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Does God Want What I Want?

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Does God Want What I Want? God's Will and Our Will Your Will Be Done?

Those who pray The Lord's Prayer say the words "Thy Will be done..." The statement is general, but life is lived in the particulars. Could God want something for us in particular that we do not want? Certainly we struggle to make decisions that are worthy of us. But how can we deal with what someone else wants – God – while accepting full responsibility for the choices we make as human beings? So strong is our desire for freedom from coercion in making decisions that some of us stay away from God at a personal level to avoid a potential conflict between what God might want and what we might want.

However we might struggle with possible differences between God's will and ours, the relationship with God will mature only when we exercise trust in resolving some particular instances of supposed differences between us. We can reasonably believe that God can only want what is good for us. But, like any child who does not want to take a distasteful medicine, or any adult who does not want to give up an addiction, our reasons for trusting in God might not match our experiences of trust.

Trust grows through experiences, not just sayings, or due entirely to someone else's telling us that it is a good idea or safe for us to do this. But I say that my experience is positive. I want to know what God wants because I believe that it really is best for me and for all, because it is entirely in keeping with who I am, all my gifts, and experiences. Who knows me better? So, in a general way, I might be able to use the words of the Lord's Prayer: "Thy will be done..."

How does one know what God wants for each of us? In general, we can say that we are to love one another as God loves us. But life is lived in the daily particulars. Not every decision, certainly not many of the small daily choices we make, are clearly between loving or hating. Does God send each person a list, or a daily communiqué? People pray the Lord's prayer frequently. What "answers" do we receive? Most of us do not have direct verbal or printed messages instructing us as to "God's will" in preparing to teach a class, taking a particular route to work, or drawing up a mental list of "to-do's."

How do we find out what others want of us? Sometimes they ask, at other times they tell us what to do if they have authority. Often, people let us know their needs, leaving it up to us to respond according to our values and in keeping with the relationships we have

with them. Those who love us and know us well want us to act from the heart, willingly. They trust us to make choices that will be both honest for us and good for them. Even in many work relationships, where one person is the supervisor for others, the work is better accomplished when everyone involved wants to achieve the goals that are shared by all.

But the experience of how God communicates his will is the key! God does not stand over there to tell us what he wants or what we should do. God is inside us, in with and through our gifts, talents, and inspirations.

How will we find God's will? Sometimes by looking outside: If it rains, I should deal with it. If the volcano blows, deal with it. If someone around me gets sick, deal with it. God is not "pulling strings" as a puppeteer, but God's love will be present for any who seek it, in all the events over which we have no control.

But inside us, when we want to learn what God wants. We should pay close attention to the deepest desires and aspirations. Observe the long (or short) course of our lives up to the present. Where do we really want to go? What are our highest aspirations? God is in them.

When we are at our best, we want and choose values, words, thoughts, and actions that are good for us and for others. We might acknowledge inspiration as coming from God, but for the most part we would say that it is our will that is done, no one else's.