

## ***DOING THE WILL OF GOD***

**John 4:31-38**

**By Andy Manning**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

1. If a person is malnourished, they may experience the following symptoms:
  - i. Unintended weight loss.
  - ii. Reduced appetite.
  - iii. Lack of interest in food and drink.
  - iv. Feeling tired all the time.
  - v. Feeling weaker.
  - vi. Getting ill often and taking a long time to recover.
  - vii. Wounds taking a long time to heal.
  - viii. Poor concentration.
  - ix. Feeling cold most of the time.
  - x. Depression.
2. Many Christians suffer from malnourishment; spiritual malnourishment. Symptoms of spiritual malnourishment include decreased joy (or discouragement); decreased peace (or worry); decreased spiritual energy for worship, prayer, church, and Bible study; increased conflict with others; increased compromise with sin; lack of spiritual growth, or spiritual stagnation.
3. You may have encountered a malnourished Christian before. It's a Christian who acts in a way that makes you question their salvation. "How can a saved person act like that?" That's a malnourished Christian.
4. What causes spiritual malnourishment? Or rather, what is the solution. How do Christians stay nourished, and strong, and healthy?
5. One of the ways that we nourish ourselves is with private devotional habits such as prayer and Bible reading. It is essential for Christians to have a daily quiet time with God.
6. But there is another aspect of spiritual nourishment that is just as important, and just as often it is neglected. It is doing God's will.
7. Today we're going to see six powerful truths about doing the will of God.

### **II. TEXT: John 4:31-38**

"31 In the meantime the disciples kept urging him, "Rabbi, eat something."

32 But he said, "I have food to eat that you don't know about."

33 The disciples said to one another, "Could someone have brought him something to eat?"

34 "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work," Jesus told them.

35 "Don't you say, 'There are still four more months, and then comes the harvest'? Listen to what I'm telling you: Open your eyes and look at the fields, because they are ready for harvest.

36 The reaper is already receiving pay and

gathering fruit for eternal life, so that the sower and reaper can rejoice together. 37 For in this case the saying is true: 'One sows and another reaps.' 38 I sent you to reap what you didn't labor for; others have labored, and you have benefited from their labor."

1. Set up: Jesus has been visiting with the Samaritan woman at the well. She just became a believer and she ran to tell the rest of the village to come meet Jesus. Jesus' disciples were concerned about him, so they told him to eat something. Jesus turned this into a teaching moment about doing the will of God. He taught them six important truths.

### III. SIX TRUTHS ABOUT DOING GOD'S WILL

#### 1. Doing God's will is the most important thing in life.

- i. **John 4:31-32** "31 In the meantime the disciples kept urging him, "Rabbi, eat something." 32 But he said, "I have food to eat that you don't know about."
- ii. Jesus was doing ministry. He was sharing the gospel with the Samaritans, and his disciples told him to stop and get something to eat. Jesus told them that He had food that they didn't know about. What food? Doing God's will. Jesus was saying that doing God's will was more important than food.
- iii. There aren't many things in life that are as important as food. You need food in order to survive. But Jesus was saying that doing God's will is more important than food. Doing God's will is more important than life itself. It is worth giving your life for.
- iv. **Luke 9:23** Then he said to them all, "If anyone wants to follow after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow me."
  1. What was Jesus saying in this verse? To be a follower of Jesus you need to...
    - a. Deny yourself: Commit to God's will rather than your own.
    - b. Take up your cross: Do God's will no matter the cost; even at the cost of your life.
- v. Let's be very clear. Doing God's will is the most important thing in life. It is more important than personal health and safety. It is more important than your reputation. It is more important than your physical appearance. It is more important than your career. It is more important than your finances. It is more important than your marriage. It is more important than your family. It is more important than school. It is more important than sports. It is more important than sex. It is more important than sleep. It is more important than food. It is more important than anything else in life.
- vi. Consider the Lord's Prayer. There are really only three personal requests: Give us our daily bread, forgive us, and lead us not into temptation. Notice that one request is physical, and two of the requests are spiritual. Our greatest priority in life is the spiritual realm – doing God's will.

- vii. Don't forget. Doing God's will is the essential mark of a true believer.  
**Matthew 7:21** "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven."
- viii. It doesn't matter what you do in life, if you haven't done God's will, then you have failed; you have wasted your life; you haven't done anything worthwhile.
- ix. The story of Eric Liddell reminds us to prioritize the will of God above all else. He was one of the fastest runners of Scotland; he was called the "flying Scotsman." He was a devoted Christian, and according to his beliefs, Christians were not to work or play sports on the Sabbath. It was a day for rest and worship period. His best race was the 100 meters, but the qualifying race was on a Sunday, so he refused to run. He said, "I would never set aside my king or my country save there was a higher power, a higher authority, the one who sets up kings, and the one who brings down kings, and I will not run." Since he could not compete in the 100 meters, he decided to compete in the 400 meters, even though he wasn't very good at it. On the morning of the Olympic 400 meters final, one of the athletic trainers handed him a note. It said, "In the old book it says: 'He that honors me I will honor.'" Liddell went on not only to win the gold, but to set a new world record in the 400 meters." Never let anything come before God's will.
- x. If you want to make the most of your life, make the most of God's will.

## 2. Most people don't know about doing God's will.

- i. **John 4:31-32** "31 In the meantime the disciples kept urging him, 'Rabbi, eat something.' 32 But he said, 'I have food to eat that you don't know about.'"
- ii. Most people in this world do not know about doing God's will. They don't know God's will, and they are not committed to God's will. So, the person who is committed to God's will is going to be different; weird; peculiar. You don't curse; you don't get drunk or do recreational drugs; you don't talk bad about people; you don't steal; you don't lie; you don't go to the strip clubs; you don't cheat. You are going to stick out like a sore thumb. You are not going to fit in with the world around you. You will be walking to the beat of a different drummer, which means you will be out of rhythm with the world. This will have three effects:

1. Some people will see your lifestyle and be attracted to Jesus.  
**Matthew 5:16** "In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven."
2. Some will criticize you. They will reject you. They will dislike you. **1 Peter 4:3-4** "3 For there has already been enough time spent in doing what the Gentiles choose to do: carrying on in unrestrained behavior,

evil desires, drunkenness, orgies, carousing, and lawless idolatry. 4 They are surprised that you don't join them in the same flood of wild living—and they slander you."

3. Some will persecute you. They will try to punish you until you conform to the world; until you fall in line; until you join the herd. **2 Timothy 3:12** "In fact, all who want to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted."

iii. Since most people don't know about doing God's will, you must prepare yourself for resistance.

1. Don't be afraid to be different. If you look, and sound, and act just like unbelievers, then something is wrong. You are not committed to God's will. **Romans 12:2 (Phillips)** "Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its mould"
2. Don't be surprised if unbelievers hate you. 1 John 3:13 "Do not be surprised, brothers and sisters, if the world hates you." **Charles E. Spurgeon** "Fellowship with God means warfare with the world." **Spurgeon** "The disciple cannot be loved where his master is hated."
3. Don't make it your goal to win the world's approval. You cannot serve two masters. Stop trying to be cool; stop trying to be trendy; stop trying to be hip; stop trying to fit in. Just do God's will. Trying to do God's will and win the world's approval at the same time is impossible; it's like trying to get wet and stay dry at the same time. Just do God's will. **Galatians 1:10** "If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ."
4. Don't forget that God's will is best. Life works best when you live according to God's will. When you rebel against God's will, life begins to fall apart. Marriages fail; children rebel; finances deplete; stress; fear; worry; anxiety; relationships crumble; physical health crumbles.

### 3. Doing God's will involves obedience.

- i. **John 4:34** "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work"
- ii. Doing God's will involves two elements. Doing God's will (obedience), and finishing his work.
- iii. The most basic definition of doing God's will is obedience.
- iv. God's will is what God wants. Doing God's will means doing what God wants you to do; that's called obedience.
- v. Jesus was the example of perfect obedience:
  1. **John 5:30** "I can do nothing on my own. I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, because I do not seek my own will, but the will of him who sent me."

- 2. **John 6:38** “For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me.”
- vi. Christians often ask, “What is God’s will for my life?” I can’t tell you who should marry, or what career you should choose, or whether you should take that job offer, but I can tell you a lot about God’s will for your life. God’s will for your life begins with His commands in Scripture.
- vii. One of the games that my kids like to play is Simon Says. Let’s see if you are any good. “Simon says touch your touch your elbow (touch my shoulder).” To win at Simon Says, you have to be really good at listening to Simon, and really quick at following Simon’s orders. It’s the same thing for Christians. As Christians, the meaning and purpose of life is Christ Says. And to be good at life, to succeed at life, you have to be really good at listening to what Christ says, and then really quick at following His orders. The better you get at listening and doing what Christ says, the more successful you will be at life.

**4. Doing God’s will involves the Great Commission.**

- i. **John 4:34** “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work”
- ii. The first aspect of doing God’s will is obedience; the second is finishing his work; doing the work that He has given you to do. What is that work? The Great Commission.
- iii. Jesus called it seeking and saving the lost (Lk 9:10).
- iv. He also called it making disciples (Mt 28:19-20).
- v. It is the task of leading people to faith in Christ and helping them grow to maturity. This is the purpose of the church, and every Christian is commanded to take part. Adopt it as your own mission.
- vi. This is what Jesus was doing in this story. He was leading the Samaritan village to believe in Him and be saved. Then he spent two days discipling them.
- vii. Unfortunately many Christians have turned the Great Commission into the Great Omission. They don’t witness. They don’t serve in church or tithe. They don’t pray for the lost.
- viii. How can you be involved in the great commission?
  - 1. Teach the Bible to your kids and grandkids.
  - 2. Share the gospel with your friends.
  - 3. Invite your friends to church.
  - 4. Serve in the church.
  - 5. Become a Home Group leader.

**5. Doing God’s will is our spiritual nourishment.**

- i. **John 4:34** “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work”
- ii. Doing God’s will is our spiritual nourishment. This means several things:

1. Doing God's will is satisfying. Just as eating is enjoyable, doing God's will makes us happy.
  2. Doing God's will is energizing. It energizes us for service, for worship, for prayer, for Bible study. It strengthens us for spiritual warfare. It results in peace and joy.
  3. Doing God's will is sustaining. As you do God's will, God promises to meet your physical needs. Matthew 6:33
- iii. So often when we think of spiritual nourishment, we think of Bible reading, prayer, and worship. And those are essential. But we also need to focus on obedience and serve. Without obedience and service, we will be malnourished.
- iv. To be a healthy Christian, you need to give and receive. You need intake and outtake. The Dead Sea is called the Dead Sea because nothing lives in it. The chemicals in the water make it impossible for life. Why is it like that? Because it has no outlet. It takes in water, but it does not have any rivers or streams that are flowing out of it. It takes but does not give. If you want to be a healthy Christian, you need to receive and give. You need prayer and Bible study and worship, but you also need obedience and serve.

**6. Doing God's will must not be postponed.**

- i. **John 4:35-38** "35 Don't you say, 'There are still four more months, and then comes the harvest'? Listen to what I'm telling you: Open your eyes and look at the fields, because they are ready for harvest. 36 The reaper is already receiving pay and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that the sower and reaper can rejoice together. 37 For in this case the saying is true: 'One sows and another reaps.' 38 I sent you to reap what you didn't labor for; others have labored, and you have benefited from their labor."
- ii. Jesus is using a farming analogy to say that doing God's will must not be postponed.
  1. Usually there is a time of waiting between planting and harvest, but the fields are ready for harvest. There are people all around who need Christ and His love. There are people all around us who need eternal life.
  2. Usually, the same person who plants is also the one who harvests. But in that situation, Jesus planted the seeds, and the disciples would get to share in the harvest. They would get the joy of teaching the Samaritans more about God's will. For us it is the same. There are many people who are ready to receive Christ, because someone has already planted the seed. They just need someone close the sale. There are many people who are ready to be discipled, because someone has already led them to faith. They need someone to take them by the hand and disciple them.

- iii. Either way, the point Jesus is making is that the fields are ready for harvest. We need to get to work doing God's will.
- iv. God's will must not be postponed. It must not be put off. We must not procrastinate. We must not wait until tomorrow.
  - 1. Start teaching your kids the Bible today.
  - 2. Start serving in church today.
  - 3. Start tithing today.
  - 4. Share the gospel with your lost friends today.
  - 5. Repent of sin today.
  - 6. Does someone need your help? Do it today.
  - 7. Does someone need your prayers? Pray today.
  - 8. Does someone need an encouraging note? Do it today.
  - 9. Does someone need a spiritual rebuke; a warning about their sin? Do it today.
  - 10. Do you need to make restitution for something you've done wrong? Do it today.
  - 11. Do you need to apologize to a friend? Do it today.
  - 12. Is there sinful habit that God wants you to break, or a godly habit that God wants you to start? Do it today.
  - 13. Do you need to get baptized? Do it today.
  - 14. Do you need to attend the newcomer's lunch and join the church? Do it today.
- v. Why today?
  - 1. Delayed obedience is disobedience.
  - 2. You may not be here tomorrow.
  - 3. The opportunity may not be here tomorrow.
- vi. The fields are ready for harvest. Do God's will and God's work today.

#### **IV. CONCLUSION**

- 1. Whenever a person is malnourished, the doctor usually does two things. First, he gets them to start eating. And second, he gets them to start taking vitamins.
- 2. If you are a malnourished Christian, there are two things you need to do. You need to do God's will, and do God's work.