

There Is A Way That Seems Right ... My Way!

By Bill Garthwaite

There is a way that seems right ... but its end is death. Proverbs 16: 25

The importance we give to **what** is said to us ... is based on how important to us the one is **who** says it. If my wife asked me to do something, it would be of far greater importance than a request made by someone I had never met. Why? Because the importance of the request is based on the importance of the one making it.

When God gives us a command, why do we have to think about it or “take it under advisement” before we decide to obey? The only logical answer is that what God wants is not as important to us as what we want ... that God is not as important to us as our ego. This is really the epitome of the antichrist spirit ... the spirit that Lucifer demonstrated when he rebelled against God and attempted to exalt himself above God’s throne ...

(13) For you have said in your heart: “I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north;

(14) I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High’ (Isaiah 14: 13, 14).

When **we** walk in disobedience, or even **delayed obedience** (which is really rebellion) ... we exemplify that same antichrist spirit. Rebellion says this is my life ... I’ll live it anyway I want to ... I am not responsible **to** anyone ... **for** anything. But sooner or later we **will** come to the conclusion that **God really is God** and that anything less than **total** and **immediate obedience** to Him is not acceptable. Unfortunately, many will not learn this until the day they stand before God. Then it will be **too late!**

The **first** book of the Bible states ...

“In the beginning ... GOD!” (Genesis 1: 1).

The **last** book of the Bible declares ... “in the **end**” ... **GOD!** (Revelation 22:13) ...

“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.

Not only is God the first and the last ... He is the **ONLY** true and living God. As we read in Isaiah 43:10 ...

“... Before Me there was no God formed, Nor shall there be after Me.”

We need to have the same awareness of God as that of the Psalmist, who said in Psalms 90: 2 ...

“Before the mountains were brought forth, Or ever You had formed the earth and the world, Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.

But unfortunately, there are many who do not have this awareness! I’m not talking about the unsaved ... the pagan ... the atheist. I am talking about those who say they are born again ... those who are called Christians or Believers.

Psalms 14:1 says ...

The fool has said in his heart, “There is no God ...”

A person who is referred to as being “born again” may be “too spiritual” to say, “There is no God,” ... but actions speak much louder than words. A quotation by William Shakespeare addresses this situation head-on. “What’s in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet.” So regardless of what I am called, **IF** my actions or my **re-actions**

... my lifestyle ... those things I do behind closed doors when no one is around for me to impress, do not proclaim and demonstrate JESUS CHRIST AS LORD ... **MY LORD ... THEN** I fit the description of the person referred to in Psalm 14:1, for I have become the ultimate fool. I have become a law unto myself ... a rebel against God! Webster defines a fool as:
“One deficient in judgment, sense or understanding; one who can be easily deceived.”

One of the most subtle deceptions that Satan uses on God's children is causing us to believe that **because** we are God's children ... we can not be deceived. This is a personification of pride and shows up in our traditions, our doctrines, and our beliefs. If we can not be deceived, why did the Lord tell the disciples to “... **Take heed that no one deceives you** (Matthew 24: 4)?”

In Genesis and in 1 Timothy we read that Eve was deceived ...

... **The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate”** (Genesis 3:13).

... **but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression** (1 Timothy 2:14).

If Eve, in her state of innocence and purity ... untainted by sin, could be (and was) deceived ... for us to think that we can not be deceived proclaims loud and clear that **we are ALREADY deceived!**

And how did the enemy deceive Eve? By causing her to question God's Word! When Eve questioned **God's Word**, she also questioned **God's Character**. According to the Gospel of John, God and His Word are the same ...

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (John 1: 1).

In questioning God's Character and ultimately disobeying God's Word, Eve moved from the realm of the spirit to the realm of the soul (the **mind**, the **will** and the **emotions**). Instead of being led by God's Spirit, Eve was led by the “mind of reason.” It is impossible to be led by the Spirit of God and at the same time to walk in disobedience ... no matter how “religious or spiritual” we may look or act.

Eve saw the fruit and it **looked good**. Because the fruit looked good and **was desirable**, she reasoned that it must be good ... that perhaps God just did not understand. Because the “mind of reason” said the fruit was good, Eve **ignored** the Word of God and chose to rely on her own logic rather than God's Word. Disobedience was the result. (See Genesis 2:16 – Genesis 3:6). Anytime we allow the enemy to cause us to question God's Word and we base our obedience to God (or our disobedience) on our own reasoning, we are deceived!

Satan uses the same tactics on us today as he did in the Garden, with some variations. To some, he will attack the truth of God's Word outright (See Genesis 3: 4). But to many of God's children, the enemy moves us – as he did with Eve – from the realm of the spirit to the realm of the soul. This is not necessarily a geographical way or path ... it is a mind set. When the enemy gets us into the soul area ... the mind of reason ... and we replace obedience with human logic, we are in serious trouble. That's “**the way that seems right, but ends in death.**”

Since the invention of the printing press, there have been many translations of the Bible. The purpose of these translations has ostensibly been to help people who are not “scholars” better comprehend the Word of God. But instead of using these translations, **with the guidance of the Holy Spirit**, to really know what Father is saying, many people simply find a translation that supports their doctrines so they can have a Bible that will confirm what **they** believe. It is easier to build a doctrine or a tradition around a personal opinion ... or a misunderstanding of God's

Word, than it is to study the Word of God, and with the help of the Holy Spirit, **know** what is in the Heart of our Father.

During our lifetime we are faced with many choices. We make decisions about schooling ... our profession or the kind of work we will do ... whether we will marry or remain single ... who we will marry ... whether to have children, etc. While these decisions are important **in this life**, there is only one decision that has any eternal importance. Do we choose ...

Life or death ...?

God's Will or our will ...?

God's Way or our way ...?

And yet, from very early childhood we are pressured by parents, teachers and church leaders to make a decision about our future ... and to answer the question, "What are you going to do when you grow up?" The answer of which may have nothing to do with God's will for our lives. What is implied by this question is, "what kind of work, profession or trade do you plan on entering to make a living?" If we don't know the answer ... we are thought of as having no purpose or direction in life. So all too often, we make the decision to just "**do something**" so that we can "make a living."

When the Children of Israel left Egypt ... theoretically they were free ... no longer were they slaves of the Egyptians. But since they had known nothing but slavery for more than 400 years, they were still in bondage because they had developed a "**slavery mentality**."

Just prior to leaving Egypt, they had witnessed a tremendous demonstration of God's power ... ten miracles on their behalf that the Bible calls plagues. They had seen all of Egypt and the mighty pharaoh "bow the knee" to the **Almighty God**. Then at the Red Sea, when there was no hope ... no way out ... God rolled back the waters to allow the Israelites to pass over on **dry ground**. And then to top it all off, God gave them a "ring side seat" while He destroyed the entire Egyptian army ...

So the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore (Exodus 14: 30).

Yes, the Children of Israel were physically out of bondage ... the devastated land of Egypt behind them ... the dead bodies of pharaoh's army scattered all over the beaches of the Red Sea and the Lord God in front of them ... **personally** leading them toward the Promised Land ...

And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light ... (Exodus 13: 21).

With all of this ... the Children of Israel still would not trust God because at the very "threshold" of the Promised Land ... they chose to give in to their fears and follow their **inabilities** into failure and death rather than to follow the leading of the Omnipotent God into the land of promise and life. For they said ...

"... We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we ... and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight ..." (Numbers 13: 31, 33).

Does this sound familiar or what?

It is extremely unfortunate that – **today** – so many of God's children have also developed a **slavery mentality** ... not like that of the Israelites ... **but much worse**. The Children of Israel knew they were in bondage so they cried unto the Lord ...

And the Lord said: “I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows.” (Exodus 3: 7). Our “slavery” is worse than that of the Israelites because ours is subtle and it’s acceptable!

According to the encyclopedia:

Slavery – is the condition of being subject or addicted to a specified influence.

Slave – a person held in bondage.

Mentality – is **perceptual framework** – which is:

A habitual way of thinking or interpreting events ... especially with reference to the behavior that it produces.

In short, our slavery mentality is our being conditioned to think like everyone else. We are “held in bondage” by how we perceive things ... our “perceptual framework” ... a framework that agrees with the status quo.

The Phillips translation of Romans 12:2 cautions us with a very clear warning ...

“Don’t let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold, but let God remold your minds from within ...”

But we have allowed ourselves to be “squeezed” into a mold designed by the world system. As stated earlier in this writing, we are “programmed” from a very early age to make decisions as to what we are going to do in life, based on “our living” rather than “God’s leading.” We have been “blinded” to the fact that that which controls us is our master. The apostle Paul gives us another warning by asking this question ...

Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey ...?” (Romans 6:16).

Among the things to which we have become slaves is that of making a living and attempting to meet our monthly expenses. Our “taskmasters” are the “weekly pay check” that is never satisfied no matter how hard we work; “our expenses” that continue to make demands on us to produce more and more; and the “ole retirement fund” so that some sweet day we can retire ... leave the “land of Egypt and the wanderings of the wilderness” and do the things we enjoy ... those things we probably should have been doing all along but did not do them because we were afraid to trust God! (See Numbers 14:11). How different our lives would be, as well as the lives of those we influence, if our parents, teachers and church leaders had encouraged us to seek the Lord regarding our future instead of encouraging us to make a decision to “just do something” to make a living.”

We’re not talking about our working or not working. Nor are we talking about living in an “ethereal world of make-believe” where we can be “spiritual dead-beats” ... “floating” from one meeting to another ... one conference to another ... one Bible teacher to another “... **always learning, but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth**” (2 Timothy 3:7).

There is certainly nothing wrong with working to support our families. We are told that we are not to be, “**slothful in business**” (Romans 12:11 KJV) and Paul tells us, and the people of Thessalonica, that “**if anyone will not work, neither shall he eat**” (2 Thessalonians 3: 10). But there is something definitely wrong with our choosing a **profession**, an **occupation** or a **career** just to establish a lifestyle that suits “our fancy” ... that supports our ego, or for that matter, in our making any decision without first **knowing** what the Lord wants. It is not important whether we become a doctor, a lawyer, a factory worker, a scientist or a preacher. What is

important is that we know and **fulfill** God's purpose for our lives ... and to use our profession ... our work ... our lives ... to express the Lord Jesus Christ to a "run-a-way world" desperately in need of a Savior!

Pathetically, this also applies to what we call "ministry." Over the years, I have met those who wanted to "get into the ministry." In fact, there was a time when I, like so many others, thought that to minister, one must stand before a group of people and expound the Word of God. It has just been in recent years that I became aware that ministry is **not what I do**. It's **not even who or what I am**. Ministry is not a "function" we perform. Ministry **is what God the Holy Spirit does!** Ministry is the **Life of the Lord Jesus Christ** being expressed through each of us who are truly born again ... whether we are the CEO of a major corporation in New York City, the janitor in a small school in Oklahoma, the leader of a home fellowship in Alaska or the founder of a world-wide evangelistic ministry. All too often we base **our** importance on **our** accomplishments, when in reality what we are and what we accomplish is not what is important. What is important is our relationship and obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ, Who says, "Follow Me" so that **He** can accomplish **IN** us and through us what **He desires** ... in whatever way **He chooses** ... **THIS IS IMPORTANT!**

As someone has so aptly said, "The only thing we learn from history is that we don't learn anything from history." Consequently we "**reproduce ourselves**" in our children and the "cycle continues." We encourage our children **to choose** their life's work based on money, position, advancement and success instead of seeking God's Will and relying on God's Guidance. (See Psalm 32:8). Why is it that we teach our children to be potty trained, to learn to sleep in a "big bed," to use a spoon instead of eating with their hands, etc., but when it comes to matters of eternal importance and consequences ... it doesn't seem to make any difference to us what choices they make as long as they have a so-called "respectable" life style and are making a "good living."

Our Lord, through Solomon has instructed us to ...

"Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it." (Proverbs 22: 6).

We have taken this to mean that we should teach our children the "do's and don'ts" of God, when the scripture is really talking about "the way ... a child should go" ... his direction in life. Instead of having them search the internet ... go to job fairs ... check the stock market or trust a guidance counselor in school to select a profession, we should be teaching them to ...

(5) Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; (6) In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. (Proverbs 3: 5, 6).

But it is **extremely difficult** to teach our children or anyone else what **we**, ourselves, **do not know!**

The Lord is telling us, today, as He told the people in the days of the prophet Haggai to **"Consider your ways!"** (Haggai 1: 7).

When the Lord says that we should consider our ways, what does He mean? When the Lord says **anything** ... what does He mean? Is there "just a slight possibility" that the Almighty God, Who created the universe and everything else that was created ... might mean exactly what He says? But we (Christians as well as the unsaved) have "created a god in **our own image**" ... one that can be manipulated and cajoled ... we have been deluded into thinking that God is just like we are ... saying one thing while meaning and doing something else. This is a **BIG MISTAKE!**

We are told by Moses in the Book of Numbers ...

God is not a man, that he should lie. He is not a human, that he should change his mind. (Numbers 23:19a – NLT).

And through the prophet Malachi, God tells us ...

“I am GOD-yes, I AM. I haven't changed.” (Malachi 3:6 – The Message).

The enemy has “duped” us into thinking that we are not responsible to obey God if we don't know what God wants. This is a great **DECEPTION!** For we are told through the apostle Paul,

“Don't live carelessly, unthinkingly. Make sure you understand what the Master wants.” (Ephesians 5: 17 - The Message).

God has given us **His Word** – the Bible. He has given us His **Holy Spirit** – **our Teacher**. God has given us the **Lord Jesus Christ** ... **our Example!** So the only reason that we don't know God's Will ... if we don't know it ... is that we really **don't want to know** His Will!

It is entirely possible for me to misunderstand a friend ... I might not know exactly what my wife means when she says something; but can it be ... that the **Omniscient God** ... with Whom nothing is impossible is unable to communicate His will and His desires to anyone who really wants to know it? **I don't think so!**

But it is not the will of God that we really need to **know**. We need to **know God** ... in intimate fellowship. This **does not** come from taking a correspondence course ... or from counseling sessions or from Bible studies. It comes from ... **and only from** ... spending time in His presence.

Over the years I have, like many Christians, sought to know the will of God. One Sunday morning in October 1998, I was in a fellowship meeting ... that we call “attending Church,” when the Lord brought me to the stark realization that knowing the will of God was not my need. What I needed was to know Him. He spoke the following word very clearly to my spirit ...

“Have not I spoken? – I have spoken and I will speak again! But why should I? I don't speak just so you can have chill bumps – I speak so you will know My will and purpose. When I speak, you must obey – or else I will speak to you no more!

Say not, I don't know the will of God. Do I, God, not have the ability to cause you to know My will?

It's not My will you need to know – it's Me!”

Adam and Eve, by eating from the forbidden tree, chose to “**know knowledge**” rather than to know God (Genesis 3:5). They already knew God's will; they just refused to do it ...they chose to be **like** God rather than having a dependency **upon** God, so they followed the example set by Lucifer ...

“ ... I will be like the Most High.” (Isaiah 14: 15).

Today there are many, who say they want to know God's will, but not so they can obey God, but so they can choose what they will and will not do. Like Adam and Eve, they have become seekers after knowledge, rather than seekers of God.

The Lord tells us through the prophet Jeremiah ...

“And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.” (Jeremiah 29:13 - KJV).

You will notice the Lord does not say, “You will seek my will and find my will when you search for my will with all your heart.

You will also notice that from Genesis to Revelation the emphasis is not on knowing God’s will, but **obeying** God’s word.

“And the LORD God commanded the man, saying ... of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” (Genesis 2: 16, 17).

“Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.”
(Revelation 22: 14).

As has been said before, God is perfectly capable of communicating His will and desires to anyone who is willing to obey Him. The writer of Ecclesiastes sums it up this way ...

“Here is my final conclusion: Fear God and obey his commands, for this is the duty of every person” (Ecclesiastes 12:13 - NLT).

But our Lord Jesus, **Who is THE Way**, gives the final admonition ...

“If you [really] love Me, you will keep (obey) My commands.”
(John 14:15 – Amplified Bible)

Yes, there is a way that seems right ... and it’s easy to find ...

“... wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction and there are many who go in by it.” (Matthew 7:13).

“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says ...”
(Revelation 3: 22).

Note:

All scriptures are from the New King James Version of the Bible unless otherwise indicated.

William A. Garthwaite
7719 Blythwood Lane
Charlotte, NC 28227-3999