fact that we, like Moses and Jonah and other biblical heroes, do not feel like acting.
David G. Myers, *The Human Puzzle: Psychological Research and Christian Belief* (New York: Harper and Row, 1978), 109

A positive change of attitude toward oneself will result when one's actions improve: that is a fact. It may come from cognitive dissonance with the resulting rationalization in a positive sense. Or it may come from simply inferring the internal state of oneself from self-observation. Either way, a positive internal change of attitude occurs.
Myers, *The Human Puzzle*, 110-112

Assignment: *Determine to fulfill God's plan for your life. Make it a habit to continually seek God's will. Begin by doing what you know is right.*

Chapter 9 of my eBook, *How to Raise Your Self-Esteem Using Proven Biblical Principles*.

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In Essentials: Unity; In non-essentials: Liberty; In all things: Charity
—Peter Meiderlin 1626.

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