

The Christian Life: God's Will

3. Is Precise Knowledge of God's Will Possible?

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From the **TeachingtheWord** Bible Knowledgebase

Part three of a series. Read [part two](#).

In Colossians chapter one, Paul uses a Greek word for knowledge that makes this plain.

We continue with the second of seven key declarations derived from Colossians 1:9-12: Not only does believing the Gospel of Christ make knowledge of God's will possible, it makes precise and correct knowledge of His will possible. That is the force of the words in the original language.

Not Just Knowledge, But Superior Knowledge

An expanded translation of the original language of verse nine would read like this: Our prayer, our desire, Paul says, is that you may be liberally supplied with the precise, correct, and thorough knowledge of God's will - His intent, His purpose. The Greek word that Paul uses here for "knowledge" is *epignosis*, which means not merely "knowledge" but "full knowledge." My prayer, Paul says, is that you might be filled with full knowledge of the will of God - precise knowledge, correct knowledge, overflowing and abundant knowledge that is not lacking or deficient in any way.

Paul is also using this word because the Colossian believers were facing a challenge to their faith, and specifically a challenge to their confidence that every believer can know the will of God. Paul uses the word *epignosis* in order to draw a sharp contrast. The Colossian believers were being troubled by the influence of worldly philosophers who had brought an early form of a heresy into the church called Gnosticism. Gnosticism was a philosophical system that was founded on pagan Greek philosophy. The term Gnosticism comes from the Greek work *gnosis*, which means "knowledge."

The Gnostics claimed to have an exclusive "higher knowledge" that was not available to the common man. Gnosticism said that matter was evil but spirit was good. Therefore, said the Gnostics, God could not have created the material universe. We find this echoed in the thinking of atheistic evolutionists today who say, "I do not believe in God, because a good God could not have created such an evil world." They do not understand that God created a perfect world but man by his rebellion ruined it.

The Gnostics also had a very un-Biblical view of Jesus Christ. This was coupled to their idea of "salvation" - not salvation from sin, but a philosophical or psychological kind of salvation that was only available to an "in-group" that possessed "higher knowledge" of God's will - higher knowledge, they asserted, than the Bible.

Throughout Paul's epistles we find evidence that some Christians in the early church felt intimidated or inferior because of this, just as many Christians feel intimidated by worldly philosophies in our day. But Paul declared this unequivocally: You have no reason to feel inferior to these people. In fact, they are the ones who have a problem. They cannot understand spiritual things because they have not been saved through Christ. You have! And so I am praying that you will have not just *gnosis* - not just "knowledge" - but *epignosis* - full knowledge, correct knowledge, knowledge that is far superior to anything that any man can have apart from Christ. You, not they, are the ones who possess "higher knowledge."

And that is knowledge of the will of God, Paul says in verse nine, in all spiritual wisdom and in all spiritual understanding. Precise and correct knowledge of God's will is possible, Paul is telling them, and that is what I am praying will be true for you. This is a knowledge that is open and available to everyone who is a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, not to an elite group only. The lowliest among you, and the highest among you, in human estimations, have equal access to precise and correct knowledge of the will of God.

Are You An Intimidated Christian?

Before we leave this second declaration from Colossians chapter one, let me add these comments and questions, addressed both to believers and unbelievers who may be reading this.

We have noted that many Christians today are intimidated by secular humanists and others in our society who make a great pretense of having superior knowledge and superior understanding. They look down on Bible-believing Christians. They ridicule Biblical Christianity. They mock anyone who says that the Bible is the inspired, inerrant, infallible, authoritative Word of God. They deride anyone who says that Jesus Christ is God Himself, and that He alone is the answer to this world's great problems. They ridicule anyone who speaks of the preeminence of the Lord Jesus Christ. They reject anyone who speaks of faith, which they mistakenly view as being contrary to reason.

The secularists speak of reason as their holy grail. They say that reason and Christian faith are mutually exclusive and cannot coexist. But what does the Word of God say? Hebrews chapter eleven, verse one: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

Christian faith is *substance*. Christian faith is *evidence*. Genuine, Biblical Christian faith is rooted in reason and logic. Christian faith is not ethereal or mystical. Why is that so? It is because of the *nature* of genuine Christian faith: *the fact that it is Christian* - it is founded on Christ.

But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God - and righteousness and sanctification and redemption - that, as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 1:30-31).

Genuine saving Christian faith has as its object the person and work of God the Son. He is the substance. He is the evidence. He is the foundation. He is the reason the Christian can have confidence in the ability to know God's will, even as we live in an evil and confusing world.

If you are in the category of Christians today who have an inferiority complex because of the ridicule of the unsaved world, or even of some professing Christians, I hope you will take comfort and encouragement from the Scripture passages we have considered thus far in Colossians chapter one, First Corinthians chapter two, and Hebrews chapter eleven. The Christian's knowledge is far superior to anything this lost and dying world can offer. The so-called higher knowledge that this world offers is false knowledge. It is speculation. It is a lie.

Romans chapter one tells us that, apart from Christ, men would rather believe the lie than believe the truth. They would rather rely on "reason" - which, often is actually not rooted in logic but in their variable feelings - rather than submit to God and seek His will in His way. Christian, do not invest in the world's lies. Stand firm in the truth, and recognize that the truth is only to be found in the Word of God. Knowledge of God's will is only to be found in God's Word. That is our third declarative statement, and we shall focus on it in our next study. If you are an unbeliever today, let me ask you these questions on the authority of God's Word: Do you understand that you cannot have true wisdom and knowledge apart from placing faith in Jesus Christ as your Savior from sin? Do you understand that this world's wisdom, your own wisdom apart from God, is completely empty, and that fullness of wisdom and knowledge is to be found only in Jesus Christ? I pray today that God will open your heart and mind to have that understanding, and that you will receive the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior from sin today. And if we can help you or answer any questions you may have, it will be our privilege, and we would be delighted to hear from you.

Next: [By What Means Can I Know God's Will?](#)

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