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HOW GOD GUIDES US ONE DAY AT A TIME

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF JAMES
NUMBER 36
JAMES 4:15-17

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JAMES 4:15-17 "For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that. But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil. Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."

In this study we continue the story of the business man who was planning to make a bundle of money and then go somewhere to enjoy it. However, because of his reversionism he didn't have the capacity to arrive at his goal. Time spent in reversionism just simply does not count. It leads to failure every time. The only time that really counts is the time we spend in fellowship with God and take in the truth of the Word of God.

JAMES 4:15 "For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live and do this, or that." "For that ye ought to say" comes from three words--"anti to legein." "Anti" is a substitutionary preposition and really means "instead." "Legein" is the present, active, infinitive of "lego." So this phrase really says, "Instead, you ought to say." So it means that instead of being in reversionism you ought to be in super grace. Instead of this rich man talking about making a bundle and running off somewhere to enjoy it, he ought to be thinking about growing in grace and learning the Word of God.

Next we have "ean" plus the subjunctive and this means this is a third class condition and means maybe you will and maybe you won't. Then we have "ho Kurios" and this refers to God the Father. When you have the "ho" before "Kurios" it always refers to God the Father, and when that article is not there, it usually refers to God the Son. Next we have the word "wills" and this is an aorist, active, subjunctive of "thelo." It means to desire, to intend, to will. This is a nomic aorist and it is referring back to eternity past when God the Father set up the plan for your life. God knew every need you would ever have and he provide for it for you in grace long before you ever existed. The super grace believer therefore understands the doctrine involved here which covers the whole will of God that directs a man's life. So this verse began by saying, "Instead, you ought to say, If the Lord has willed." So the doctrine of divine decrees, the doctrine of divine essence and the doctrine of divine guidance all are tied up in this verse.

THE DOCTRINE OF DIVINE GUIDANCE

Can one know the will of God for his life without getting help from anyone else? Indeed he can. If you know God and The Word of God, then you will become self-sustaining and will know what the will of God is for you. You need not seek counsel or guidance at this point unless you are a new believer.

1. THERE ARE THREE CATEGORIES OF THE WILL OF GOD.

- a. God's own will. This is the sovereignty of God. It never was God's will that a man sin or that angels sin. They did sin, but it was against the will of God.
- b. The will of angels. In Isaiah 14 we saw where Lucifer, the leading angel, used his will in those five expressions "I will."
- c. Human will. Every normal person has a free will. Volition is one of the characteristics God breathed into man when he was created.

2. THE CARDINAL PRINCIPLE OF DIVINE GUIDANCE IS FOUND IN 1 JOHN 3:23

"And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment." This is the basic principle of divine guidance. This verse says that it is the will of God for all members of the human race to believe in Jesus Christ. This is God's primary will for the human race. The will of God for people after they become believers is spirituality. It is his will that believers be filled with the Holy Spirit.

ROMANS 5:5 "And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."

GALATIANS 5:22 "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,"

3. IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND THAT THE HUMANITY OF CHRIST HAD FREE WILL.

The free will of the humanity of Christ is an illustration of the fact that all members of the human race have free will. The first Adam had free will and he used it to sin. The Second Adam had free will.

MATTHEW 20:22 "But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able."

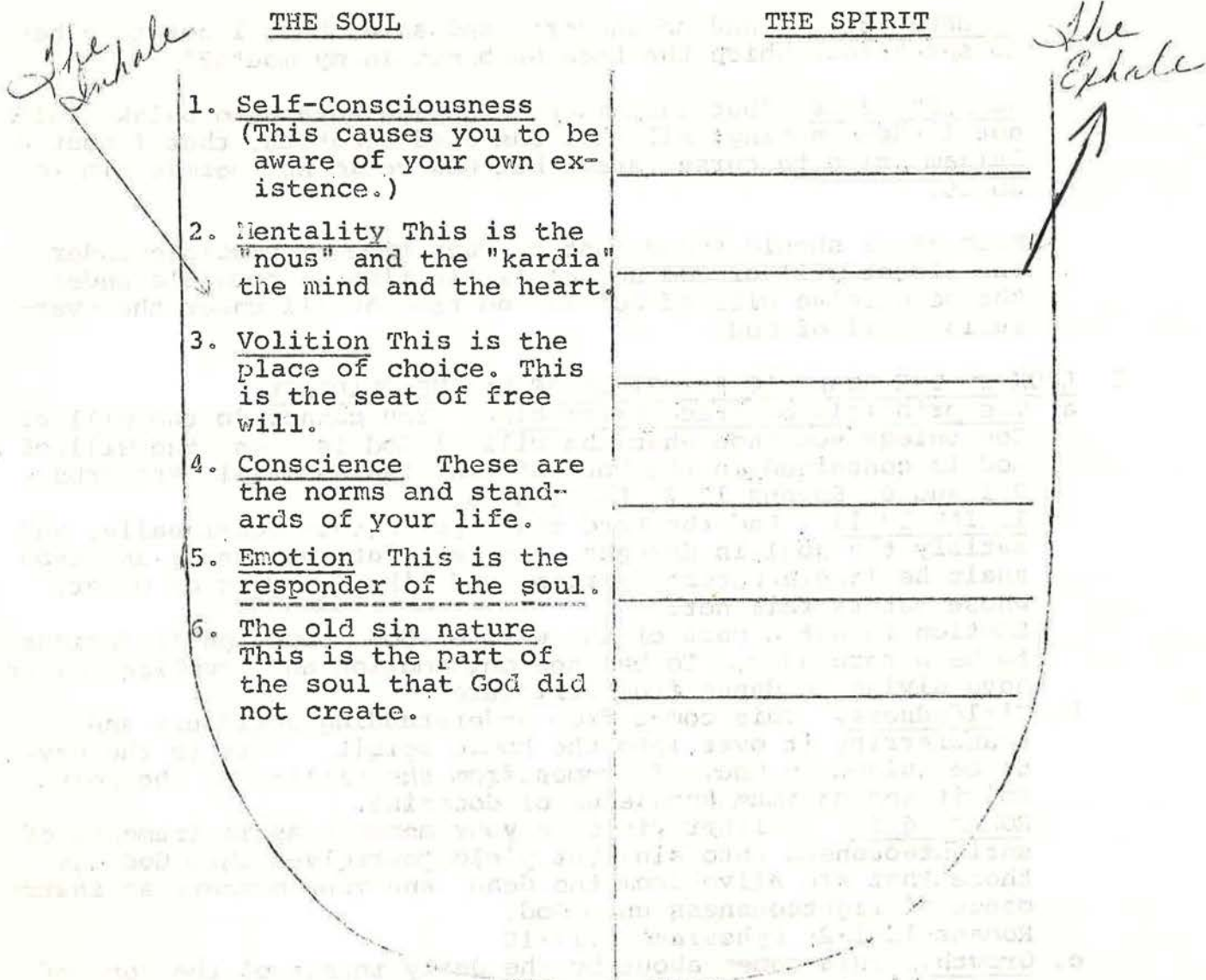
MATTHEW 26:42 "He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done."

HEBREWS 10:7 "Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God."

HEBREW 10:9 "Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second."

No free will in mankind would imply that there is no free will in the humanity of Christ. Man has a volition in his soul and this is the seat of his free will.

Look again at the design of the soul.



You must understand the soul if you are to understand divine guidance. You have mentality and volition and this is basis for making decisions.

4. THERE ARE THREE TYPES OF THE WILL OF GOD AS IT RELATES TO HUMANITY.

- a. The direct will of God. NUMBERS 22:12 "And God said unto Balaam, Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people: for they are blessed." God told Balaam not to go to Moab and he went. This was the will of God for him not to go.
- b. The permissive will of God. NUMBERS 22:20 "And God came unto Balaam at night, and said unto him, If the men come to call thee, rise up, and go with them; but yet the word which I shall say unto thee, that shalt thou do." Balaam kept on begging God and God allowed him to go. God is a gentleman and he permits people to do things many times when God knows it is not the best for them. This is his permissive will.

c. The overruling will of God.

NUMBERS 23:5 "And the Lord put a word in Balaam's mouth, and said, Return unto Balak, and thus thou shalt speak."

NUMBERS 23:12 "And he answered and said, Must I not take heed to speak that which the Lord hath put in my mouth?"

NUMBERS 23:26 "But Balaam answered and said unto Balak, Told not I thee, saying, All that the Lord speaketh, that I must do" Balaam tried to curse Israel but God would not permit him to do it.

Each of us should spend just as much time as possible under the direct will of God and as little time as possible under the permissive will of God and no time at all under the overruling will of God.

5. LOOK AT THE ACADEMIC PRINCIPLE OF DIVINE GUIDANCE.

a. The principle of grace perception. You cannot do the will of God unless you know what the will of God is. And the will of God is contained in the Word of God. Isaiah 58:11, Proverbs 3:1 and 6, Romans 12:2, Psalm 32:3.

ISAIAH 58:11 "And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not."

Emotion is not a part of the will of God. Emotion is designed to be a responder. To balance out emotion and equalize it, we have divine guidance from Scripture.

b. Yieldedness. This comes from understanding Scripture and transferring it over into the human spirit. This is the way to be guided by God. It comes from the filling of the Holy Spirit and maximum knowledge of doctrine.

ROMANS 6:13 "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God."

Romans 12:1-2, Ephesians 5:17-18

c. Growth. This comes about by the daily intake of the Word of God and contains daily adjustment to the voice of God as it is revealed in Scripture.

6. THE ACTUAL LIVING OUT OF THE WILL OF GOD IN DAILY LIFE DEPENDS ON THREE THINGS.

a. The viewpoint will of God. What does God want me to think?

b. The operational will of God. What does God want me to do?

c. The geographical will of God. Where does God want me to be?

7. THE MECHANICS OF THE WILL OF GOD.

These are found in one passage - Acts 11:5-6.

a. Guidance through prayer.

ACTS 11:5 "I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me:"

- b. Guidance through thinking.
ACTS 11:6 "Upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air."
- c. Guidance through doctrine.
ACTS 11:7-10 "And I heard a voice saying unto me, Arise, Peter; slay and eat. But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth. But the voice answered me again from heaven, What God hath cleanse that call not thou common. And this was done three times: and all were drawn up again into heaven."
- d. Guidance through providential circumstances.
ACTS 11:11 "And, behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was, sent from Caesarea unto me."
- e. Guidance through the filling of the Holy Spirit.
ACTS 11:12 "And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house:"
- f. Guidance through fellowship with others.
ACTS 11:13-15 "And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved. And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning."
- g. Guidance through remembering the Word of God.
ACTS 11:16 "Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost."

This verse goes on to say, "We shall live" and this is a future, active, indicative of "zao." This refers to the functions of life. Next we have "and do this" and this is also a future, active, indicative of "poieo." Though both of these are in the future tense, it is stating a fact that is certain to be a reality. In other words, if you take in the Word of God, then you will live a certain way and you will do certain things. So this verse says, "Instead, you ought to say as a super grace believer would, if the Lord has willed, we shall both live in super grace and function in super grace."

Now look at a summary of this verse.

1. The super grace life lines up with God's super grace provision made for us in eternity past. It fits perfectly. It's like two pieces of a puzzle. One was prepared in eternity past and now we take our part and fit it in with the part God provided for us long ago. Super grace welds the two together and they dove-tail into each other perfectly.
2. Therefore, the super grace life depends entirely upon God.

3. This also becomes our maximum security as we live out our Christian lives.
4. When everything depends on God and is of God's design, then you can't miss God's amazing blessings.
5. Only when he is in reversionism does the believer miss the amazing blessings of grace.
6. The life of the reversionist is a vapor trail, seen for a moment and then disappearing.
7. The life of the super grace believer is a monument established forever for the glory of God and is compatible with LAMENTATION 3:22-23 "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness."

JAMES 4:16 "But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil." This verse gives us the contrast of the super grace life and reversionism. The word "rejoice" is mistranslated in this verse, for this is a present, middle, indicative of "kauchaomai" and it means "to brag." "In your boasting" is from "en alozonia." So this phrase says, "But you keep on boasting with arrogant words." He might have entered super grace living, but instead, he turned negative toward doctrine and boasted of his own power and importance. The verdict of God is now given to this kind of boasting. It says, "All such boasting is worthless, evil."

JAMES 4:17 "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." This word "therefore" from "oun" introduces a conclusion. Next we have a perfect, active, participle of "oida" and this refers to inherent knowledge. The dative case here suggests that this person knew better. So this phrase actually says, "Therefore, to the one having known." In other words, this person was once a super grace believer but has slipped back. So this person knows to do better than he is doing. The phrase "to do good" really means to do the honorable thing. The next phrase says, "And is not doing it." The conclusion "This keeps on being sin" and the word for sin is "hamartia" and this means "missing the mark."

So this verse says, "Therefore, to the one knowing the honorable thing to do and not doing it, to him it keeps on being the missing of the mark."