

The Ways of God

by Steve Canfield

To experience revival and follow God's will, we must gain a right perspective of God, understand His ways, and be willing to trust and obey Him, even when it's difficult or costly.

Scripture: Galatians 6:14

Topics: "Knowing God", "Revival"

Description

Steve Canfield preaches on the importance of gaining a right perspective of the Lord to experience revival. He emphasizes that our generation has lost an understanding of the greatness, power, and majesty of God, hindering us from knowing His will. By understanding the ways of God - sovereign, sudden, silent, and suffering ways - we can better grasp His will for our lives, even when it involves obscurity, criticism, servanthood, and deprivation.

Transcript

After studying revival accounts for a good portion of my life, I have come to the conclusion that revival comes when people gain a right perspective of the Lord. Yet tragically, our generation has lost an understanding of the greatness, grandeur, power, and majesty of the eternal God of the universe. We often say we want to know God's will, but we haven't taken the time to know Him.

I meet many people who are pushing against the will of God, even in the midst of their trying to "discover" it. I believe this is because they have never understood the ways of God. Set up against the ways of men - comfort, convenience, attempts to control, influence, manipulate, and succeed - God's ways stand in stark contrast. The ways of God are often ways of obscurity, criticism, servanthood, and deprivation. They involve self-denial, repentance, poorness of spirit, and humility. The ways of God are rarely in line with the ways of this world.

The ways of God are often mysterious. They go against human reasoning. But developing an understanding of God's ways - His sovereign, sudden, silent, and suffering ways - will enable us to better grasp His will for our lives.

God does His work in sovereign ways. Sovereignty means that He is God and I am not. God can do whatever He wants to do! The prophet Isaiah emphasized just how great and powerful God is when he asked Israel this question: "Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of His hand?" (Isaiah 40:12).

Did you know that there are 340 quintillion (340,000,000,000,000,000) gallons of water on the face of the earth? God holds them all in the palm of His hand. What a vast God! This God who is big enough to hold the oceans of the world in the palm of His hand is big enough to take care of your life, too. He is the God of all power to whom we must bow the knee!

I have come to believe that many of us are practical atheists. We say we believe in God, but we live as if there is no God. We live as if our God is impotent. . . unable to make a real difference in our lives. We know intellectually that God is sovereign, but we don't let that impact our lives. When we dwell on the greatness of our grief, we lose perspective on the greatness of our God. So, if we are going to embrace the will of God for our lives, we first have to come to the place where we embrace the amazing, almighty power of God.

God does His work in sudden ways. God is never in a hurry, nor is He ever late. Sometimes God does His work in the suddenness of a crisis to flush out the real us. Remember in Matthew 14 the story of Peter walking on water? Have you ever noticed that in the midst of obedience to Christ, the disciples experienced the greatest storm? He had instructed them to get into the boat and cross over the lake. This means that it is possible for you to go through a storm even when you're doing everything that God has told you to do.

God does His work in silent ways. This experience of the disciples is also an example to us that God sometimes speaks the loudest through His silence. The disciples were obeying Christ in the boat, yet they were involved in the biggest storm of their lives. In the midst of the storm they couldn't see Christ, but that wasn't important, because He could see them.

Sometimes when we are in the midst of God's silence, we may say, "God, what is happening? The lights have gone out." God sees you. He knows you. He knows you're there. It's more important for God to see us than for us to see God.

God does His work in suffering ways. I wish this wasn't one of the ways of God. But the fact is, the ways of God are the ways of the Cross. One of the greatest struggles in my life is to die to what I want to be and accept what God wants me to be. Galatians 6:14 says, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world was crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

We must die to our desire for praise, our desire for ease, our desire for control, and be willing to embrace that cross. John 12:24 says, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." A seed will not produce life until it is buried, covered, and out of sight, never to be seen again. It has to be put into the ground. Are you willing to go into the ground? To be buried, covered, and never seen again? Are you willing to die to yourself, to your reputation, to your praise? This is the only way to gain the true life. This is the only way that God's will can be accomplished through you.

Once we grasp the ways of God, we can begin to understand the will of God.

The will of God is rarely convenient. In Acts 16 we read the story of Paul and Silas. They were arrested unjustly, beaten without a trial, put into prison, and chained in stocks and bonds. There, in the lowest part of the dungeon, with the stench of human dung all around, rats nibbling at their feet, and bugs crawling from their wounds, were they in the will of God? Yes! Was it a place that was convenient? No way! The will of God is rarely convenient. But in the midst of that horrible circumstance, Paul and Silas sang praises to

God. Why? They understood the ways of God, so they were able to embrace the will of God.

The will of God is seldom comfortable. Probably the greatest example in Scripture of an uncomfortable, unjustified situation is Job. All heaven and hell were watching Job's lips. Satan said to God, "If you let me get to him, he'll curse You to Your face." God said, "No, not Job." So Job was tested in the severest possible ways. He lost his family. He lost his finances. He lost his health. He lost everything. . .except his nagging wife. . .he probably wished he could lose her! (Satan knew better than to take her; she was on his side!) Would Job look at his circumstances, and, at the advice of his wife, "curse God and die"?

The Bible records Job's reverent response, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord"(Job 1:21). How did Job do it? How could he keep such a perspective of God even after everything was lost? It's simple: he knew the ways of God, so he could embrace the will of God.

The will of God is often costly. Hebrews 11 illustrates this. "And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthah; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again. . ." (Hebrews 11:32-35). I want to be in that group! But look what happens in the middle of verse 35 through verse 38 ". . .and others were tortured...and others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, and tormented; (of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth." The will of God is often costly.

The will of God is always best. I once heard a tragic story of a missionary family that felt called to a nation with poisonous snakes. Even though they knew God wanted them there, the mother was so concerned for her sons' safety (because of the snakes) that the family ended up leaving the field.

One day the husband walked out the front door of their new Louisiana home, only to hear the screams of his young sons. He found that they had gotten into a rattlesnake nest! One of his sons had been bitten by a poisonous snake!

They had a long, winding, bumpy dirt driveway out to the main road and then it was 30 minutes to the hospital. So, he put his son in that truck, threw it in reverse, and backed out of the driveway. In his haste, he ran over the second son, didn't even realize he'd done it, and sped to the hospital. By the time he arrived at the hospital, because the venom was potent and the boy was small, the son was pronounced Dead on Arrival. He got on the phone to call his wife and tell her what had happened, but there was no answer. He got into his truck and drove those long miles home. As he pulled into his driveway, he saw a scene I'm sure he never forgot. Apparently his wife had come to the door just in time to see him run over and kill the second son. She'd had a heart attack and died in the doorway.

Every time I recount this story I am reminded that the will of God is always best. It is safer to be in a country full of snakes, if that is the will of God, than any place else apart from the will of God. The real danger is in not following God's plan. God is able to take care of the universe; He can take care of you. The will of God is always, always, always best. Does that mean that nothing bad ever happens in the midst of the will of God? I'm not saying that. There are tragic circumstances that take place when people

are walking in the will of God. But it's always better to be in God's will when those things happen than to be out of God's will. Make no mistake: it's always best.

The will of God is often ignored. Because we don't understand the ways of God, we don't embrace His will. We say, "God, I don't really want to do that, or go there, or begin this. God, I'll just do it my way." I remember talking with a person who was leaving our ministry after ten years of service. He said to me, "You know, I have given God ten years of my life. I think I'll just go do my own thing now. I just want to be normal for a while." I think there is nothing sadder than normal churches, filled with normal believers, living normal lives. God, give us the supernatural, not the normal! God, give us some Davids, some Joshuas, some Gideons, some Pauls, so that we can shake this generation for Your glory! Give us those with the courage to do the will of God!

I began by saying that revival comes as a result of people gaining a right perspective of God. Without a clear understanding of the ways of God, we will never be able to fully grasp and obey His will. Let us each begin a personal quest to study the person of God: to hear His truth, to listen to His heart, to consider His ways, and to know the One we call Lord. Let us give ourselves over to His will, trusting that His ways are best!

Making It Personal

Am I ready to follow God's will, whatever that may mean? Yes No

Do I believe God has the power to deal with any situation that may arise in my life? Yes No

Am I willing to trust and obey God, even when I don't understand why certain things are happening? Yes No

What price might I have to pay in order to do God's will?

How can I grow in my understanding of the ways of God?

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/steve-canfield/the-ways-of-god/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net