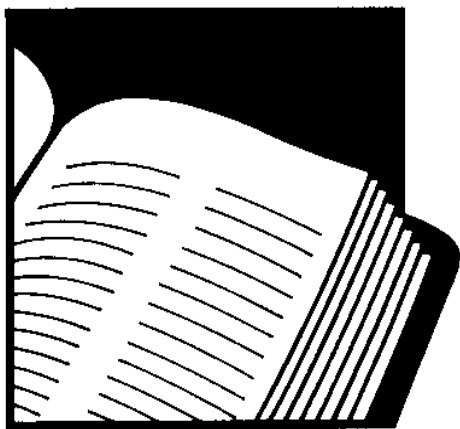


# **The Perfect Will of God**



**by Charles Wages**

*“Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.” (Col. 4:12)*

**I**t is one thing to know the will of God, it is another thing to stand in the will of God. In our Scripture text we are told of the faithful saint, Epaphras, who prayed fervently for the saints and brethren in Christ at Colosse (Col.4:12). Let’s observe and think about his prayer.

Epaphras’ prayers were of a spiritual nature. Although the physical needs of the Colossian saints were of importance, the growth and stand in the ministry of God’s Word were of greater importance. Tychicus, another faithful worker with the apostle Paul, was sent to “know the estate” of the saints (Col.4:8). Onesimus, Aristarchus, Marcus and Justus are other workers Paul refers to in Colossians, chapter four; however, Epaphras is the one who seemed to be the prayer warrior. It is more than interesting to note that the believers at Colosse had exhibited the three great truths so often referred to in Scripture. They were faith (Col. 1:4); love (Col.1:4); and hope (Col.1:5). This gave them the real foundation for living and serving the Lord, yet, they still needed to

know and stand in God's perfect will. This is true of all believers regardless of how much of God's Word we know.

What does it mean to "stand perfect and complete in all the will of God?" How can one stand in all the will of God? Epaphras' prayer was for the Colossian believers to stand in every will that God desired for them, not necessarily the will of God for everyone in every place at every time or dispensation. We must "rightly divide" the Word of Truth as to God's will for our lives. The words "perfect" and "complete" have a similar meaning and yet different as to use in Scripture. Both mean to bring to an end or a fulness in performance. When we know the will of God for our lives, we should perform it in a full manner and complete the performance of that will. That was what this prayer was all about. The great truth the Colossians had been given was the special revelation given to Paul concerning the mystery or God's great plan for the church, the body of Christ. Colossians 1:24-29 presents this truth very clearly. Verses 26 and 27 state,

*“Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gen-*

*tiles; which is Christ in you,  
the hope of glory.”*

Believers of this “dispensation of the grace of God” (Eph. 3:2) should not only know this truth concerning the mystery revealed to and through the apostle Paul, but should have a full understanding of His will for their lives and perform it fully and in full assurance. Also, and of utmost importance, is to “stand” for this great truth. There are countless numbers of saints who know about the great truth for this “church age,” but do not take a stand and completely or fully do God’s will. The apostle Paul is a good example of answer to this prayer of Epaphras. He says of himself in 2 Tim. 4:17,

*“Notwithstanding, the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.”*

Note that he said, “that by me the preaching might be fully known.” His earnest desire was that this great message might be given in its fulness or completeness and that those who heard or read might fully understand and stand on it.

This same truth had been presented earlier to some Corinthian believers; however, only those that were “perfect” (mature) could fully understand the message (1 Cor. 2:4-8). Paul was confident that God could and would make this truth fully known to all who would completely surrender to His will. See how confident he was when he wrote,

*“I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded; and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.” (Phil. 3:14-15)*

It is God’s perfect will that we be fully given His truth for His church today. Also, this verse clearly teaches us that God will reveal His will and word to all who will yield and stand for the truth, rightly divided.

For Epaphras’ prayer to be answered in the lives of the Colossian believers they were to be “fully persuaded” in their minds and hearts. They were to make the truth of Paul’s revealed message “fully known,” and they were to make “full proof” of their work for the Lord. This was a big order to perform. (It is interesting that the word

“perform” is similar to our word for perfect or complete.) In other words God’s will is not completed or brought to perfection until we perform that will! This, of course is referring to our service for the Lord.

It is no happenstance that the apostle Paul would say, at the end of his earthly life, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith” (2 Tim. 4:7). Epaphras’ prayer for the saints had been fulfilled in Paul’s ministry, especially in revealing truth given him by the risen Lord. What a statement he made in Acts 20:27, “I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God!”

One of the leading questions asked by believers is “how can I know the will of God?” This is not an easy question to answer, because God’s will is not always the same for every saved person. However, Romans 12:1-3 is the best introductory answer, and is for all Christians today.

*“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed*

*by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.”*

Then there must be a yielding to the Holy Spirit and a serious study of God’s Word. Again, we should all consider carefully the prayer of Epaphras in Col. 4:12. We should make an effort to “know” God’s will in the revealed truth of the Apostle Paul’s epistles to saints of this age of grace. Certainly, God’s will for His Church today is different than that He revealed through Old Testament prophets. It would be utterly impossible to perform to completion some of the ordinances for worship, service, giving, or even praying as those given to Israel of old. In fact, we are told that these were “blotted out” and “taken away” at the cross (Col. 2:14-17). Certainly, it is not God’s will for believers today to worship angels (Col. 2:18). It is God’s will to worship the Lord Jesus Christ as the head of His Church (Col. 2:19; Eph. 1:19-23).

We must all be honest and realize that every little aspect of our daily lives is not spelled out in detail in the Word. However, as we learn and put into practice the great truths revealed, it will lead to a closer walk, worship, and work for our Lord. Remember, Epaphras prayed a Scriptural prayer. We can too. Remember, he prayed for perfection and completeness in the will of God. Perfection did not mean to do everything perfect, but to seek to know and perform what God shows in His Word. Thank God for Epaphras and his prayer. An apt saying is, "The will of God, nothing more, nothing less, nothing else." 1 Thessalonians 5:18 is an excellent Scripture to remember.

*"In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."*



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*Speaking the Truth in Love*

**September 1994**