

Why You Can't Carry Out God's Will in Your Own Strength

Editor's Note: This is part 3 of a three-part series on myths about God's will. Read part 1 at [this link](#) and part 2 [here](#).

It might happen to us—we hear a prophetic word and sense a direction for our lives, but we can't seem to achieve it. Maybe it's going into the mission field, a particular career or even a relationship we want to pursue, but it just won't come together. What do we do when our own strength isn't enough? Should we quit and give up on our dreams?

When this happens, it's normal to question if we heard God wrong or if His plans changed. Did we sin and mess something up? If we couldn't achieve it, is the opportunity gone? If that's you, take a moment and see if you've bought into the myth that when we get a clear assignment from God, it's on us to carry it out in our own strength. While that seems normal in the world, it's not God's way!

The Power of Partnership

We often miss that Jesus delights in partnership. If He gave a clear word or mission, it's still His greatest desire that we would abide in Him (John 15:1–11). True, our flesh wants to take control and make things happen on our own, but this doesn't please God. Yes, we have work to do, but working apart from Him can lead to severe punishment. See what Jesus says about His judgment:

"Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonderful works in Your name?' But then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you. Depart from Me, you who practice evil'" (Matt. 7:22-23).

Ouch! So how do we avoid this? The answer comes in *abiding*.

Why We Abide

“Remain in Me,” Jesus says, “for without Me you can do nothing” (John 15:4-5). Christ not only gave us this command, but He modeled it perfectly during His ministry on earth.

Jesus, our Savior and Lord, did only “what He [saw] the Father do” (John 5:19b). He was fully God and fully man, yet He lived in complete reliance on God, not on the flesh. This is why in some cities He did few miracles, but in others, everyone who came to Him was healed (Mark 6:5; Luke 4:40). This is also why He healed people in different ways (such as various blind men and lepers), because it wasn’t about the method, but doing the will of His Father.

The apostle Paul lived in a similar way. He sought to visit certain cities, but was “forbidden by the Holy Spirit,” so he chose to yield (Acts 16:6–7). Yes, he was called to go to the nations, but he could not accomplish it in his own timing or way. He had to wait on God’s perfect will and not try to do it without Him. We are no different.

Breaking the Independence Myth

It’s a myth that when God gives you an assignment or directive it’s all on you to accomplish it. Such thinking leads to pride and, ultimately, barrenness—and perhaps even condemnation (Matt. 7:23). In all that we do, we must not forsake the first commandment—to love God with all that we are and have—and not pull away from Jesus (Matt. 22:37, John 15:5).

The most important thing is to follow the Lord and to submit everything into His hands—even our need for daily bread (Matt. 6:11). We can pray as Jesus did, “Father, ‘into Your hands I commit My spirit’” (Luke 23:46b), giving back to Him our goals, dreams and the words we’ve received. Jesus wants partnership, and He enjoys us on the journey. “He who remains

in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit," Jesus says in John 15:5b to His group of disciples who still made plenty of mistakes before they transformed the world!

We must trust our good Shepherd, such that even when He calls us to lead others, we remain under His perfect leadership.

Application

We never outgrow relying on God, even when the assignment is clear. The Israelites didn't conquer the nations the same way each time; they had to rely on God for a fresh battle plan each time. This was the Lord's doing, and a lesson to us so we won't stop relying on Him—no matter how much "success" or growth we experience.

Jesus deserves the first place in all things (see Col. 1:18). Put Him first today, even in how you choose to accomplish the dreams and desires in your heart. Talk with Him continually, asking Holy Spirit to "guide you into all truth" (John 16:13b). Here we find our freedom, along with joy and fruitfulness, for "he who remains in [Him] ... bears much fruit. For without [Him, we] can do nothing" (John 15:5). {eo}

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