

Leave the World of His Enemy Entirely

God's enemy is *our* enemy. And *our* enemy is *God's* enemy.
God delivers us from *our* enemy when we separate ourselves from *His*.

When we welcome evil into our lives in any way, we welcome the enemy of God, and we need the power, wisdom, guidance, and help of the Holy Spirit in order to separate ourselves completely from that realm. That doesn't mean we should isolate ourselves from everyone who doesn't believe the way *we* do. It means we don't give the enemy an opening into our mind and life in any way.

We're never allowed to have one foot in God's kingdom and the other in the realm of darkness.

Jesus said, "The ruler of this world is coming, and *he has nothing in Me*" (John 14:30). This means that because Jesus was sinless, Satan had no authority over Him. If we surrender nothing of our lives to the enemy and everything to Jesus, the enemy has no authority over *us* either.

God wants us to live in the world, but we are not to align our heart with the world's system. That's because it is opposed to God's

kingdom and rule and all that God is and does. As much as it is up to us, we must choose to allow only godly and faith-filled people, who live in God's truth, to be the *influencers* in our lives.

David said, "*My eyes shall be on the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me*" (Psalm 101:6). We, too, should not spend the majority of our time with those who might influence us to pick up any of the enemy's ways.

If we *align our heart with evil* in any way, it will come back upon us in some negative consequence. But if we express love for God by *resisting evil* in our lives, God will be our defender.

Ask God to Deliver You from Evil

Jesus taught us to pray, "*Deliver us from the evil one.*"

David prayed, "*Deliver me, O LORD, from evil men; preserve me from violent men, who plan evil things in their hearts...who have purposed to make my steps stumble*" (Psalm 140:1-2,4).

We, too, must often pray, "Deliver us from evil" and "protect us from evil men." That's because the *enemy of God* will attack each one of us. Jesus knew that, and it's why He taught us to pray the way He did. I always pray that my children will be delivered from evil as well, because the enemy will try to entice them.

Too many people are in denial about whether we have a spiritual enemy who opposes us. And bad things happen in people's lives who are either ignorant of the enemy and his tactics, or they have chosen to deny his existence. Whatever their belief about that, it's not working.

Jesus teaches us to pray that the plans of the enemy will not succeed in our life.

We show our love for God by *praying against evil*. David prayed, "*Still my prayer is against the deeds of the wicked*" (Psalm 141:5). We can pray *for* things and we can pray *against* things. Make it a habit to pray against the encroachment of evil into your life and the lives of your loved ones.

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Jesus destroyed the power of evil by His death and resurrection. But evil is still here. The Bible assures us that evil will not triumph over us as long as we *resist it*. *We must take authority* over it in Jesus' name and *refuse to align* ourselves with it. God did *not* say, "Pretend the devil doesn't exist and he will flee." He said, "*Resist* the devil and he will flee from you" (James 4:7). Do I believe a demon is behind every bush? No, but I believe countless demons are in too many places and too many people.

The enemy is not everywhere, although some days it may seem as though that is true. That's what the enemy wants us to think. The truth is, only God is omnipresent. However, the enemy will be where he is invited to be. God will be where *He* is invited to be, as well, but in far greater power than the enemy. We must be careful who and what our thoughts, words, and actions invite into our life.

Because Jesus delivered us from evil and its power, that means evil has no power over us—if we choose not to buy into it. We see people in the news who sell their souls to the dark side and are rewarded with worldly enticements, but their eternal future will be with the dark side as well.

We are not allowed to forget that fact.

We must choose to turn away from even any *hint* of the dark side and live in the light with Jesus because our future depends on it.

Love God by Keeping Your Heart Separate from the World

We are all in a spiritual war between God and His enemy, and the sooner we recognize that, the sooner we can become the prayer warriors God wants us to be. In this spiritual war, *prayer is the way* we battle the enemy. But we must first clearly make the *distinction* as to what aligns us with the enemy and what does not. David said, "Their sorrows shall be multiplied who hasten after another god" (Psalm 16:4). *Those who follow after the enemy will not have peace.*

We show love for God by separating ourselves from anything that separates us from Him. When we do that, God delivers us out of the grasp of the enemy's hands. "*You who love the LORD, hate evil! He preserves the souls of His saints; He delivers them out of the hand of the wicked*" (Psalm 97:10).

Evil constantly plots against us, and we must remember at all times to turn to God for help to win the battles we are in with the enemy. God *prepares* us for battle. He *teaches us* how to do battle against our spiritual enemy. He *delivers us* from our enemy and *gives us victory*.

God not only wants us to resist the enemy and defend ourselves against all evil plans, but He also wants us to go on the *offensive* and pray for the destruction of the enemy's plans *before* he attempts to execute them.

David said, "*It is God who arms me with strength, and makes my way perfect...* I have pursued my enemies and overtaken them; neither did I turn back again till they were destroyed" (Psalm 18:32,37).

God arms us and helps us in battle by enabling us to do what we cannot do without Him.

God protects us from our enemy and teaches us to pray through the attacks against us. He wants us to not give up until our enemy is defeated. Even when our enemy surrounds us, we can still call upon the Lord, and His name alone can deliver us.

We must separate ourselves from those who reject God and His ways. The psalmist said, "My soul has dwelt too long with one who hates peace" (Psalm 120:6). Do you often feel like that?

The enemy even disguises himself as a type of quasi-believer. That is how cults are formed. Their beliefs seem *kind of right*, or *mostly right*, or *could be right*. And they appeal especially to those who want to be thought of as the *most right*. Be suspicious of any group promising they alone have special revelation from God that no one else has, or that only they have true revelation from God. Cults are built and established on these kinds of claims, and the people in them become blinded to the truth.

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We all can be enticed into the world of the enemy that way if we are not diligent to keep our heart clean before the Lord. Remember, *"The heart is deceitful above all things"* (Jeremiah 17:9). God said He searches our heart and tests our mind and rewards us according to what He finds (Jeremiah 17:10). There are those who *pretend* to be good—or *think* they are good when they are *not*—and God knows the truth about that.

Sometimes we are tested by God to see if we will join the wicked when they seem to be winning. For example, when the people around us serving evil are the popular ones, will we forsake God and align ourselves with them? We must never be weak in resisting evil. Every time we are faced with a choice, we must make the right one. And each day our choices must be clear. *"The LORD tests the righteous, but the wicked and the one who loves violence His soul hates"* (Psalm 11:5).

God tests those He loves. We show love for God by passing each test.

When we do as the Bible says and love the Lord with all of our heart, soul, and strength, then we won't fall for the lure of the enemy and will pass the test of whether we will resist him or not (Deuteronomy 6:5).

We have a choice every day as to what or who we lift up our souls to. Will it be an idol or will it be the Lord? David said, *"To You, O LORD, I lift up my soul. O my God, I trust in You; let me not be ashamed; let not my enemies triumph over me"* (Psalm 25:1-2). When we lift our soul to any form of idol, our enemy always triumphs.

Loving God means separating ourselves from the world's value system and instead valuing the things of God above all else. It means listening for the voice of God over all other voices—including the voice of our own self-interest.

Ask God frequently to show you if there is *any idol in your life* to which you have lifted up your soul. You may be *surprised at what*

He shows you. Even judging ourselves by the world's image of how we should look or act can become an idol to us.

The Bible says we are not to "give place to the devil" (Ephesians 4:27). For example, if we truly love God, we will not look at things that are ungodly and opposed to His ways. When we do, it wounds *our spirit* and grieves *His*. If we fill our thoughts with the things of God, we will keep ourselves from allowing evil in. David said, "*I will set nothing wicked before my eyes; I hate the work of those who fall away; it shall not cling to me. A perverse heart shall depart from me; I will not know wickedness*" (Psalm 101:3-4). We must learn to say the same thing.

Even though David did at one point allow himself to think and view what was evil, it grieved him so painfully that he repented before God and paid an enormous price for his lack of judgment.

We have to make a conscious and ongoing effort to depart from all evil and do the right thing. Ask God to show you if there is anything in your life with which you have aligned your heart and from which you need to separate yourself. There is great freedom and relief when you do.

God never takes away our right to make bad choices. We have to choose to turn from living life on our own terms to living life on *His*.

Don't Be Overwhelmed When Evil Prospers

We all see evil proliferating in the world every day. And just when we think we've seen it all, something even more unimaginably horrific happens. We observe ruthless people benefiting from bad deeds and we wonder, *How long will evil reign and profit?*

David saw the same thing happening in his time and said, "*Do not fret because of evildoers, nor be envious of the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb*" (Psalm 37:1-2). Isn't it comforting to know there will be an end to the evil we see? That's why we must never covet their profits.

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We wonder why the wicked flourish, but the Bible says it is so they will be destroyed forever (Psalm 92:7). God gives them a chance to turn back to Him, but when they refuse it is clear where they stand. God's enemies *will* be destroyed because He is all-powerful, He will not be mocked, and He always has the last word (Psalm 92:8-9).

Instead of fretting over evil, here are some things we can do until the workers of evil are destroyed:

- ✧ "*Trust in the LORD, and do good; dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness*" (Psalm 37:3).
- ✧ "*Delight yourself also in the LORD, and He shall give you the desires of your heart*" (Psalm 37:4).
- ✧ "*Commit your way to the LORD, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass. He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your justice as the noonday*" (Psalm 37:5-6).
- ✧ "*Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him; do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass*" (Psalm 37:7).
- ✧ "*Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; do not fret—it only causes harm*" (Psalm 37:8).

It's easy to let ourselves be overwhelmed by how evil is prospering today, but if we choose instead to trust in the Lord, do good and delight ourselves in Him, commit our lives to Him, rest and wait patiently for Him, and not let ourselves be consumed with anger, we will live with our mind, emotions, deepest thoughts, and spiritual self focused entirely on the Lord and loving Him with all our heart.

Our anger does not produce God's righteousness; only our love does.

In these days that are becoming more and more evil, draw even closer to God. Proclaim Him as your Lord. Recognize **all the good** in your life and world that would not exist without Him. Say often,

"You are my Lord, my goodness is nothing apart from You" (Psalm 16:2). Enjoy God's people. "As for the saints who are on the earth, they are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight" (Psalm 16:3).

Don't covet what evil people acquire. "A little that a righteous man has is better than the riches of many wicked" (Psalm 37:16).

You have more important things to do.

God Has Delivered You from Fear of the Enemy

One of the reasons we have an enemy is *because* we are the Lord's. That's why we can not only ask God to deliver us from the enemy's evil plans, but also to keep us from even the *fear* of the enemy. David prayed, "*Preserve my life from fear of the enemy. Hide me from the secret plots of the wicked*" (Psalm 64:1-2).

David knew who was on his side. He said, "If it had not been the LORD who was on our side, when men rose up against us, then they would have swallowed us alive, when their wrath was kindled against us; then the waters would have overwhelmed us, *the stream would have gone over our soul*" (Psalm 124:2-4).

You need to know who is on your side too. It should never be that the fear of the enemy overwhelms your soul. If it does, seek refuge in the Lord.

Remember this: God is all-powerful. He cannot create anything that is more powerful than He is. It's impossible. Don't be tricked by dumb questions about such things asked by people who want to make Christians look stupid. The enemy is nowhere near as powerful as God and never will be. The enemy's power comes only by people believing his lies instead of *God's truth*.

Because we love God, we choose to serve *Him* and not the enemy. David said, "The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? *The LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?... Though an army may encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war may rise against me, in this I will be confident*" (Psalm 27:1,3).

David knew God would

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God Will Protect You

Jesus triumphed over the enemy than the power of evil.

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David knew God would hide and protect him.

The enemy will always try to stop everything the Lord wants to do in you and in your life. Don't be afraid. Hide yourself in the Lord in prayer, worship, and in His Word. If the attack on you is big, your blessing on the other side of it will surely be big as well. The challenges you face moving into the promised land of where God is leading you will work in you the faith and strength to thrive in it. Our weakest moments can precede God's greatest work in our lives. These times of enemy attack will only increase your trust in the Lord and the peace He gives you.

God Will Protect You from the Purveyors of Evil

Jesus triumphed over the enemy. Now the power in you is greater than the power of evil.

Yes, there have been evil things done by people who called themselves Christians—such as in the Holocaust and slavery—but those were not Christians. They were not people who received Jesus and all that He did on the cross, and were filled with the Spirit of wisdom, comfort, and love that Jesus gives those who love Him. They did not love God above all else and seek to be led by Him every day.

Not even close!

The people who did those things were not empowered and moved by the love of God. The fragrance and beauty of the Lord was not in them. They were lovers of themselves and purveyors of evil. They sold their hearts to the enemy of God and His ways and served the enemy and themselves entirely. There is no excuse or justification for it that even remotely aligns itself with God in any way. It is in stark and brutal opposition to all that God is. What they did is ugly and has the stench of evil.

Godly people are motivated by God's love in what they do. Evil people reveal themselves by their lack of love.

You can always tell the people who are standing on a foundation

of straw in their beliefs—who have left God out of their “religions” by the way they attack God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. They vilify believers, they mock God, and they turn all their efforts toward destroying God’s name and His people. Not all religions are the same. You can’t lump them all together and say they are all bad or all good. That reveals the immense ignorance of those who do that. But you can look around you, and if you see that a person, or a group of people, is trying to destroy those who don’t believe the way they do, then you will understand that they are on shaky ground in their belief system. They know it, and that’s why they have to destroy those who are not with them. You see that cruelty in dictators and leaders of false religions.

Check out those who try to destroy all knowledge of God. When you identify such people who do that, they are always godless. They are serving the evil.

People who serve the dark side have to eliminate those who serve in the light. When you see people trying to eliminate anyone who disagrees or opposes them, that is a sign they are serving evil by conjuring up a lie for their own benefit. They believe that in order for them to rule and prevail, they must eliminate the truth.

Just as the law of gravity is true everywhere, so are God’s laws. Natural laws are set up by God, and His laws are true in every country and town. It is always wrong to violate any of His laws and commands because consequences are built into them. If you see people rejecting God’s laws as stated in the Bible, they are not of God.

God created you with a will, and you must make choices as to who you will and will not serve. Whether you think so or not, you will serve the dark forces of evil if you are not deliberately and actively serving the Lord. Not believing in the Lord puts you in an unbelieving fog. You don’t see anything straight. You are influenced most by the loudest voice defying God.

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separating yourself from all evil and resisting the advance of evil in prayer and action, you are protected. You do not need to fear being bought off by the enemy in any way when you are already sold out to God. Being committed only to God invites the personal transformation only He can give you.

Prayer of Love

LORD, help me to express my love for You by separating myself completely from anything that is not pleasing to You. If the enemy of my soul has anything in me, reveal it to me now so I can be free of all influence he may have in my life. If I have attached my heart or thoughts to his ways—or have been drawn away from Your kingdom—show me so I can repent of it and come back to You and under Your protective covering.

Enable me to stand strong in resisting the enemy so he will flee from me. I will not look to any person to be my savior “for the help of man is useless” if not led by You (Psalm 108:12). Against the enemy, no one can do what You do. That’s why my eyes are always on You (Psalm 25:15). Thank You, Jesus, that You have defeated the enemy and put him under Your feet. Help me to take up the shield of faith in You that protects me from enemy attack (Ephesians 6:16). “For Your righteousness’ sake bring my soul out of trouble. In Your mercy cut off my enemies, and destroy all those who afflict my soul; for I am Your servant” (Psalm 143:11-12).

Help me to resist all temptation to live as those who serve the enemy. When tempted, I will worship You because praise invites Your presence in a powerful way and the enemy hates it. Thank You that You are on my side and I need not fear what man can do to me (Psalm 118:6). Thank You that Your commandments “make me wiser than my enemies” (Psalm 119:98). Thank You that no weapon of the enemy formed against me will prosper (Isaiah 54:17).

In Jesus’ name I pray.

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Words of Love

When the enemy comes in like a flood,
the Spirit of the LORD will lift up a standard against him.

ISAIAH 59:19

By this I know that You are well pleased with me,
because my enemy does not triumph over me.
As for me, You uphold me in my integrity, and set me
before Your face forever.

PSALM 41:11-12

Whatever is born of God overcomes the world.
And this is the victory that has overcome the world—
our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he
who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

1 JOHN 5:4-5

For yet a little while and the wicked shall be no more...
But the meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight
themselves in the abundance of peace.

PSALM 37:10-11

When I cry out to You, then my enemies will turn back;
this I know, because God is for me.

PSALM 56:9

Long for His Will and His Presence Continuously

Something happens to our mind, soul, and spirit when we come to the point where we not only long for a deeper level of relationship with God but know we can't live without it. We finally realize that only He can fill the empty space in us and don't want to waste any more of our time looking in other places. We come to the end of ourselves and don't want to live one moment outside of His will. We've already tried that and proven to ourselves it doesn't work.

Once we've made that major decision to go deeper with the Lord and there is no turning back, our lives will never be the same. We know too much to question His absolute importance in our life.

At this point there are two things you must have:

1. The knowledge that you are living in the center of God's will.
2. The sense that you are in His presence.

Having this knowledge and sense every day is like food for your soul. It feeds you with a fullness only He can give you. When we love God enough to want His presence and perfect will in our lives at all times, it's because we understand that if we don't have that, then we are not as close to Him as we can be.

We Show Love for God by Longing to Be in His Perfect Will

Life on earth is short. Forever is a long time. That's why we must desire nothing beyond God's will for us. And we should settle for nothing less either.

God is a God who can be known.

That means His *will* can be known as well.

Jesus said, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me" (John 4:34). Like Jesus, we must long for God's will to be done in our lives just as we long for food. Our love for God is shown by our *desire* to live in His will, and knowing that doing His will is more satisfying than anything else.

We show love for God by looking to Him for direction and not presuming we know what His will is concerning the certain specifics of our lives. We all know from His Word that He doesn't want us to lie, steal, or commit murder. This is true for everyone. But does He want us to quit our job and move to another land? He might want *you* to do that, but that may not be God's will for everyone else. You must know His will about that for you.

When you need to know the will of God about your life specifically, the only way to understand it is to pray, pray, pray. And then pray with other people whose walk with God is deep and true, who love God more than anything else.

When we do not live in God's will, or we have stepped outside of it, it's not so much that God slaps us down as punishment but that we have forfeited the blessings that were ours if we were *in* God's will. Living outside the boundaries of God's will by not living in a way that pleases Him exposes us to the very consequences we want to avoid.

That's why we must draw near to God and seek to know His will every day. We must search His Word for it and we must pray for it.

Too often people wait to seek God's will until something terrible happens—such as a tragedy or calamity. Or it may take a severe

difficulty to wake us up to God's perfect will, where we can become weak, insipid, because He is merciful and our wayward slipping away and humble heart, He for protective umbrella of His

We can't presume to know Him.

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difficulty to wake us up to the fact that we have slidden away from God's perfect will, where we once were. We have let our heart toward God become weak, insipid, timid, toxic, variable, or indifferent. But because He is merciful and loves us, the moment we turn back from our wayward slipping away and seek Him with a truly repentant and humble heart, He forgives us and receives us back under the protective umbrella of His perfect will.

We can't presume to know God's will in all things without asking Him.

Presumption is having an attitude toward something or someone that is not accurate. It is failing to listen for a word from God because you think you already know what His direction will be, but it's not correct. Presumption leads us to have false confidence because we believe something to be true that doesn't really exist. We have confidence that a certain thing is God's will when it really isn't.

When Jerusalem fell to its enemy, many of the Israelites were carried away captive. Those who were left asked Jeremiah to pray that they would have clear direction as to whether they should go to Egypt or stay where they were.

Jeremiah said, "I will pray to the LORD your God according to your words, and it shall be, that whatever the LORD answers you, I will declare it to you. I will keep nothing back from you" (Jeremiah 42:4).

But even though Jeremiah had favor with God, it still took ten days to receive the answer from Him, which was that they were to stay in Jerusalem.

However, the Israelites had already made up their minds that they were going to Egypt no matter what. They either presumed to know God's will or they didn't care what His will was for them. Either way, it was a terrible choice.

Because they did not wait on God for *His* direction, the people were destroyed. It is said of Jerusalem that "*she did not consider her destiny*; therefore her collapse was awesome; *she had no comforter*" (Lamentations 1:9).

These people didn't consider their destiny because they didn't care about what God wanted. They wanted what *they* wanted instead. And they wanted it right then. Waiting on God for the answer was not in their mind at that point.

Far too many of us have done things of which it can be said that we did not consider our destiny when we did them. How many times in your life have you done something without truly thinking through the consequences? Not many *if you relied on God's wisdom and leading*, and you sought the *knowledge* of His *perfect will*. But I'm talking about *before* that. Before you knew to value God's Word and His wisdom and His will. How many do-overs would you like to have if you had a time machine? I can think of so many things in my life that it's scary. Thank God for His mercy that causes us to rise above our mistakes and lack of judgment. Thank God that He can make things right, healed, or restored. Where would we be without His redemption and restoration?

The way to have a life without those kinds of regrets is to live in His will and refuse to live any other way. When you've had a big gulp of what it's like to *not* be in God's will, and the taste is so bitter that you want to do anything to avoid having to drink from that cup ever again, then you will do whatever it takes to never be outside God's will—even for a moment.

We Show Love for God by Making the Right Choices

While it's true you can read God's Word to find out what His will is concerning most of your life, there are choices you must make, and you need to hear from God specifically regarding them. We cannot assume we know His will without hearing from Him and getting His peace about it. We can't assume God will do things a certain way because that's what He did in the past. We can't try to force God into a box of our design. We cannot presume to know what He is saying without asking Him what His will is in that particular situation.

God wants us to walk for His voice leading us. He doesn't want us running all figured out and we know check with Him anymore what the Israelites did—less of what *God* wants.

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Not listening to God be too high.

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of which it can be said that we did them. How many times without truly thinking about it you *relied* on God's *wisdom* and *edge* of His *perfect will*. But you knew to value God's Word and any do-overs would you like to think of so many things in His mercy that causes us to rise up. Thank God that He can do it. Where would we be without Him?

of kinds of regrets is to live in the past. When you've had a big gulp and the taste is so bitter that you can't drink from that cup ever again. To never be outside God's love.

Long for the Right Choices

to find out what His will is for the choices you must make, especially regarding them. We must listen for Him and not assume God will do things as we wish in the past. We can't try to control; we cannot presume to know what His will is in that particular situation.

God wants us to walk with Him, keep our eyes on Him, listen for His voice leading us, and seek to know His will every moment. He doesn't want us running off on our own, thinking we have Him all figured out and we know as much as He does, so we don't need to check with Him anymore. And He definitely doesn't want us doing what the Israelites did—deciding to do what *we* want to do regardless of what *God* wants.

Not considering our destiny has disastrous consequences.

We must have a heart that truly listens for God to speak His will to us. And we cannot have selective hearing—only hearing as much as we want to hear and when we are ready to hear it.

Not listening to God will always cost us, and the price will always be too high.

Jesus said, "I have come down from heaven, *not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me*" (John 6:38). Even Jesus sought God in order to do His heavenly Father's will.

We show love for God by longing for His will. But that means being completely honest with Him. If we come to Him with less than perfect motives, we will wonder why He doesn't answer our prayers.

Some people believe if you say anything negative about yourself it is a sign of unbelief. Therefore you cannot say "I'm sick," or "I'm afraid," or "I'm sad." To do so would be giving in to it—even to speak of it in prayer. But I say if you don't speak the truth in prayer, you don't really give God a chance to answer. Then it is *you* doing it. The psalmist said, "I believed, therefore I spoke, 'I am greatly afflicted'" (Psalm 116:10). Because he believed in God, he spoke the truth about himself and his affliction.

It's best to pray, "Lord, this is what is happening to me, and this is what I want to see happen in this situation, *but more than that*, I want what *You* want."

I have known friends who died from their ailments *who would* not even ask people to pray for them because *they would have to*

confess they were sick. God's healing is an act of His mercy upon us. It's not something we *make happen* because of our great faith. *God* decides whom He heals and when it's our time to die. We have to let God be God and not try to make things happen without His power.

God's will is not all about us. He has things He wants to do in this world, and He wants to use each of us as His instruments to do them. He doesn't need us. He can do what He does by Himself, but He chooses to *partner with us* to do His will on earth. We cannot fulfill our calling if we are not first of all seeking His will for our life.

You have to be honest when you seek to know God's will about a specific thing that's personal to you. Tell Him how you feel about it, but let Him know you want what *He* wants more than anything else. When you seek His will for every part of your life, you will be amazed at what doors open up for you to do His will for others.

We Show Love for God by Longing for His Presence

We must develop a passion for the presence of God. We do that by growing into a passion for Jesus, a passion for His Spirit in us, a passion to serve and please God, and a passion for His Word.

Once you sense God's presence in your life, you will long for it every day. You will always desire to live in that peaceful place. When you long for His presence more than anything else, you won't want to go back to living any other way. Anything less is no longer acceptable. You will be hopelessly addicted to His presence, and hopefully you will never recover from it.

Moses warned the Israelites not to go into the Promised Land, which the Lord had promised to them, because it was too late. They had already failed to trust God when He asked them to go in earlier. They had their chance and they totally blew it. But now they were *presuming* this was what God still wanted them to do without checking with Him first.

Moses said, "Why do you transgress the command of the LORD? For this will not succeed" (Numbers 14:41). He warned them that

they would be defeated *ger with them* (Numbers 14:42).

The Israelites had lost their lack of faith and their desire for more in our lives than to lose.

Moses said, "You shall not go away from the LORD, and you shall not serve other gods. But they ignored what He said. As a result, their enemies were multiplied against them."

We lose the closeness of God above all else, and we lose our joy. But when we submit to His Spirit in us every day, He empowers us to do the will of God.

God does not promise that our lives will always be easy, but we can find joy and peace in His presence in the situation.

There is a movement from the prosperity gospel to the prosperity gospel. The prosperity gospel believes a person can get rich by giving it to them. The prosperity gospel is the other extreme of the prosperity gospel, as if that is all we can do for them that anyone can do. I don't believe in the prosperity gospel. I don't see the prosperity gospel as happiness *and* also allowing us to experience God in a box and dictating to us.

God is not like a genie in a bottle. In prayer, will appear a miracle. Claus, nor is He a dictator.

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the command of the LORD? (1). He warned them that

they would be defeated by their enemies *because the Lord was no longer with them* (Numbers 14:42).

The Israelites had lost God's presence with them because of their lack of faith and their disobedience. Can there be anything sadder in our lives than to lose the presence of God once we have it?

Moses said, "You shall fall by the sword; because you have turned away from the LORD, *the Lord will not be with you*" (Numbers 14:43). But they ignored what Moses said and did what they wanted to do. As a result, their enemies attacked them and drove them away.

We lose the closeness of God's presence when we don't seek Him above all else, and we violate His ways by living outside of His will. But when we submit our spirit to Him and welcome a fresh sense of His Spirit in us every day, and seek His guidance in all things, *He empowers us to do the right thing*.

God does not promise us a continual rose garden, nor does He say our lives will always be a living hell. He says we will have trials, but we can find joy and peace in the midst of them as we seek His presence in the situation we are in.

There is a movement out in Christendom among reactionaries to the prosperity gospel. The supporters of the prosperity gospel believe a person can claim anything they want and God will give it to them. The reactionaries to that belief system have gone to the other extreme and claim there is a misery and suffering gospel, as if that is all we can ever hope for on earth. It has become heresy to them that anyone could ever find happiness or joy this side of heaven. I don't believe in either of these extremes, and neither should you. I don't see the case for either side in the Bible. God gives happiness *and* also allows suffering for His purposes. And to claim we will never experience one or the other is wrong. It's like putting God in a box and dictating to Him what He can or cannot do.

God is not like a genie who, when you snap your spiritual fingers in prayer, will appear and make everything right. *He is not Santa Claus*, nor is He a dictator. He is the God of love, peace, and joy

who wants us to put our trust in Him. God wants us to seek Him intensely, long for Him deeply, pour out our love for Him in praise and worship lavishly, devour His Word like food for our soul, and stop trying to control what He does in our lives. It's the least we can do considering all He has done for us.

Living in God's Presence Brings You into Your Destiny

Jesus instructed us to first seek God's kingdom, and then we will have everything we need (Matthew 6:33). In other words, seek God in prayer and in His Word and refuse to worry about the future. That doesn't mean don't think about *planning* for the future, or *working* for the future; it means we do what God asks and *trust Him* for the future.

Seeking God first will always put us in the correct position and aim us in the right direction to move into the future God has for us.

God says the future He has for us is good.

Making God a priority by letting Him know every day how much you need Him, and that you are keeping your eyes on Him, and you are walking with Him through every step of your life, will keep you on the path that leads to the future He has for you.

You must decide to trust Him and "be anxious for nothing, but *in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving*, let your requests be made known to God" (Philippians 4:6). The promise here is that when you release the situation you are concerned about into God's hands in prayer, then "*the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding*, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:7). What a wonderful promise to us. We get peace in exchange for praying and trusting God.

He will show us the right way to go, but we have to be looking to Him to see what that is. God says, "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; *I will guide you with My eye*" (Psalm 32:8).

When our son was a child, he had to be clearly disciplined in order for him to do the right thing. With our daughter, all my

husband or I had to do was take care of the matter. The reaction was. Our son see that. He was busy doing time. He had to be taught to

We, too, must be looking to do. That means having a serious turning to Him to see if we want to be like a wild horse without a bridle. We want to be sensible a lot of grief if we do that but trust in God, and we are guaranteed

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took care of the matter. That's because she was looking to see what
our reaction was. Our son was not even thinking about looking to
see that. He was busy doing what seemed like a good idea at the
time. He had to be taught to look to us for guidance.

We, too, must be looking to God for His approval of what we
do. That means having a sensitive heart toward Him and frequently
turning to Him to see if what we are doing pleases Him. We don't
want to be like a wild horse that cannot be tamed without a bit and
bridle. We want to be sensitive to the Lord. We will save ourselves
a lot of grief if we do that because mercy surrounds those of us who
trust in God, and we are guaranteed to have joy (Psalm 32:9-11).

That's good enough reason for me. What about you?

*God cannot make changes in us that last unless we are looking to
Him to do so.*

Prayer of Love

LORD, I long to do Your will at all times. Doing Your will is food for my mind, soul, and spirit that gives me strength and peace. I don't ever want to be outside of Your perfect will for my life, so help me to always look to You for guidance and counsel. Lord Jesus, I know You did not seek Your own will on earth, but the will of Your Father who sent You (John 5:30). Enable me to fully submit my will to our heavenly Father as well. Lord, I pray You will always fill me with the knowledge of Your perfect will (Colossians 1:9).

You are life to me, and I cannot live without sensing Your presence in my life. "I spread out my hands to You; my soul longs for You like a thirsty land" (Psalm 143:6). I know that "the upright shall dwell in Your presence" (Psalm 140:13). Help me to do the right thing so that I don't lose that sense of Your presence. I am grateful You never leave or forsake me because Your Spirit dwells within me, but I don't want to do anything to grieve Your Spirit in me or to lose my sense of closeness to You.

Lord, I know there is a connection between living in Your perfect will and sensing Your presence in my life. I know You are everywhere, but the closeness of Your presence is only felt by those who draw close to You and seek to do Your will. Enable me to never sacrifice the closeness of Your presence because of wanting things my way instead of Yours. I know that in Your presence is restoration and transformation. Help me to totally submit my life to You.

In Jesus' name I pray.

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Words of Love

The world is passing away, and the lust of it;
but he who does the will of God abides forever.

1 JOHN 2:17

Do not be unwise, but understand
what the will of the Lord is.

EPHESIANS 5:17

Do not be conformed to this world,
but be transformed by the renewing of your mind,
that you may prove what is that good and acceptable
and perfect will of God.

ROMANS 12:2

Not everyone who says to Me, "Lord, Lord,"
shall enter the kingdom of heaven,
but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.

MATTHEW 7:21

As the deer pants for the water brooks,
so pants my soul for You, O God.
My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.

PSALM 42:1-2