

**AGAPE HOUSE OF WORSHIP  
WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY**

**Study Series: Foundation for an Effective Prayer Life**  
**Part 4: Praying the Will of God**

**Wednesday, January 24, 2024**  
**Facilitator: Pastor Jide Lawore**

**Introduction**

Last week, in the Part 3 of our Foundation for an Effective Prayer Life, we looked at the subject of praying the will of God, having concluded that prayer is not arm-twisting God to do our selfish will but aligning and partnering with God to fulfill His will in our lives and around us.

*James 4:2-3* “... Yet you don’t have what you want because you don’t ask God for it. 3 And even when you ask, you don’t get it because your motives are all wrong—you want only what will give you pleasure. (NLT)

Our challenge then as Christians and praying people is knowing the will of God when we pray. We also know that as humans, we have a fundamental weakness when it comes to prayer; we do not know what we should pray for and how we should pray.

*Romans 8:26* “And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don’t know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words. 27 And the Father who knows all hearts knows what the Spirit is saying, for the Spirit pleads for us believers in harmony with God’s own will.”

One of the ways we combat this weakness is through the help of the Holy Spirit who prays for us using “groanings that cannot be expressed in words.” And because God and the Holy Spirit are one, the prayers that originate from the Holy Spirit are always according to the will of God.

However, since we are commanded to pray both in Spirit and in understanding, we must then ensure our praying in understanding is also in accordance with the will of God. So today, we are going to explore how to make sure our prayers in understanding (with words) are in accordance with His will.

*1 Corinthians 14:14-15* “For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unproductive [because it does not understand what my spirit is praying]. 15 Then what am I to do? I will pray with the spirit [by the Holy Spirit that is within me] and I will pray with the mind [using words I understand]; I will sing with the spirit [by the Holy Spirit that is within me] and I will sing with the mind [using words I understand].

**Question 1:** Is speaking in tongues necessary for salvation? And is the inability to do so mean that my conversations with God are of less significance to those who have the gift?

**Question 2:** Sometimes we pray for healing (especially regarding stubborn illnesses like I taught in a previous sermon) and we believe that we are praying the will of God because we believe that those kinds of illnesses are not of God. So, my question is – are there prayers of understanding that we can simply rely on scriptures as being the word of God?

Lesson from the prayer of Jesus: What Can We Learn from this prayer?

*Matthew 26:37-45* “And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed. 38 Then He said to them, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me.” 39 He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.” 40 Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, “What! Could you not watch with Me one hour? 41 Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

- There are two wills in the prayer of Jesus: His will and the father’s will.
- While His prayer did not start with the will of God, it ended in the will of God.
- It seems as if Jesus spent 1 hour in prayer even though the essence of the prayer is described as, “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.”
- Jesus seems to expect the disciples to pray with him for at least an hour.
- Prayer is a guide against temptation “Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation.”

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

## Understanding the Will of God - There are three kinds of the will of God in the Bible

### 1. General Will of God

The general will of God is like a circle, they give us the boundary of actions that please God. There are boundaries (revealed by God's written Word) but within that circle there are a variety of choices that God celebrates. For example, the Bible says we should not marry unbelievers (2 Corinthians 6:14) but within the circle of potential spouses who are born-again, there might be many who would please both God and you. People who are willing to make choices within the circle of God's will are usually "movers."

**2 Peter 3:9** *"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."*

**3 John 2** *"Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers."*

**2 Thessalonians 3:10-12** *"For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: 'The one who is unwilling to work shall not eat.' 11 We hear that some among you are idle and disruptive. They are not busy; they are busybodies. 12 Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the food they eat."*

### 2. The Specific Will of God

The specific will of God is like a small dot within that circle. It is the will of God that is specific to you as a person and at any moment. It is the will of God that is made possible by the leading of the Holy Spirit (Acts 16:6-7). This is why a relationship with the Holy Spirit is important to believers. Knowing the spirit will of God cannot be taught, it can only be caught as we develop a relationship with the Holy Spirit.

**John 5:30** *"I can do nothing on my own. I judge as God tells me. Therefore, my judgment is just, because I carry out the will of the one who sent me, not my own will."*

### The Sovereign Will of God

The Sovereign will of God is what God, by His limitless power and knowledge, has eternally ordered and determined to happen from beginning to end in all of His creation, all for His glory. Psalm 115:3, Ephesians 1:11, Romans 9:18-21.

### Seven ways to improve the alignment of your praying in understanding

1. Acknowledge your weakness and ask for the help of the Holy Spirit before you pray on any matter. And as you pray, listen, and follow His promptings.
2. When you are unsure, pray like Jesus, *"not as I will, but as You will."*
3. In all your prayers, pray in the spirit first and then in understanding.
  - a. **1 Corinthians 14:15** *"What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding."*
  - b. **Ephesians 6:18** *"And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests."*
4. Always pray the already revealed will of God – the promises of God, the plan and purpose of God.
5. As much as possible, pray the Spirit inspired prayers in the Bible: Ephesians 1:17-19, Ephesians 3:16-19, Philippians 1:9-11, Colossians 1:9b-12.
6. Become kingdom minded: renew your mind and align your heart with God. The more your mind is renewed, the more your desires become aligned with the will of God, then the more your prayer of understanding align with the will of God.
  - a. **Psalm 37:4** *"Take delight in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart."*
  - b. **Romans 12:2** *"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. The more your heart is aligned with God, the more your desire will align with Him."*
7. Always ask God to help you remove any idol in your heart. **Ezekiel 14:4** *"Therefore speak to them and tell them, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: When any of the Israelites set up idols in their hearts and put a wicked stumbling block before their faces and then go to a prophet, I the LORD will answer them myself in keeping with their great idolatry.'"*