

Principle Number One: Surrender

To understand God's will, we must first understand why it takes place.

Sanctification has to do with what I am, not what I do. The word sanctification comes from the same root word from which we get our word holy. We are to be holy.

What makes something or someone holy? It is that it or they belong to God. It is God's desire that we become entirely His property.

1 Thessalonians 5:23 ²³ Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Knowledge of God's Word + Obedience to God's Word + Time = Spiritual Maturity

So what is absolutely essential before a life is pleasing to God? "Without faith it is impossible to please Him" (Hebrews 11:6). Please note, it does not say it will be difficult – it says it is impossible. Therefore, the life that pleases God is the life that is lived by faith and we must recognize the distinction between belief and faith; you can believe in Christ, but you must move out in faith to demonstrate the sincerity of your belief. We must live a life of faith to be pleasing to God. In fact, the Bible says, "everything that does not come from faith is sin" (Romans 14:23).

We can't know the victory of the resurrection without personally applying the crucifixion.

In the future we will become, but until then we must overcome three very powerful forces:

- Overcoming this world's temptations
- Satan's deceptions
- Our own inwardly selfish desires

The problems that we run into will develop our perseverance, which in turn, will strengthen our character, deepen our trust in God, and give us greater confidence about the future.

We must understand that spiritual growth is,

- Personal (Philippians 2:13)
- Progressive (Deuteronomy 7:22)
- Joyful (1 Peter 1:8-9)
- Painful (John 15:2; 16:8; Hebrews 12:5; James 1:2-4)
- Productive (John 15:2, 8, 16)

To realize God's will and to become spiritually mature we must:

- Be submitted to God's Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:16);
- Be equipped by God's team (Ephesians 4:12);
- Demonstrate mutual, unconditional love of one another (2 Thessalonians 1:3);
- Have daily spiritual nourishment from God's Word (1 Pet. 2:2);
- Have opportunity to exercise faith (Philippians 1:6);
- Have an understanding of moral absolutes (2 Peter 1:5-11);
- Be grounded in essential doctrine (Hebrews 5:11-14).

Our problems can help us look upward and forward, instead of downward and inward:
Mark 13:35–36 ³⁵ “Therefore, be on the alert—for you do not know when the master of the house is coming, whether in the evening, at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or in the morning— ³⁶ in case he should come suddenly and find you asleep.

Philippians 3:13–14 ¹³ Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of *it* yet; but one thing *I do*: forgetting what *lies* behind and **reaching forward** to what *lies* ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal for the prize of **the upward call of God in Christ Jesus**.

They can build strong character:

Romans 5:3–4 ³ And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; ⁴ and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope;

They can provide us with opportunities to comfort others who also are struggling:

2 Corinthians 1:3–5 ³ Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, ⁴ who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. ⁵ For just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ.

Our troubles may be an indication that we actually are in God’s will!

2 Thessalonians 1:5 ⁵ *This is* a plain indication of God’s righteous judgment so that you will be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering.

Obedience to God always begins with humility. We must believe that His way is better than our own.

- God’s ways are always best.
- God places a premium on our obedience.
- God can use anything or anyone to accomplish His purposes.

Philippians 4:6–7 ⁶ Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

We must believe that God’s view of everything is true regardless of popular opinion. If God says something is good, and we say it is bad, we can never experience freedom. If God says something is bad, and we say it is good, we are deceived.