

MOODY DISTANCE LEARNING

God is omnipotent, Part 2

Greg Wheatley: God's will for your life. That's our topic this quarter on Radio School of the Bible. Welcome, my name is Greg Wheatley, and as always, it's our privilege to have you here learning along with us. Our instructor for this topic this quarter is Dr. Bill Thrasher, professor of Bible and Theology in the graduate school at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. Well, we're continuing to learn more and more about what it means to walk in God's will, and one of the primary ways we do that is by getting to know Him better and better. So with that in mind, let's dig into today's study with Dr. Bill Thrasher.

Dr. Bill Thrasher: Thank you, Greg. We have been looking at various truths of God's character and how responding to it the leads us in the experience of the will of God. Last time, we began looking at this truth of God being a God of all power. Sometimes we say that God is omnipotent, is the phrase we use, or the word we use. God is omnipotent. He can do all things. I know I have a young son who is fascinated with that truth, that God can do all things.

Well, God is not limited in any way. He's only limited – and we wouldn't even want to use the word limited, by the perfections of His attributes. In other words, He cannot lie, He cannot be unloving and He cannot do anything unwise. But God is a God of all power, and we said in regard to how does that help us in regard to experiencing His wonderful will, one, there are distractions, and there are spiritual forces that are against us. But we need to realize that God is for us, God is for us. If God is for us, who can be against us? And, yes, there are spiritual forces who seek to distract us, seek to intimidate us, seek to steer us away from doing God's will, but God is bigger than that and we can trust Him in that battle. In fact, that battle will be a part of the way that Jesus becomes precious to us.

Also, there is the fear of man that hinders us from being ourselves, that hinders us sometimes from pursuing the will of God and can also sidetrack us. But God says as we get to know Him, the God of all power, "The fear of man can bring a snare, but he who trusts in the Lord will be exalted." That is, lifted up from anyone being able to harm them.

In fact, I like the words of Hebrews 13 in regard to the experiencing the will of God. A businessman alerted my attention to this verse one particular time. He said there was a time that he had to make a very difficult decision in his business and everybody said, "You just can't do that," and he knew it was the only right thing to do ethically. But the verse God used was a verse in Hebrews 13, Hebrews 13:6, and that followed a verse that I was quite familiar with. It says, "Let your life be free from the love of money, being content with what you have, for He, Himself, has said, 'I'll never leave you nor forsake you.'"

But the next verse is a verse that says this. It says, "So that we may confidently say the Lord is my helper, what can man do to me?" And he says that was the verse that God – says, "God, I know this is what's right. I'm going to put my faith upon that. I know they say – these people say that I can never run a business this way (he was having his own accounting business).

But, you know, the Lord blessed that man and He did more than just make a living being an accountant. He wonderfully served the Lord there as an accountant. In fact, he and his wife, and he's with the Lord now, weren't privileged to have any children. And when my father went to be with the Lord, he sort of became like a father to me. It sort of worked out that way.

Someone just told me about that man. I was living in Dallas, Texas at that particular time. He lived in Houston, and I was so struck by what they said about him, I said, "You know, I'd like to go visit that man." He didn't know me, I didn't know him, but I knew he was a godly man. And so this mutual friend, they arranged that I could meet him and that struck up a friendship, and he was a very valuable comrade to me, even though he was older. He was like a father figure to me. And so I thank God for that, and certainly a wonderful example of a person who was a businessman, but first and foremost served the Lord.

In fact, I remember behind his desk he had this – well, it was a little carving and it had this word *tetelestai*, and that's a Greek word that means it is finished. That's what Jesus cried out when He was dying on the cross. Now, every client that came to him, they looked at him, had to look at that funny Greek word *tetelestai*. Now, he used that many, many times to tell them about what, when they would say, "What is that word? What does that mean?" and he would tell them about the finished work of Jesus and led a number of people to the Lord, even would disciple his employees.

So God is a God of all power. Rather than fear man, Rather than, them saying, “Hey, you can’t do this. You can’t be totally upright. You can’t be totally living integrity and make a living.” He said, “No, God is all powerful. I can trust Him for that.”

Now, what do we need to do? We need to realize our need for God’s power. We need to admit that, “Lord, I am inadequate in myself, but Lord, I want to pursue you.” In the words of the Apostle Paul, I want to know you and the power of your resurrection.

You know, there are two key prayers that many times I’ve asked people to pray. One prayer is this, “Lord, would you show me what it means to labor in your strength? Show me what it means to labor in your strength.” Now, if you’re around the church very long, you know in a sense that’s the right thing to do. I do love that – that verse there in Colossians 1:29, where the Apostle says, “I labor,” which means, what, work to the point of exhaustion, “but I labor according to His power that mightily works within me.”

And what God wants to show us, there’s a difference in laboring and laboring according to God’s power. I’m sure I’ve spent a lot of my life laboring, but there’s a difference in laboring and laboring in God’s power. In both situations you get tired, in one situation you get tired a lot sooner, but laboring according to God’s power, even when you’re physically tired, you can be inwardly refreshed. And that God as a patient teacher wants to teach us what it means to labor in His power.

You see, God’s will not only is involved in doing things, but He wants us to get to know Him as we accomplish that thing. Maybe this routine task or whatever, He wants us to get to know Him better. You know, we live in a world where things constantly need fixing and need – and God, could He have devised things that never go wrong? But no, that’s a part of life, but we get to know Him as we trust Him. I know you and I, Greg, have talked. You know, when things go wrong, we – we have to call upon God, because we don’t know how to fix it.

But learning to labor according to His power, you know, there’s another prayer that I would encourage you to pray, and that’s, “Lord, show me what it means for you to be strong in my weakness.” These can be familiar words, but, you know, when you turn these into prayers and say, “God, you know, I want to experience this in my life, would you show me what it means to labor in your strength in this situation? Would you show me what it means for you to be strong in my weakness?”

You see, God has a way to keep you usable. I remember hearing a challenging message one time by Dr. Ron Dunn, and it was – it was on this theme of how God keeps us usable, and he says God’s plan to keep you usable is to keep you weak. God has something in your life to make you sense your need of Him. He uses the word thorn there in 2 Corinthians 12. Now, that thorn, Satan tries to use you, what, to destroy you, but God wants to use it to cause you to be weak, to make you sense your need – to feel your need for him and to cause you to look to Him.

Lord, show me what it means for you to be strong in my weakness. I remember him saying, you know, Jesus is all you need, but you’ll never know it until that’s all you’ve got. Well, God wants you to allow Him to be strong in your weakness. Now, sometimes your weakness is maybe a weakness of understanding, Lord, I don’t know what’s next. I don’t know what the next step is. I’m not sure. Well, God wants to be strong. He knows the insights you need. Now, we need to trust Him in regard to God’s will one day at a time, one step at a time, well, because that’s the way God unfolds His will, one step at a time.

You know, as you approach God’s will, He wants you to experience His power, and let me just say four practical things in regard to approaching God’s will and God’s power. The first thing is a reiteration of what we said. God is the only one who can make us adequate. God makes us adequate. I like those words in 2 Corinthians.

Our adequacy comes from God. It doesn’t come from our preparation, the Proverbs – Proverbs 21:31, “The horse is prepared for the day of battle, but victory belongs to the Lord.” God wants you trusting in Him, not in your preparation. Maybe you have some kind of ministry, a ministry of communicating God’s word and God wants you to be prepared, but He doesn’t want you trusting in that preparation. He wants you trusting in Him.

Maybe you’re privileged to know a lot, but God doesn’t want you trusting in that. He wants you trusting in Him. God tells us that theme many times. I’ll read it again, in Psalm 33, “The king is not saved by a mighty army. A warrior is not delivered by great strength. A horse is a false hope for victory, nor does it deliver anyone by its great strength.” God wants you looking to Him. Only God can make us adequate.

Also, another thing is only God can ultimately open the doors for ministry and opportunity to experience His will. That’s an interesting phrase to look at in the epistle, the concept of open doors. We love that phrase there in the Book of Revelation. God can open doors that no man can shut. So look to Him to open doors.

Greg Wheatley: Isn't it interesting, those of us who live – well, I think especially in America, who have so many privileges and so many, frankly, gadgets that help our life. We're the most prone to have a hard time doing that, aren't we, because there's so much that we can lean on that does help us and makes us feel adequate and powerful in ourselves.

Dr. Bill Thrasher: I think that's true, and I think that – that's why – I think that's why God gives us those thorns, as it talks about in 2 Corinthians 12. You know, we don't know exactly what Paul was struggling with there, there have been many – and I think the reason we don't know is because it helps us identify. It is true. I mean, left to ourselves, our flesh would like to manipulate life so that we don't need God. I don't know that we'd like to consciously say that, but that really is what the flesh wants: it would love to and lecture on how to live by faith, but it doesn't want to truly do that day by day.

So you are right, but God has His way of, in the words of John 15, of pruning us, is the analogy it uses there, to enable us to grow more. He doesn't want us to grow static; He doesn't want us to grow so comfortable that we don't need Him, because it wouldn't be good for us. We would lose that sense. In fact, really that's what destroys love, is when two parties no longer need each other, and there can be that idea of, "Lord, we don't want to be vulnerable, we don't want to so need each other we can get hurt," but that destroys love. And so that's the way it is with God. He likes to, what, put us in a situation that we totally need Him so that we can experience His love, and as we're talking about today, experience His power.

Greg Wheatley: Well, thank you once again, Dr. Thrasher for a good lesson today on God's will for your life. Well, thank you once again for being part of our program. We'll hope to see you again next time on Radio School of the Bible.

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