

Can God or Will God?

1. The year was 1990. We had just bought a home. I had been promoted just under a year before and was struggling to balance my seminary studies along with my Regional Manager duties. The recession of 1990 hit and everyone, everywhere was making cutbacks, and with most recessions, middle management is among the first to go. I went to the unemployment lines. My wife owned a typing business that she had someone else managing, so we had a small income, but not nearly enough to take care of our needs. I sent out resumes, interviewed and applied at jobs all over the D/FW metroplex, and no takers. I became fearful, angry and frustrated. How could God let this happen to me. One evening I laid on our bed and sobbed uncontrollably as I vented my pain toward my situation. Where was God?
 - a. Have you ever been in such a place where you wondered where God was? Have you wondered if He cared or if He *wanted to* fix your situation?
 - b. One of the things I have observed in the bible is the remarkable absence of the words “God can” and the incredible prevalence of “God will.”
 - i. I typed those two combinations into my bible search engine this week, and got Zero passages where it was said “God can” do something. Zero, NONE, OUGHT, Nought, Not a one.
 - ii. Then I typed in “God will” and “I will” referring to God doing something, and found over 5000+ statements where God said He will do something.
 - iii. God “can” = 0. God Will =5000.
 - iv. Isn’t that strange? Especially when we understand that God CAN do anything. Why doesn’t the bible tell us what God CAN do? Instead it tells us what HE WILL do.
 - v. Because you know I have the ability to do something doesn’t let you know what I will do, does it? Obviously, God CAN heal, God CAN raise the dead, God CAN turn rocks into bread, God CAN do ANYTHING.
 - vi. But don’t you want to know what GOD WILL do? Especially when you have a need, a concern, a crisis, a problem, or a dilemma. **God what WILL You do?**

I want to take just a couple of passages where God says He will do something just to illustrate the wonderful richness of His Love for you and me:

2. Look at Philippians 4:19 *“And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”*
 - a. I love this passage because it is one of the GOD WILL statements in the bible.
 - b. Can you imagine if this was written where it said, “my God CAN supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”
 - c. The word CAN is “hope so” wording that contains no faith or promise.
 - d. **But the word WILL is filled with pregnant promise, waiting for faith to grab a hold of it!**
 - e. I love this passage because it has even more promise beneath its surface, waiting for us to mine it and extract its bounty!
 - i. I looked this one up in the Greek, because it is such an important passage to our New Testament faith. Let me share with you what I learned>
 1. **“Supply”** = Plero (fill up, full to the measure, completely full, nothing lacking liberally supplied or furnished).
 - a. Isn’t “supply” such a poor translation of that? Think about what it means for God to “fill up, to the full measure” every one (all, not some) of your needs.”
 - ii. Retranslate: *“And my God will liberally fill to complete fullness your every need so that you lack nothing according to His fullness of riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”*
 1. “according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”

2. That is infinite resources!
 3. Now, if you examine the context, do you see any conditions for God to meet your every need to completeness? The answer is yes...Paul was commending the Philippians for their generosity in giving to his ministry. Bottom line? When we meet others needs, God meets ours.
 4. Ok, Pastor, if I don't meet other people's needs, then I won't get mine met? I don't know that one, but I can tell you that if you are giving sacrificially and faithfully, you cannot out give God.
3. Let's revisit 1990. We had been faithful to tithe. We had responded when God told us to give. Yet, here was my world, falling apart...or so I thought. Not long after my tantrum toward God, God gave us a revelation of doing typesetting for printshops. Many of them were small and didn't have the technical expertise to do it, or the money to purchase the equipment. We had a very sloooow computer from our business and a very basic laser printer at the house. We only used them for personal stuff...and computers in 1990 weren't very common. The one in our home had cost us \$1000 - and that was 20 years ago...and it was an XT with 1 MEG of ram (not gig). But by faith, Jennifer stepped out and made a call to a local print shop and asked them if we could do typesetting for them. Our rates were more reasonable than others, and we would deliver the next morning anything faxed in to us by 5pm. Of course, we had to buy a fax machine for the house. By faith, we did so. And then God moved. Before long, we had replaced about 1/2 of my previous income with income from our typesetting. I took over running the typing business and by faith, we moved into a retail store front across the street from Texas Christian University. We started doing resumes and advertised that we could do them in ONE HOUR. Our business grew to the largest of its kind in the metroplex within the next 4 years.
- a. Where was God? **Where He had always been, on His throne, waiting for us to stop complaining and being fearful and for us to take a step of faith.**
 - b. I believe that **throughout the bible, God takes the position of "I will" toward our needs.**
 - i. Yet for some reason we think or act like He is the stingy daddy who isn't interested in us or who enjoys watching us suffer. Where do we get such thoughts? (from the lies of the devil).
 - ii. God is not the author of suffering or of disease. The devil is the one who "steals, kills and destroys" and who was a "liar from the beginning." God would no more give you cancer than you would give your child a box of poison so they can learn something from it.
 - c. What has God done in your life in meeting your needs?
 - i.
4. Let's look at a passage that symbolizes for me, the way that we look at God.
- a. Matthew 8:1-3 *"When Jesus came down from the mountain, large crowds followed Him. And a leper came to Him and bowed down before Him, and said, "Lord, if You are willing (if you desire or take pleasure in this), You can (LITERALLY 'HAVE THE POWER TO – you got the dynamos to do this') make me clean." Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him (grabbed a hold of him, not a good thing b/c the law prohibited touching a leper who was believed to be contagious, and Jesus didn't just touch him, but grabbed ahold of him), saying, "I am willing (It is my pleasure to cleanse you); be cleansed." And immediately his leprosy was cleansed."*
 - b. **"If you are willing..."**
 - i. The leper knew that Jesus had the power to heal him. His doubt was about his willingness.
 - ii. **"Men more easily believe in miraculous power than in miraculous love"** (Bruce)

iii. There are many people who will argue about how God “can” do something but who won’t pray for God to actually DO IT. Why? Because it is easier to believe that God can do something than it is to believe God will.

iv. **To believe God will do something on your behalf means you have to**

1. Believe God loves you enough to do something miraculous on your behalf.
2. It takes more faith to believe God loves you and wants to do something for you than it does to believe He CAN do something.
 - a. Do you tell people when you say you will pray for them, that God CAN heal or provide? Probably so, we do it without thinking. And when we do so, we lock out faith from the environment.
 - b. We would be far better off quoting the bible and what God says HE WILL DO than merely commenting on what He CAN do. Amen?

c. That is why I think the “I will” and “God will” statements are so important in the bible.

i. **“I will” statements reveal what God WANTS to do and spur our faith to attach to those promises and declarations of the nature and character of our God!**

ii. The BPE version translates Jesus’ response as *“And he put his hand on him, saying, It is my pleasure; be clean. And straight away he was made clean.”*

1. Did you see that? It doesn’t come out in the English translation very well, but in the Greek it is as bold as the sun. Jesus doesn’t just say, “I will.” He says “It is my pleasure, my delight” to heal you.
2. Do you believe that God takes pleasure, enjoyment in bringing people to wholeness and in curing their diseases?
3. **Think carefully before you answer**, because many of us don’t think that way about God. We think because a relative or friend wasn’t healed, or because we know someone who is unemployed for 2 years that God isn’t interested or doesn’t care. In other words, **we allow our experience to shape our theology instead of what God’s word says about God.**
4. **We must shape our theology on God’s word, not on our experience.**

5. Exercise in belief:

a. If you lie, what does that make you? (A liar) If you steal, what does that make you? (A thief). If you sin, what does that make you? (A sinner).

i. Now, if a sinner comes to Christ and receives His gift of forgiveness and love and the new Birth, he becomes a brand new person. Right? But then a few days go by and he commits a sin. Does that mean he is still a sinner?

ii. Think about this. The bible tells us that a Christian is a Saint, a Child of God, a *former sinner*, a New Creation in Christ.

1. Which one do you believe? Your experience (because you still sin) or what God’s word SAYS about you and God?
 - a. Imagine if we said, “I don’t feel forgiven”...therefore I’m not forgiven?
 - b. Or God didn’t heal my grandmother, He won’t heal me.
 - c. Isn’t that what we do, even though it is blatantly wrong to do?
 - d. We need the word of God to form our beliefs, not our experience. Yet, we allow our experience to dictate lies to us!
2. What do we do with the passages of scripture where God says, “I am Jehovah Rapha, the God who heals you.” (Psalm 103:3, Ex 15:26, Mt 8:17)

6. Secondary Application: “Be cleansed” –Leprosy was a picture of sin. Jesus came to cleanse it all. He touched sinners, and took their sins and their sorrows. He is willing to take yours! And He won’t just take it from you, He will make you a brand new creation, the old will pass away and all things will become new! He will give you a brand new heart of flesh to replace the heart of stone, He will forgive all your sins and give you his Spirit!

- i. Jer 24:6 “My eyes will watch over them for their good, and I will bring them back to this land. I will build them up and not tear them down; I will plant them and not uproot them.”
- ii. Phil 1:3-6 “I thank my God every time I remember you. 4 In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy 5 because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, 6 being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.
- iii. Isa 42:16 “I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them; I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them.”
- iv. Ez 36:26 “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.”
- v. Psalm 91:15 “He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him.”
- vi. John 11:22 ““Even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You.”
- vii. Gen 22:8 “Abraham said, "God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." So the two of them walked on together.”
- viii. Ge 41:16 “Joseph then answered Pharaoh, saying, "It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer.””
- ix. Ge 48:21 “Then Israel said to Joseph, "Behold, I am about to die, but God will be with you, and bring you back to the land of your fathers.”
- x. Ge 50:24-25 “Joseph said to his brothers, "I am about to die, but God will surely take care of you and bring you up from this land to the land which He promised on oath to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. Then Joseph made the sons of Israel swear, saying, "God will surely take care of you, and you shall carry my bones up from here.””
- xi. Dt 3:20 “they also possess the land which the LORD your God will give them beyond the Jordan. Then you may return every man to his possession which I have given you.”
- xii. Dt. 3:17 “the LORD your God will keep with you His covenant and His lovingkindness which He swore to your forefathers.”
- xiii. Dt 7:16 “You shall consume all the peoples whom the LORD your God will deliver to you;”
- xiv. Dt 15:6 ““For the LORD your God will bless you as He has promised you, and you will lend to many nations, but you will not borrow; and you will rule over many nations, but they will not rule over you.”
- xv. Dt. 15:18 “the LORD your God will bless you in whatever you do.”
- xvi. Dt 16:15 “the LORD your God will bless you in all your produce and in all the work of your hands, so that you will be altogether joyful.”
- xvii. Dt 28:1 ““Now it shall be, if you diligently obey the LORD your God, being careful to do all His commandments which I command you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth.”
- xviii. Dt 30:9 ““Then the LORD your God will prosper you abundantly in all the work of your hand, in the offspring of your body and in the offspring of your cattle and in the produce of your ground, for the LORD will again rejoice over you for good, just as He rejoiced over your fathers;”
- xix. Ps 55:19 “God will hear and answer them-- Even the one who sits enthroned from of old—“
- xx. Ps 57:3 “God will send forth His lovingkindness and His truth.”

- xxi. Isa 35:4 *“Say to those with anxious heart, “Take courage, fear not. Behold, your God will come with vengeance; The recompense of God will come, But He will save you.”*”
- xxii. Isa 62:5 ‘And as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, So your God will rejoice over you.’”
- xxiii. Micah 7:7 “But as for me, I will watch expectantly for the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation. My God will hear me.”
- xxiv.