

Will God/Can God? (part 4)

1. Share about the weekend and what I learned.
 - a. Several of us went to a conference this week to learn how to develop a lifestyle of expressing the love and power of God on a daily basis. This meant paying attention to people around us, “as we go” about life, to be attentive to their needs, and through the power of Christ within, minister to them. Some of you do this at every opportunity you get. Many of us don’t.
 - b. I wondered why I don’t do it more. Why do I get into the shortest line in the grocery store? Come on, I’m not the only one...why do you do it too? To keep your wait the shortest? Of course. Its all about me! (you).
 - c. Many of us get up in the morning to pray for a “good day” meaning a day with short lines, green lights, great parking spaces, and no one demanding anything from us. We believe that we exist to be blessed (and God loves to bless us) but we forget why we really exist. We don’t exist for ourselves, but rather to reflect the glory of God...because it was in His image we were made and our life calling is to put His glory on display.
 - i. But we have been taught differently. We believe life is about us. God exists for me.
 - ii. When I worked at Nabisco In Houston, each morning I would go down the production lines I was to supervise and pray over each and every machine, praying for blessing, productivity and no mechanical problems. For about 6 months, my production lines had the highest productivity of any of the three shifts. It really seemed like God liked me! God blessed me. Gee...God was making me look good! Then I noticed that my prayers weren’t having the desired effect...machines broke down, I got some of the lazier workers transferred to my line, things didn’t work out the way I wanted. I actually got mad at God.
 - iii. Have you ever felt like that? Like, Hey God, I prayed this morning for a good day, and I caught every traffic light, couldn’t find a good parking spot, and I lost my keys! Where were YOU?
 - iv. God doesn’t exist for us. We exist for Him. To demonstrate His love and power to the world and to make the Living Christ known through word and deed!
 1. So what would that look like in contrast? Well, instead of choosing the shortest line at the grocery store, you pick the longest line, with the neediest people in it. You strike up conversations with them and you look for areas of their life that you could pray for/with them.
 2. We went to Denny’s the other day. We were asked if we wanted a quiet table off apart from the business of the restaurant. We said no. We would love an active table!
 - v.
 - vi. Something I also learned this week was that while offering healing in Jesus Name is the privilege of the followers of Jesus Christ, it isn’t the point. Healing is simply an expression of God’s love. Especially to someone who is away from the Lord or who doesn’t know God. Love is the point. Letting a person know that God is real, that God is interested in them, and that God arranged this “coincidental meeting” between you and the person in line in front of you. (which if you had chosen the short line, you would have missed).
 - d. I also want to clarify something. God does enjoy blessing you. But He blesses you because of who you are (His Child), not because you prayed right, because you deserved it, or because you talked Him into it. God wants you and I to get ahold of who we are in Him. It will change our lives.
 - i. As we cover one more set of “I will” statements, I hope you will see who you are in Him!
2. As I pondered over the I will statements of God, there really isn’t much more I can do than to urge you to read them for yourself. I have printed out some of them and placed them in the bulletin insert for you.

You might either keep them in your bible (to refer to) or post them on your bathroom mirror. We all need to get a firm grasp on how much our Father loves us and DESIRES to do good to us.

- a. Jesus never turned anyone away who was in need. And He still won't turn you away!
- b. But if you are a child of God, you and I need to recognize what is ours in Christ. (Ephesians).

3. So far we have examined the difference between "God can" and "God will." We looked at the things God "Can't do." But there is one thing left about the "I will" statements...it is **Receiving** them.

- a. I was looking at the "I will" statements in the Psalms, and found quite a few that were being vocalized not by God but by the Psalmist (David). As I read them I couldn't help but to be in awe of the declarations he was making. It sounded sometimes, almost presumptuous. How could he make such bold, broad statements about what God would do for him?
- b. Look at a few of them:
 - i. Psalms 23:1 NIV *The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want.*
 - ii. Psalms 23:4 NIV *Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.*
 - iii. Psalms 23:6 NIV *Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.*
 - iv. Psalms 62:2 NIV *He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will never be shaken.*
 - v. Psalms 27:13 NIV *I am still confident of this: I will see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.*
- c. How does someone make such confident, broad statements about God? Let me tell you how you can too.

4. **How can I Believe God WILL?**

- a. **How do you get faith? By spending time in the word, hearing what God says about Himself and about you. Spend time before the face of God. Listen to His love for you.**
- b. **Understand that Faith is an active choice.**
 - i. We choose how we will live. You might think "stuff happens" to you, but the truth is, you really make choices about life. We choose what we will believe and do every moment of every day.
 - ii. Faith isn't some nebulous thing that comes about and gives you strength. Faith is the hand that reaches out and takes what God has offered. And because it is a decision we make, it has a great deal to do with what we know about God.
 - iii. I watched a woman at the conference I was at, raise her hand when the speaker offered a free cd and asked if anyone wanted it. She said, "God told me I needed that cd" and she ran to the front to get it. There wasn't anything passive about her response to the "offer."
 - iv. That is faith.
- c. **Faith requires trust in the giver.**
 - i. I have learned that we don't really have a faith deficit, we have a love deficit. We don't believe God really cares enough about us to act on our behalf.
 - ii. **You have tried the trust-falls, right? If you are uncertain about the person who is supposed to catch you, you won't be inclined to "let go" and fall backwards. Or you will be turning your head as you are falling to be sure they are behind you as promised. But what if the person catching you is someone you know loves you, cares about you, and that has demonstrated that concern over and over...what if they had demonstrated life-saving actions on your behalf before. How about then. You will probably close your eyes with great joy and expectation.**
- d. **Faith is built upon experience.**
 - i. Understand, I didn't say faith comes from experience. I said it is built upon experience. As I use a small measure of faith, my capacity to believe and trust God grows.

- ii. We too can make those strong declarations that arise not from “hope so faith” but from the CONVICTION that God WILL, because we have experienced His willingness first hand!
- e. Do you recall what David told Saul when Saul told David he was too young and inexperienced to fight the Giant (Goliath)?
 - i. 1 Sam. 17:31-36 *“What David said was overheard and reported to Saul, and Saul sent for him. David said to Saul, “Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him.” Saul replied, “You are not able to go out against this Philistine and fight him; you are only a boy, and he has been a fighting man from his youth.” But David said to Saul, “Your servant has been keeping his father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it. Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God. The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.”*
- f. David had a context of experience which was far from “presumptuous” when he made the statement that the “Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear WILL deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.”
 - i. David had spent many hours before the Lord, meditating on the word of God, the ways of God, the will of God. He knew God intimately, not just in head knowledge, but experientially. He also knew who he was IN God.
 - ii. The way to grow in faith so that you can claim and walk in the “I WILL” of God requires that you walk in intimacy and daily obedience with God.
 - iii. David knew who he was before God. Do you?
 - iv. Who are you before God?
 - 1. You might wonder why I spend so much time on these questions, like are you a saint or a sinner? Why I ask you whether you are righteous or not? Why I tell you about how Christ lives in You...Christ in you the hope of Glory. Because we have an identity crisis.
 - 2. The devil wants you to believe you aren't who God says you are. Satan has spent your life telling you the opposite of What God says about you!
 - 3. How will you respond to that?

Declarations of Faith by the Psalmist:

Psalms 16:8 NIV

I have set the LORD always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.

Psalms 17:15 NIV

And I--in righteousness I will see your face; when I awake, I will be satisfied with seeing your likeness.

Psalms 18:49 NIV

Therefore I will praise you among the nations, O LORD; I will sing praises to your name.

Psalms 22:22 NIV

I will declare your name to my brothers; in the congregation I will praise you.

Psalms 26:12 NIV

My feet stand on level ground; in the great assembly I will praise the LORD.

Psalms 27:6 NIV

Then my head will be exalted above the enemies who surround me; at his tabernacle will I sacrifice with shouts of joy; I will sing and make music to the LORD.

Psalms 27:8 NIV

My heart says of you, "Seek his face!" Your face, LORD, I will seek.

Psalms 27:13 NIV

I am still confident of this: I will see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.

Psalms 56:3 NIV

When I am afraid, I will trust in you.

Psalms 56:4 NIV

In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I will not be afraid. What can mortal man do to me?

Psalms 59:16 NIV

But I will sing of your strength, in the morning I will sing of your love; for you are my fortress, my refuge in times of trouble.

Psalms 62:2 NIV

He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will never be shaken.

Psalms 77:12 NIV

I will meditate on all your works and consider all your mighty deeds.

Psalms 86:7 NIV

In the day of my trouble I will call to you, for you will answer me.