

## “I Will...”

1. Review of “I will” “God will” versus “I can” or “God can.”
  - a. There are Zero occurrences in the bible of where God says “I can.”
    - i. And even in the New Testament usage, the word for ability “I can” isn’t in there, even though we translate it that way.
    - ii. Yet there are over 5000 instances of where God says “I will” or “God will” or “the Lord will” in the bible.
2. Can you just kind of soak in that for a moment. We have a God who can do anything yet He figures we ought to know that by now...and prefers to tell us what He WILL do.
  - a. **“I can:” statements don’t inspire us to action or faith, but “I will” statements do!**
  - b. So if God declares HE will do something, will it happen? I think you can bet the farm on it.
  - c. If God declares He WILL do something, are you safe saying it is His will?
    - i. You also understand that by agreeing with what God says He will do, you are activating your faith?
    - ii. I mentioned last week that God’s “I will” statements are promises upon which we can grab a hold of and hang our lives by faith upon, like a solid peg in the wall we can hold onto.
  - d. **The way you grab a hold of such “I will” statements is to “agree with God” often by taking a step of obedience that sometimes involves personal risk or sacrifice.**
3. Let me tell you a story of how I learned to agree with God: Back in 1985, I was working for Nabisco as a packaging foreman. I was a fairly young Christian, had just gotten married, and started attending a Southern Baptist church. **I had heard God’s calling** upon my life to prepare for a teaching ministry in the church, and had just enrolled in the extension seminary in Houston, Texas where I was about to start taking my first 2 classes. I was pursuing God’s calling to ministry and the training I believed He wanted me to get. I did really well in my first semester in the Seminary extension, I remembered how to study, cram and pray before an exam. So I enrolled in another semester...believing that “I could do most of my seminary like this, working a well paying job with job security, benefits, health insurance, retirement, and going to school part-time.”
  - a. Then the hammer came down. Nabisco got bought out by Standard Brands and became Nabisco Brands. Shake ups began at the home office and trickled down to the local bakery. Half way through my second semester, management changed many of the foremen’s shift assignments, and instead of working second shift and being able to attend school during the day, I faced rotating shifts every few months! It was Spring of 1986, we had just had our first child in November of 1985, when this happened, and I saw all my plans drifting out the window like a wisp of smoke in the wind. What would I do? Any ideas I had of comfort or personal security in following God now were gone. Uncertainty and a hidden future lay ahead of us if we were really going to follow God, and to pursue the training God had called us to.
4. Genesis 12:1-7 *The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. 2 "I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." 4 So Abram left, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Haran. 5 He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan, and they arrived there. 6 Abram traveled through the land as far as the site of the great tree of Moreh at Shechem. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. 7 The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built an altar there to the LORD, who had appeared to him."*

- a. This is one of the early promises of God. God speaks to Abram and instructs him to LEAVE everything he has relied upon for security and comfort. And if Abram will trust God, God would then do several things...look at the "I will" statements: (7 of them!)
    - i. Go to the land I will show you....
    - ii. I will make you a great nation
    - iii. I will bless you
    - iv. I will make your name great and make you a blessing
    - v. I will bless those who bless you
    - vi. I will curse those who curse you
    - vii. V7: to your offspring I will give this land
  - b. Sounds pretty simple huh? Hey, pack your things and lets go on a trip and when you do I will do some cool stuff for you. Most of us don't see that as a very tough calling. In fact, if you are a teenager, you'd think its pretty easy to get a job, move out of the house and make a living.
  - c. For Abram, he was a nomadic herdsman. Danger lurked at every corner, every desert and every watering hole. For the nomadic herdsman, safety lay in numbers, and your best friends were your family...which for Abram, was who he was with (his parents and his extended family).
5. There some things that required faith for Abram (Abraham. "FAITH WALLS")
- a. **He didn't know where he was going.** God simply said, "*to the land I will show you.*" For the nomad, this is a death sentence, because to wander into unknown desert areas was to invite death from starvation or thirst. You stuck to known patterns, where you knew the water and the food was. No sane person would just venture out without a plan.
    - i. God is the God of the past, present and future. He knows them all. He can make this bold statement "*to the land I will show you*" and expect that we can trust Him based solely upon who He is.
    - ii. "I will show you demonstrates that God has a perspective that is so much bigger in time and space than we can realize or understand.
      1. Imagine being up in the International Space Station, 300 miles above the earth, orbiting and being able to see everything below. You can see storms forming in the Atlantic Ocean, you can see the ash cloud from the eruption in Iceland, you can see the ice on the poles. You would have a perspective no one else had.
      2. Before the advent of weather satellites, most ships and cities had very little warning to the development and movement of a hurricane. Why? Because they lacked the perspective.
      3. God has a perspective so much greater because He is beyond time itself. He knows how things will turn out. And we can trust Him!
  - b. **Abram had no children**, yet God told him that He would make him into a great nation.
    - i. Hello? Abram is 75 years old. Bob Smith, how would you feel if God told you that it was time to start a family and have some kids?
    - ii. I think the temptation at this point is to question God and ask, "Is that really You or am I imagining this?" "*to your offspring I will give this land...*"
  - c. **He and his descendants would be blessed!**
    - i. Okay, now that one isn't a biggy. You can't expect me to believe to believe that God will bless you will take faith?
    - ii. Yes, in fact, you can. You must. Blessing to us is something we cannot even fathom, because we have been blessed beyond any society in human history. The poorest American lives better off than 80% of the rest of the world's population.
    - iii. You were "blessed" in those days if you had a change of clothes, a donkey to ride on (transportation), a wife and kids, a tent and knew where your next meal was coming from.
    - iv. Yet, Abraham would soon find out that what we consider "blessed" in no way compares to divine blessing! Abraham would become rich beyond his comprehension. His wife, at age 80 would turn heads of younger men. He would father two great nations (Israel

would be one of them). It would be from his lineage that the Messiah would come. I would say that is blessing beyond our comprehension.

6. So what does this mean for me?
  - a. God speaks to us, each and every one of us. He challenges each of us to take steps of faith in our lives that require us to experience trust and dependence upon Himself, and letting go of everything else that we know and trust.
  - b. That Spring day in 1986, when I discovered that I would no longer have a steady shift job from which I could plan my seminary schedule, I was awakened to the harsh choice that I would have to make. If God had really called me to train for ministry, then I would have to make a choice. Follow God and fulfill that calling, or turn my back on that calling and seek comfort in the job, career and home in Houston Texas. After all, wouldn't the wise thing be to stay in Houston, where we would have insurance to cover my family?
    - i. Jennifer and I made a hard choice that day. We felt God was telling us to move to Fort Worth and complete Seminary. Move...with a baby in tow, to a place we didn't know. That summer, we scouted out Ft. Worth, and when we packed everything up in August to move, we arrived only to find out that the apartment we had reserved was not there. We were stuck in a hotel room for 3 days, looking for a place to live, with no job, no income and a lot of questions. (what should you do when you have a lot of questions?)
    - ii. **So we prayed.** Jennifer went out later that day and had a conversation with a policeman, who told us we were lucky to not get that apartment (high crime rate). He also knew of a apt. complex near TCU (a short drive from seminary) that would be a good fit, he even knew one of the apt. managers. Before long, we were in our new apartment, and I was working and going to school. God had come through, just as He would over and over again throughout our lives.
7. Here is the promise> **When God says He will do something, He often requires us to take a step of faith in order to obtain that promise.** Abram had to "leave" and "go" where God told him to go.
  - a. God's calling for myself (and Jennifer) was as clear as it could be. There was no denying we heard God call us. His promise? That our lives would bear fruit in the lives of others.
  - b. God keeps His promise. He knows which way the road will bend ahead. **I have to let you know, God saw the bend in the road for us long before we did...**the Nabisco Plant shut down 3 years after we left for Fort Worth.
  - c. Perhaps you are trying to hold on to His promise. Or maybe you have just heard Him call you by name...and wonder if you can make that sacrifice? The price you pay to follow Him is nothing like the price He paid for you. You must take a step(s) of faith in order to receive what He has promised. Are you ready to take that step, to step out and let Him take you where you've never been before?

Let's pray.

## Possible Passages:

There's a children's Bible song that says, "My God is so big... There's nothing my God cannot do." The Bible does, however, tell us that there are some things that my God cannot do. John Wesley captured that truth of the incomprehensibility of God. "Give me a worm that can understand a man," he wrote, "and I will give you a man who can understand God."

"But Jesus looked at them and said: 'With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.'"  
Matthew 19:26.

No, for only God can limit or impose a restriction upon Himself.

### GOD CANNOT LIE!

God cannot break His word.

A. Titus 1:2 "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;"

B. Hebrews 6:18 "That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:"

C. Absolute truth belongs to God alone. Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729-1781)

D. Deuteronomy 32:4 "He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he."

E. Truth lies in character. Christ did not simply speak the truth; he was Truth-truth through and through, for truth is a thing not of words but a life and being. Frederick William Robertson (1816-1853)

F. Proverbs 6:16-19 "These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that devises wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaks lies, and he that sows discord among brethren."

God cannot sin.

A. James 1:13 "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempts he any man:"

B. God is compelled to conceal himself in a measure from the natural world, for the divine illumination would blind the eyes of mortal man were it to shine upon him in full strength. L. S. Thornton

C. Habakkuk 1:13a "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity..."

D. There is a danger of forgetting that the Bible reveals, not first the love of God, but the intense, blazing holiness of God, with his love as the center of that holiness. Oswald Chambers (1874-1917)

E. Psalms 5:4 "For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee."

God cannot change.

A. Malachi 3:6 "For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed."

B. The law of mutation belongs to a fallen world, but God is immutable, and in him men of faith find eternal permanence. A. W. Tozer (1897-1963)

### GOD CANNOT UNDO WHAT HAS ALREADY BEEN DONE!

If God allowed Himself to undo what has been done surely He would have undone Satan's rebellion and Adam's fall. But God gave to man and the angels free will, therefore their actions carry a sense of finality.

"And the Lord God said to the woman, 'What is this that thou hast done?' Genesis 3:13.

God cannot undo your sinful deeds...or else He would!

God cannot unsay your sinful words...or else He would!

God cannot unthink your sinful thoughts...or else He would! Because:

"As I live! declares the Lord God, 'I take no pleasure in the death of the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked should turn from his way and live.'" Ezekiel 33:11.

### GOD CANNOT SAVE ANYONE APART FROM FAITH IN CHRIST!

"He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." John 3:18.

"Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.'" John 14:6.

"And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men, by which we must be saved." Acts 4:12.

**GOD CANNOT SAVE ANYONE AGAINST THEIR WILL!**

"You search the scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life." John 5:39-40.

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him who hears say, Come. And let him who is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the Water of Life freely." Revelation 22:17.

During the presidency of Andrew Jackson, George Wilson, a postal clerk, robbed a federal payroll from a train and in the process killed a guard. The court convicted him and sentenced him to hang. Because of public sentiment against capital punishment, however, a movement began to secure a presidential pardon for Wilson (first offense), and eventually Jackson intervened with a pardon. Amazingly, Wilson refused it. Since this had never happened before, the Supreme Court was asked to rule on whether someone could indeed refuse a presidential pardon. Chief Justice John Marshall handed down the court's decision: "A pardon is a parchment whose only value must be determined by the receiver of the pardon. It has no value apart from that which the receiver gives to it. George Wilson has refused to accept the pardon. We cannot conceive why he would do so, but he has. Therefore, George Wilson must die." George Wilson, as punishment for his crime, was hanged. Pardon, declared the Supreme Court, must not only be granted, it must be accepted. - George Maronge, Jr., Birmingham, Alabama. Leadership, Vol. 12, no. 3.

Matthew 16:19 Holman Christian Standard

"I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth is already bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth is already loosed in heaven."

I will give (Not, I have given...) It is future tense promise.

We don't bind anything in heaven, because that is where the ultimate reality is. But what we do is to bind upon the earth what is already bound in heaven, and loose as well. This is important because we play a role in APPLYING God's will upon the earthly reality.

Matthew 9:20-21 "Just then a woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak. 21 She said to herself, "If I only touch his cloak, I will be healed." 22 Jesus turned and saw her. "Take heart, daughter," he said, "your faith has healed you." And the woman was healed from that moment."

John 6:40 NIV

For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."

John 6:44 NIV

"No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day.

John 14:13 NIV

And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father.

John 14:14 NIV

You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

2 Corinthians 6:18 NIV

"I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty