

## **Not My Will...**

This week was definitely one full of trials and tests. As with all trials and tests, God is checking on our progress and growth. How will we react?

The first significant test this week was on Tuesday when the little female Pitbull Andrea and I were trying to care for, led both our Dobermans off the property and out into who knows where. Talk about a panic mode! Well, the usual course of action for the old me would have been to go into a launch mode or DEFCON 1. It didn't exactly happen that way this time. Prayer took over, and our God Family came together and they were all safely recovered several hours later.

It's amazing how scripture can pop into your mind when some things occur. The enemy wanted to instill his brand of fear and panic but I remembered just Who Rusty and Bear belong too. They're God's as I am (we all are) and we're blessed to be the stewards of what He entrusts us to care for. Just a couple of scriptures to put this into context.

**2 Timothy 1:7-** "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of sound mindedness."

Our fear needs to be the proper type of reverent fear of God.

**Psalm 111:10-** “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all those who do His commandments. His praise endures forever.”

**Proverbs 1:7-** “The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of knowledge, *but* fools despise wisdom and instruction.”

**Proverbs 9:10-** “The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of wisdom; and the knowledge of the holy *is* understanding.”

But if God has not given us a spirit of fear, why then do we fear Him? If we fear, are we becoming cowards?

Reverence is defined by the On-Line Dictionary as: 1. A feeling of profound awe and respect and often love. See Synonyms at honor. 2. An act showing respect, especially a bow or curtsy. 3. Reverence Used as a form of address for certain members of the Christian clergy. The first definition nails it. A feeling of profound awe, respect and love. Not just often but always love where our relationship with God is concerned.

**1 John 4:18-** “There is no fear in the love *of God*; rather, perfect love casts out fear because fear has torment. And the one who fears has not been made perfect in the love *of God*.”

Having the wrong kind of fear can put us in a position of doubting God. We’ve mentioned this numerous times in discussing half-hearted prayers. We certainly don’t want to become cowards as they have no place in God’s Kingdom.

**Revelation 21:8-** “But *the* cowardly, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone; which is *the* second death.”

We begin a transformation at baptism from the carnal mind to putting on the Mind of Christ. **1 Corinthians 2:16-** “For who has known *the* mind of *the* Lord? Who shall instruct Him? But we have *the* mind of Christ.” As we just read in the article, we become dedicated to discerning and doing His Will and not our own. **Matthew 22:36-38-** “Master, which commandment *is the* great commandment in the Law?” And Jesus said to him,” ‘You shall love *the* Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is *the* first and greatest commandment;” It becomes easy to do God’s Will when we love Him first.

Before we were baptized, we were “co-joined” to Christ in our understanding. As most protestant denominations believe they are part of Him.

**John 15:5-6-** “Dwell in Me, and I in you. As a branch cannot bear fruit of itself, but only if it remains in the vine, neither can you bear fruit unless you are dwelling in Me. I am the vine, and you are the branches. The one who is dwelling in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; because apart from Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not dwell in Me, he is cast out as a branch, and is dried up; and men gather them and cast them into a fire, and they are burned.”

This is where their “cut and paste” Christianity fails them. They miss the meanings by not living by “every” word that proceeds out of the mouth of God (Deuteronomy 8:3, Matthew 4:4, Luke 4:4).

As Merriam-Webster defines “cojoined” as: “to join (two or more things or people) together.” If we all stand up and link arm in arm, we are ‘co-joined.’” At baptism, we become “conjoined” to Jesus Christ. While the dictionary definition is parallel to “cojoin”, conjoin adds a synonym of “fused” to its meaning. Much like a chemical compound, two elements become one.

**Romans 6:4-8-** “Therefore, we were buried with Him through the baptism into the death; so that, just as Christ was raised from *the* dead by the glory of the Father, in the same way, we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been

conjoined together in the likeness of His death, so also shall we be *in the likeness* of *His* resurrection. Knowing this, that our old man was co-crucified with *Him* in order that the body of sin might be destroyed, so that we might no longer be enslaved to sin;

Because the one who has died *to sin* has been justified from sin. Now if we died together with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,”

We are fused into Christ through His sacrifice and the gift of the Holy Spirit. We become one with Him. We dwell, we walk and we are conjoined with Him.

As I am not physically with you this week, it is quite apparent I'm out of state. Getting here to Pennsylvania was quite the test as well. I had made plans awhile back to come up and see my siblings and visit with some friends from growing up in the neighborhood. We had our first reunion last year and it was great to see (those of us still alive) friends we haven't seen in nearly 50 years. Time and gravity had essentially the same effect on all of us.

In any case, I booked a flight and on the day of departure, I received an email advising my flight was cancelled. It is a short visit anyway and Satan was quick to throw the darts of fear and panic. Again, I felt a calm and didn't give into the fear. I simply gave it over to God's discretion and His will be done. Well, here I am in PA, just a few hours later than the original flight.

Test number two for the trip came at the Philadelphia Airport baggage claim. I went to the baggage claim area to pick up my checked bag and nothing! All the luggage had been picked up, they shut down the carousel and those waiting dispersed. If it was just clothes in my luggage, I probably wouldn't have made it past DEFCON 4, but as I was transporting firearms, there were greater concerns. I went to the claim's office for the airline and was told that my suitcase had come in and was unloaded at the numbered location posted. So now the enemy was whispering "someone stole it!" I went back to the claim's office and before I came unglued, God had a grip on the reigns, and I asked the clerk to check again as I had firearms packed in the suitcase. She said, "you didn't mention that, we have your suitcase right here." I think my smile was visible from space. All without using a "CK" explicative.

As God gives us free will, the "old man" would have reacted quite differently. But realizing that these tests are God's Will and keeping the Great Commandment in mind from Matthew 22, pleasing God has become the most important thing in life. I use the term "free will" as opposed to "free moral agency", which reminds me of a business or something.

The greatest example of free will and seeking the Will of God The Father is in our Savior Jesus Christ when He was in the Garden of Gethsemane.

**Mathew 26:39-42-** “Then He said to them, “My soul is deeply grieved, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me.” And after going forward a little, He fell on His face, praying, and saying, “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.” Then He came to His disciples and found them sleeping. And *He* said to Peter, “What! Were you not able to watch with Me one hour? Watch and pray, so that you do not enter into temptation; the spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh is weak.” The second time He went again *and* prayed, saying, “My Father, if this cup cannot pass from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done.”

**Luke 22:40-42-** “And when He arrived at the place, He said to them, “Pray that you do not enter into temptation.” And He withdrew from them about a stone’s throw; and falling to His knees, He prayed, Saying, “Father, if You are willing to take away this cup from Me—; nevertheless, not My will, but Your will be done.”

It is perilous to overlook God’s Will for our own.

**Matthew 7:21-** “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but the one who *is* doing the will of My Father, Who *is* in heaven.”

**Revelation 3:15-16-** “I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot; I would *that* you be *either* cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and *are* neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of My mouth.” Playing both sides of the fence doesn’t work.

We need to remember who we are in Him. While we may freely choose to disobey God, thinking we are doing “our” will, it may just be a test He’s allowing to get our attention or teach us. It’s always going to be His Will in the end, always for our best interests if we are wise enough to learn. Aside from free will, He gave us His only Son too. He loves us that much.

**Hebrews 13:20-21-** “And *may* the God of peace, Who raised our Lord Jesus from among *the* dead—that great Shepherd of the sheep—through *the* blood of *the* everlasting covenant, Perfect you in every good work in order that you may do His will; accomplishing in you that which *is* well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to Whom *be the* glory into the ages of eternity. Amen.”

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