

Prayer 05 Conditions - Effective Prayer

by Alden Gannett

The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding and praying according to God's will for effective prayer.

Duration: 48:56

Scripture: Joshua 1:1, Psalm 119:105, Proverbs 16:3, Matthew 6:33, Acts 13:2, Colossians 3:15, 1 John 5:14-15

Topics: "Effectual Prayer"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of seeking and knowing the will of God for our lives. He highlights that God is the Lord of the Harvest and it is His plan and purpose that we should follow. The speaker shares his personal testimony of initially rebelling against God's calling to preach and be a missionary. He encourages the audience to actively search for God's will and to let the peace of God act as an umpire in their hearts. The sermon references Matthew 9, which speaks of God as the Lord of the Harvest, and Colossians 3:15, which urges believers to let the peace of God rule in their hearts.

Transcript

We'll be opening our Bibles today to 1 John, Chapter 5. 1 John 5, as we continue our series on prayer, and as we continue to look to the Lord for his conditions for an effective prayer ministry. 1 John 5. Let's begin with verse 13. These things that are written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

And this is a confidence that we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us. And if we know that he heareth whatever we ask, we know that we have the petition that we desired of him. If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death.

There is a sin unto death. I do not say that he shall pray for it. All unrighteousness is sin, and there is a sin not unto death.

We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not, but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not. And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness. And we know that the Son of God is come, and have given us an understanding that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son, Jesus Christ.

This is the true God and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

Let us pray. Our Father, how we rejoice today in the word of God! How we rejoice in its promises for our hearts! Thank thee for the encouragement thy word gives, for the direction for our lives that is revealed therein. O may the Holy Spirit give us direction today as we look to thee for thy will as to how to pray.

Speak to each waiting heart in the name of Christ. Amen. Here, one of the great promises of God's word is that this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us.

And if we know that he hear us whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him. What a promise in the word of God! You will notice that these verses follow immediately on the great text of assurance of salvation. The whole epistle is dedicated to the promise expressed right here in chapter 5, verse 13 of 1 John, of assurance of salvation.

And once one is certain that he is saved, John immediately introduces the subject of prayer. Once the matter of salvation is settled, then a concern is exercised for others. And we went on and read this morning a prayer for a sinning brother.

Here one is asking, one is concerned about others, our text last night. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. And where better can we express our love one for another than in praying one for another, in ministering to the spiritual needs of others? Now, the question at hand in this promise today is, how do we know a particular request is in the will of God? That's the question.

For he says, this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears, and if he hears, he answers. This is it. We know we have the petition that we desire to hear.

There are those who tell us that when we come to the Lord in prayer, that we simply should pray, Lord, thy will be done, and that we should be no more specific than that, than when we have a particular matter at hand. For we do not know, it is said, whether it's God's will to spare a life, for example, whether it's God's will to take that one home. We do not know whether it's God's will for one to go to such and such a college, or to another such college.

We do not know God's will for another person, and therefore it is argued that we should not pray specifically. We simply should come to the Lord and say, Lord, thy will be done for Brother Jones, for Brother Brown, for Brother Smith. I grant you that there are times when we do not know the will of God, when all we can pray is, Lord, thy will be done, and we feel like Paul, as he wrote to the Romans, we know not how to pray as we are.

But this is not the spirit of this prayer promise. There are other times, therefore, when we are to pray very specifically, very precisely, because we have ascertained before God that such a course of action is God's will, and when this has been ascertained, we can claim the promise of 1 John 5, 14 and 15. This is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us.

And if we know that he heareth whatever we ask, we know that we have the petition that we desire to see. I'm concluding, then, that there are both situations taught in the word. When I do not know God's will, I am to pray thy will be done, and leave it with the Lord in faith.

On the other hand, when God has made his known, his will known, and it is my responsibility to discern that will wherever possible, then I am to pray specifically in that will, and trust God for the answer. This

morning, then, our question is, how may I know God's will so that I may pray in that will? As a premise for this discussion, let us be reminded of the place the three persons of the Godhead had in this matter of our knowing the will of God for our lives. Matthew chapter 9, you'll recall, says that God is the Lord of the harvest.

We are therefore to pray the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth laborers into his harvest. I take great encouragement in in the assurance that God in heaven is the Lord of the harvest. It's his harvest, and as the Lord of that harvest, it is he who sends forth laborers into that harvest.

That's not my job, that's his. I take great heart in this in school business, with young people before you who continually are looking to the Lord for his will for their lives. How wonderful to know that he is the Lord of that harvest, and that he has a plan for each one of these lives.

He has a plan for your life at Park of the Palms. He has a plan for your life who come from other places today. The sovereign Lord of glory has planned our lives, and his will is good and acceptable and perfect, and the Lord of the harvest has a place, has a plan.

I take great heart as well in the fact that Jesus Christ is the head of the church, and that it is the responsibility of the head of the church to direct his church. We are members of the body of Christ, 1 Corinthians 12. We are members in particular in that body, and he has set us as members in that body as it hath pleased him.

And what comfort it brings to our hearts to know then that the head, the Lord Jesus Christ, is alive, seated at the right hand of the Father, and there among his other ministries to direct and to enable his church. To fulfill his plan for this age of grace in which he is. And then Romans 8.14 says, as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

The great, great promise that the indwelling Spirit has among his many ministries within, that of leading God's children in his perfect will for our lives. Here's an evidence that we're his. As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

Here's a proof of sonship, says Paul, that you're led by God the Holy Spirit. Isn't it wonderful that God the Father as the Lord of the harvest, and Jesus Christ as the head of the church, and the Holy Spirit as the indweller, as our sanctifier, as our guide. All three are there to make known to us the will of God for our lives.

Beloved, God's not the author of confusion. God's not in the business of confusing his children. He leads his dear children along.

He leadeth me, O blessed God. Beloved, God does then intend for us to know his will. God does then intend for us in prayer to pray in the will of God.

I've had the joy of these last months of reading George Mueller's book, and how I've enjoyed to read his biography of how the Lord has wonderfully used this man of God. And he said that as he approached any matter, his first concern was to determine the will of God, and then having determined that will, to claim it in prayer on the basis of this promise. All right, the first text, then, that I want us to remember today in determining God's will is Romans 8.14. As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

Here is the promise of leadership. I am reminded of some texts in the Old Testament that come to mind to you as well. Proverbs 3, 5, and 6 quote them together with me.

Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not to thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy path. Psalm 37, 5, together, commit thy way unto the Lord.

Trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass. You remember that great text in Proverbs? It was new to me recently. Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established.

Oh, that was very precious to me when the Lord gave me that recently. Commit thy works unto the Lord, the responsibilities God has given to us, and thy thoughts in regard to them, God's will in regard to them, shall be established. Hmm? Thy thoughts shall be established.

All right, there's a great promise then. These many promises that God will lead us. Our second text, will you turn with me, is one you know very well.

It's Psalm 119, 105. Psalm 119, 105. Many of you learned it years ago.

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. That text, beloved, means exactly what it says, just as every other text in the Bible.

It here declares that as we take a step, God will lead us, lead us, lead us in his blessed will. He'll show us where to place the foot. God's word is that lamp unto our feet, that light unto our path.

I was raised across the tracks, literally, in a very little community. I usually speak of Geneva, New York, but actually it was Border City, just across the county line, and a place that if you winked, you didn't see as you drove through. But our house was literally surrounded by railroad tracks, outside of a little piece a few hundred feet or a hundred yards.

You could not get away from our house without crossing tracks, sooner or later, in one direction or another. And the trains would fly by. They would also switch boxcars at three in the morning.

Of course, you get used to anything. My father-in-law used to say, you get used to hanging if you hang long enough. We used to get used to the boxcars banging, as they do, you know, when they switch them.

They're in the yard, and the yards were right in front of our house, 50 yards from our back door. I used to see those those switchmen out there at night taking their kerosene lanterns, as we call them, and I guess today they use electric lanterns with batteries. But back in those days, they used to fill these with kerosene, and they'd do this, and then their signal would be an opposite, and then they'd have the various signals for the engineer up in the engine, and they'd walk along these tracks at night, and that ramp would show them where to go.

It's hard enough to walk on railroad ties in the daytime. It's much more difficult at night without stumbling, and these men would have that kerosene or coal oil lantern, and that would be a lamp unto their feet, a light unto their path. You've been raised on the farm, remember the days before electricity, when you used the same coal oil or kerosene lantern, and you would go early in the morning and do the chores, or late at night and milk the cows by the kerosene lantern, and it was a lamp unto your feet and the light unto your path.

Now, the psalmist says for the believer, thy word is a lamp unto my feet, a light unto my path. On the basis of this text, beloved, we may declare today that so much of the will of God for your life and mine is already recorded in this book. That's right, that's exactly it.

So much of God's will is already inscribed on the pages of these words, for thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. Now, let's look at this from two points of view today. First a negative, and then a positive.

From a negative point of view, we may conclude from this text that it's never, never, never God's will to act contrary to his word. You and I can never declare God's will to bear false witness. A lie is not a very present help in times of trouble.

Our youngsters think so, or used to think so. We all tried it on one occasion or another. Jacob did, you remember, without success centuries ago.

It's never God's will to bear false witness. It is never God's will to covet another's station in life, another's position in life, somebody else's cottage on the lake, or anything else. Never God's will to covet.

It's never God's will to dishonor father and mother. It's never God's will to commit adultery in this day when such is so loose, and people rationalize and justify it cannot be God's will because it's contrary to his word. In this day of situational ethics, in this day of the new morality, when the ethic is determined by the situation at hand, and two young people are in a parked car, and they say they love each other and that makes immorality right, they say.

It cannot be right because it's contrary to the word of God. And you'll never forget the time at Dallas Seminary many years ago, a strange lady came to the library having made an appointment, and she said, I have a problem. And I said, what's that? She said, I'm in love with a married man here in the city of Dallas who has five children, and I want you to give me a text in the Bible that will give him permission to divorce his wife and to marry me.

You wouldn't think that could happen, but it did. I was there. It cannot be God's will when it's contrary to his word.

And beloved, this settles many, many, many, many daily problems. Check the motive of the heart. Is it for the glory of God, you see? If it's not, can't be God's will.

That settles it. All right, let's state it positively. And positively speaking, God's will is always, always, always in keeping with his word.

That means it's God's will for your life and mine, as we heard earlier this week, to study, to show ourselves approved unto God, work when the need is not, to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. It's God's will for you and me to be in the word every day. It's God's will for us to meditate upon the law day and night.

It's God's will for us to let the word of Christ dwell in us richly. This is God's will for my life, and many people are living out of the will of God because they neglect the word of God. Right? It is God's will for us to pray.

Pray without ceasing. Pray, pray, ask and it shall be given you. Seek and ye shall find.

Knock and it shall be opened unto you. This is God's will for my life. It is God's will every day for my life.

It is God's will for me to continue in a spirit of dependence upon my Lord. I then am out of God's will if I am not a man of prayer. That's right, beloved.

It is God's will that upon the first day of the week I lay aside as God has prospered me. Therefore, if I take the Lord's money and use it on myself, use it for other things no matter how worthwhile they are, I am out of the will of God. That is right.

That is right. It is God's will for me to pray over my stewardship. It is God's will for me to give of my substance to the work of the Lord.

It is God's will for me to worship God in my offerings unto Him. This is the will of God as revealed in his word. It is the will of God for me to be a witness for the Savior.

I cannot say I live in the will of God if I am not exercised about the souls of men. It is the will of God that I go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, the part of the world God has ordained for me. And I can go to all the world through my giving, and I can go to all the world through my praying, and I can go as God leads me day by day to Jerusalem, to Judea, to Samaria, to the uttermost part of the earth.

God has a specific plan, but the principle is God's will for me. If I sit back and say this job is for my children, it's for my grandchildren, it's for Brother Willie, it's for somebody else, it's not for me. I am living out of the will of God, beloved.

Yes, I am. Yes, I am. There isn't a verse in my Bible that says the Great Commission is just for the other fellow.

There isn't a verse in my Bible that says when I get 65, I retire from witnessing. And I know you did not come here with that intention. Simply a reminder today that God has left me here, as we sang a few minutes ago, channels only, blessed Savior.

God has a plan and a purpose for my life here to be fulfilled till he comes or till he takes me home by death. These are God's wills. We heard last night, it's God's will for me to keep on loving one another.

This is God's will for my life to love my neighbor, and it's God's will for my life to express the love of Christ to you today. If there is envy, if there is jealousy, if there is bitterness, if there is hatred, if there are unkind words today from my lips to you, this is not God's will. It is God's will that the fruit of the Spirit be manifested in our lives today of love and joy and peace and long-suffering and gentleness and goodness and faith and meekness and self-control.

This is God's will for our lives. It is God's will for you and me today to be filled with the Spirit. This is a command from God to every believer.

This is God's will today that I walk in the Spirit and not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. This is God's will. Now, beloved, I'm laboring this point because when we think of the will of God, we think, now let me see, shall I live at Park of the Palms, or shall I live somewhere else? Shall I spend the month of December up north, or shall I stay here? Shall I send my children to this college or that? And young people have the problem, shall I marry Betty Lou or Jane, you see, or Tom Dick or Harry? And shall I be an engineer, a doctor, a lawyer? But many of you today, these questions have already been settled years ago.

These are important. These are significant, and it is important that in every particular we be in the will of God. But, beloved, as we face the question of how to know the will of God in particular matters, let us first of all realize that I am to live in the will of God today in the areas God has already revealed in his word.

And this is consistent with a text in Genesis chapter 24. You remember the servant of Abraham going for a bride for his son Isaac, and he said, I, being in the way, the Lord led me to the house of my master's brother. What's he saying? I walked in the will of God as I knew it, step by step, and then God led me in this particular.

Very, very important. This is the experience and testimony of Isaiah in Isaiah chapter 6. You'll recall how he was there in his vision before God, and God revealed himself in his sovereign glory. And then Isaiah fell before God and said, Woe is me, for I am undone.

I'm a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of glory. And after seeing that vision, and after responding to that vision, we'll read, Also I heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? He said, Here am I. Send me. When did he hear the voice of the Lord about God's will for his life? Once he had a vision of his Lord, and he walked in the light of that vision.

Then he heard the voice of the Lord say. Think of Acts chapter 13, where God was sending from the church at Antioch two missionaries to go to the ends of the earth with the gospel. And what do we read? As they ministered unto the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me, Barnabas and Saul, unto the work unto which I have called them.

I cannot overemphasize this this morning, beloved, that if I am to know the will of God in a particular matter, I am to be ministering unto the Lord, serving the Lord, worshiping the Lord, obeying the Lord in the areas that are already revealed in his word. I being in the way, the Lord led me. It's been so often illustrated by driving a car.

So much easier to steer when it's in motion. A child of God, for him it is so much easier to determine the will of God in a particular matter when he's already moving, already in action, already actively serving our blessed Lord and Savior. In that's my testimony.

When I was in high school, I say to my shame that I was rebelling against the will of God. I had a sneaking suspicion that God was calling me to preach, and I didn't want to preach. I also had a sneaking suspicion that God wanted me to be a missionary.

I did not want to be a missionary. I told the Lord so. I used to go to Ontario Bible Conference, where we shall be shortly, and I can remember sneaking away from the 6.30 missionary hour, fearful that perhaps God might call me to Africa while that missionary from Africa spoke.

You see, I was not in the way, and then I go to bed at night and ask the Lord to show me his will for my life. This is how human we are. So upon graduation from high school, instead of going off to college, I stayed and worked for my father two years.

Why? I didn't want to go off to train to preach, so I went to raise chrysanthemums and make lots of money. Oh, my father died a poor man in the chrysanthemum business. All the time I raised flowers, and I did enjoy it.

The Lord kept saying, this is not for you, son. This is not for you, son. This is not for you, son.

Then one day the phone rang. A friend of mine, a graduate of Moody Bible Institute, said, we have a gospel team, and we'd like you to be down with us, Terrific in New York, and play a trumpet solo Sunday night with us. And I said, oh, no, Harlan.

I said, I promised the Lord two years ago that I'd never play for him again. Isn't that awful? He said, you pray about it, and hung up. Isn't that awful? I knew if I prayed about it, what I'd have to do.

Well, I did pray, thank the Lord, and I did call up my friend and said I'd go. I picked out the easiest song in the book, Son of My Soul, Thou Savior Dear. No high notes, no low notes, no fast notes.

I don't know how anybody else got a blessing that night, but one young man did, because he'd walked in obedience to the will of God to that degree that night. They invited me on the gospel team, and you know what happened? I enjoyed serving the Lord. I found a joy in giving my testimony to the grace of God.

I saw thrill in seeing young people saved. And we did on that gospel team, and the Lord kept saying, this is for you. This is for you.

This is for you. This is for you. I be in the way.

The Lord led me. One night we were out on Lake Seneca, one of the Finger Lakes. A young man from the Let him deny himself and take up the cross and follow me.

That night, without anyone else knowing it, I went to my bed, got on my knees and said, Lord, I stopped running. I'm through running. I will do the will of God by your grace.

The next day I wrote off for a catalog for a Christian college. God had made his will clear. I can't thank him enough for that today.

Do you want to know the will of God about a particular matter for your life? Then do the will of God you do know today. Do what his word is already recorded. Walk in his light today.

My word is a lamp unto my feet, a light unto my path. But now we must turn in conclusion to the precise question, how may I know the will of God in a particular matter that is not revealed in God's word? The Bible nowhere says that I was to marry Georgetta Saul's giver, you see. The Bible nowhere said that I was to go to Houghton College in Dallas Theological Seminary.

How do I know the will of God in a particular matter as to how you precisely are to serve him here at Park of the Palms, for example? What is God's will for you in his service here now in this place for the glory of God? I turn to one final text of scripture, Colossians chapter 3 and verse 15. Colossians 3 15. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you are called in one body, and be thankful.

Let the peace of God rule in your hearts. The word rule here means act as umpire. It's the word illustrated by Casey Sengel, as he used to run from his dugout with the New York Yankees and went out there and argue with the umpire about the recent decision, and clench his fists and shake them in his face and demand justice, according to Casey Sengel.

But the umpire said, get back in your dugout. The decision's been made, that's it. That's our word.

Let the peace of God act as umpire. The umpire makes the decision. He says the man's out, that settles it. He says the man's safe, that settles it. He says that was a ball, that was a strike, that settles it. He makes the decision.

The peace of God in the life of the believer, yielded to the Lord, delighting in the will of God, desiring the will of God. The peace of God will rule in our hearts about God's will for our lives. Will you allow further personal testimony here? Some years ago we taught at the Dallas Bible College in Dallas, Texas.

There was a church vacant in Houston, Texas, Baraka Church, known to some of you. The church was without a pastor, and we used to go down on the train. The airplanes didn't operate as freely back twenty-five years ago.

We would go down there and supply the pulpit on the Lord's Day. One day they asked me to come a day early on Saturday to speak to the men on Saturday night, and I said I'd be glad to. So we boarded the train at noon on Saturday, and we went to the hotel.

Lo and behold, a knock came to the door, and there was one of the deacons of the church. We said, Brother Gannett, the deacons would like for you to meet with our deacons tomorrow night after the service and talk to you about becoming the pastor of this church. So here I was faced with a decision.

Am I to teach in the Dallas Bible College in Dallas, Texas? Am I to preach in Baraka Church in Houston, Texas? A specific. Immediately, and this is very significant, and I found it so in determining God's will in subsequent days, that immediately an unrest came into my heart. I began to mention other names.

I called a man not long ago about coming to Southeastern Bible College on our faculty, and immediately he said, Well, now, have you considered so-and-so? I knew right then and there that pretty well this man was not coming to Southeastern. He said, No, you must meet with us, so I agreed. So we met together the next Sunday evening and shared together, and I said, Gentlemen, I'd pray about it for thirty days.

They said they would then have a congregational meeting. So for thirty days I prayed about going to Baraka Church, leaving Dallas Bible College. The more I prayed, the more convinced I became it was not the will of God for me to leave the teaching ministry and to go to that church.

So I wrote him a letter, the gentleman who addressed me, and said, I have prayed about this and determined it is not the will of God. They had a congregational meeting, and in that congregational meeting they called me to become their pastor. I got a phone call about midnight from a dear brother, and he said, We called you to be our pastor on the grounds that you didn't have anything to pray about, because we hadn't called you yet.

What a technicality! So I went back and prayed some more, and during this time a number of people came to me and said, Brother Gannett, we believe it's God's will for you to come. Brother Gannett, we are praying and ask that the Lord send you our way. Brother Gannett, we are hoping it's God's will.

Did you notice the uncertainty of each of those statements? I prayed for two more months, prayed, prayed, prayed. One day I was going, the next day I was staying. One day I was going, the next day I was staying.

One day I was going, the next day I was staying. I became confused, and more confused, and more confused. Finally Christmas time arrived, and we went home to our families during the holidays, so we

said to the folks that we'd be going to Pennsylvania, and we'd have an answer from the Lord when we returned.

I said that from the pulpit. Well, we got to Pennsylvania, and I prayed, and prayed, and prayed, and one day I was going to Houston, the next day I was staying in Dallas. One day I was going to Houston, the next day I was staying in Dallas.

Why did I have these problems? Well, for one thing, here was a lovely downtown church, and that appeals to the flesh for a young preacher out of seminary. And I could rationalize this so well. You know, I needed to be a pastor for a while to appreciate the problems my students faced as they trained for the Lord's work.

That made real sense, you know. Furthermore, the church in Houston paid twice as much as the school in Dallas, and that language, you know, money talks, that was so easy to justify. And after all, I was a young man, and just starting a family, and needed more money, actually.

Oh, I was earning a fancy salary of, I think, \$200 a month as a professor. Furthermore, they had just given the last pastor a car, and I needed a car. I ought to give the last pastor a car, and he might give me one.

One day I was going, next day I was staying. One day I was going, next day I was staying. You see the problems I had, and the problems you had.

We came back from Pennsylvania, and I still didn't know the will of the Lord. And I had prayed, and prayed, and prayed, for such conflict and such unrest in my soul. So Thursday or Friday of that week came, and I had promised them an answer on the Lord's Day.

So I had heard about somebody one day who had to know the will of the Lord, so he locked himself up in his room with his Bible, and he got his answer. I said, if it worked for him, it might work for me. So I kissed my wife goodbye, as all good husbands should do when they leave, and I said to my wife, I'll not be back till I have an answer.

So I drove out to my father's farm. It was 25 miles away. She knew where I was going.

And I determined to stay there. No one was there. I determined to stay there until the Lord gave me my answer.

So I sat in my car, and I read. I read how God had called Isaiah, how God had called Samuel, how God had called Ezekiel, how God had called Saul of Tarsus, how God had called these men of God, and how he'd led them. I asked the Lord to show me, and I got no answer.

I prayed, and I read, and I prayed, and I read, and I read, and I prayed, and I read. And for two and a half hours, I went through this spiritual exercise, trying to determine the will of the Lord, and I still had no answer. Well, I knew I had to preach Sunday, and I was preaching through Colossians, and I finished the last Sunday I was there at Colossians chapter 3, verse 14.

So I opened my Bible to Colossians 3.15, and read, Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you are called in one body, and be ye thankful. And I said, Lord, that's what I have not had, is peace. My mind went back to that hotel room the day that deacon asked me about becoming pastor of that church, and an unrest came into my soul.

I remember the peace I had when I sent off the letter and said it was not God's will, and I recall the two subsequent months of confusion, confusion, confusion, when I had reopened the case and had prayed, and prayed, and prayed some more. I said right out loud to the Lord, does that mean you want me to stay right here in Dallas at the Dallas Bible Institute, as it was then called? And at that moment, the peace of God just flooded my soul. Methodists would call out a camp meeting experience.

Don't you go out and try to duplicate it now. That's not my point at all today. Don't you try to duplicate anybody's experience.

But I had been in such an emotional unrest for two months, that all that wonderful peace came to my heart that day in that car in Segalville, Texas, as I received so definitely from the Lord the answer to my prayer. I closed my Bible. I thanked the Lord and went home to my wife and said, honey, we're staying in Dallas.

She said, thank the Lord. She's ready to go, ready to stay. Whatever the Lord's will was, she was right with me.

I got on the train that Saturday night and woke up the next morning in Houston and walked into the church, and the chairman of the board met me there, and he said, brother Alden, we have peace. I said, praise the Lord. That's the one thing I do have today is peace.

I said, come in, I'll tell you about it. He gathered the deacons together, and I stood before them and told them the story I've just shared with you. And the Lord witnessed to their hearts.

I stood up before the congregation. I asked the song leader to lead us in the song he leadeth me, O blessed thoughts. And after we sang that song together, I stood up and told the whole church family what I just told you this morning.

And that church family that repeatedly had said to me, you're God's man for our church, that morning accepted the will of God, and God witnessed to their hearts what he had to me. And after the morning service, a man came to me and he said, I almost drove to Dallas this week to tell you it wasn't God's will for you to come. The Lord had shown him I'm mistaken.

We had a communion service after that, and though I never have been a more precious one in my life, as we gathered there together, accepting from the Lord his will, as the folk came out and greeted me afterwards, one by one said, this is from the Lord. This is from the Lord. This is from the Lord.

You see what happened? Will you never forget it? The Spirit of God took the word of God, Colossians 3.15, for me that day, and produced the peace of God in my heart. Interestingly enough, nine months later, I left Dallas Bible College and went to a church in Dallas, Texas. Excuse me, I did not leave it.

I became a part-time pastor on the Lord's Day, and the man who was pastor of that church went to Houston, and I stayed there four years. And what was my text two years later? There in Joshua 1, Moses my servant is dead. Go now in this people.

God gave me that text for leaving the classroom and to go to the church. When I came to Birmingham, Alabama, I was clear up in a Bible conference in Rumley, New Hampshire. I was praying, praying, praying for God's will to be done.

The college so needed a president. They had been two years and four months without one. Financially, it was very, very difficult straight.

So they needed a leader, and I prayed so earnestly for the will of God, and as my habit, I read through the Psalms twice a year. I begin with January 1 with Psalm 1, and read through and through the Proverbs, and started with Proverbs 1 this morning. And then I go back and do it again twice a year, and I was at Psalm 71, verse 16.

Before breakfast that morning, we had a prayer meeting, and I broke down and wept, which I rarely ever do. Oh, I shed a tear, but I just broke up inside, prayers and so about this decision. And then after breakfast, I went to my room and said, I've got to get an answer.

I must have an answer. And I was on Psalm 71 and verse 16, and I read, I will go in the strength of the Lord. That was my answer.

I closed my Bible and thanked my God, and told my wife. We wrote our letters of resignation to Dallas Seminary and acceptance to Southeastern Bible College. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, a light unto my path.

Now, God has not always been pleased to give me a chapter and verse. Not always. Often he has, but always the principle of the word, always the text.

Principle somewhere to show us the way. Now, let's come back to our text of the morning. I've been the preacher today who started with the text and come back in the conclusion.

Here it is, and this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us, and that we know that he hears whatever we ask. We know. We know that we have the petition, and we desire it.

What's on your heart today? What's your burden today? What load do you carry today? What great matters of primary concern to you today? You've been asking God for an answer. We have some at our house. I have one issue I've dedicated the summer to pray about.

I'm so concerned, I'm too busy at Southeastern Bible College. God must give me an answer how to lighten the load. He will.

He will. I dedicate the problem to the Lord for his will. He'll guide me.

He will guide you. Once he shows us his will, we can claim it. We have the petition that we desired of him.

Let's claim this promise today. Precious Father, how wonderful is thy word. How wonderful is its clear direction.

And oh, we pray today for thee to lead us. Thou dost see our hearts, thou dost know our downsitings, our uprisings, our very thoughts if are off. O God, dost thou to see the burden, the lack of wisdom, the need of wisdom today, the need of direction in our lives.

O God, lead us, we pray, each one, in that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Lead our brother Harvey as he faces the matter of motels and apartments for Park of the Palms. Make known thy will to our brother and those who labor with him here.

Lead in this matter of the Sunday school for Park of the Palms. Lead people in this audience today who will be making decisions in these days about where to spend their days of retirement. O God, give direction for our lives.

We claim this promise. We thank thee for it. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

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