

A Willing Mind

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“For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.”

~ II Corinthians 8:12

The starting place of the work of God in the life of His sons is the implanting of His will in their hearts and minds. Sons are to be like their fathers; so God’s sons are to be like the Heavenly Father. At the core of this reproduction of the divine nature is the Father’s own will.

*“For it is God which worketh in you both **to will** and to do of His good pleasure”*
(Philippians 2:13).

This is the work of God in a nutshell – “*to will and to do*” – and the Father begins by working something into His sons (“*worketh in you*”). He works into them His will (“*to will*”). As His sons we are given a willing heart for His life and purpose. We trust and acknowledge the in-working of His will.

“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths”(Proverbs 3:5-6).

The Father leads His sons by instilling into them His own spirit.

“For as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God” (Romans 8:14).

Here is God’s leading. Those led by God’s Spirit are God’s sons. Like Father, like son. The Father is working to permeate His divine expression in every area of our lives.

Thus, everything starts with the “will.” Little wonder, when speaking to the Corinthians about the subject of giving, Paul says that the beginning principle is a “*willing mind*.”

“For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not” (II Corinthians 8:12).

Let's remember that we are God's "workmanship." It is indeed "God which worketh" in us, and His first work will be the infusion of His will.

Be honest. Do you feel that His will is lacking in you? Do you feel as though He is working too slowly? Beloved of the Father, do not be discouraged with His work. Trust Him implicitly. By patience and faith wait upon Him to do His work. His will in you is His responsibility.

*"But they that **wait upon the LORD** shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint" (Isaiah 40:31).*

Or, maybe you have the "will," but do not have the second part yet – the "do" ("**both to will and to do** of His good pleasure"). Perhaps you identify with these words of Paul,

*"... For **to will** is present with me; but **how to perform** that which is good I find not" (Romans 7:18).*

Again, do not be disappointed with His work. Simply trust Him unreservedly. Wait patiently upon Him. The **doing** of His will is also His responsibility. He is faithful and will do His work!

You have the "want to." That is the start.

*"**For if there be first a willing mind ...**" (II Corinthians 8:12).*

Rejoice that this "willing mind" is God's work. The rest of the verse says,

"... It is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not" (II Corinthians 8:12).

Do you despair over what you don't have ("... hath not")? Maybe your lack of talent, or ability, or resources, or experience, or money, etc.? Do you think that they hinder God's work in your life? Do not fret. His work is larger than all of these. You are who you are because God has made you that way. He is the potter, we are the clay.

"Who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, 'Why hast thou made me thus?'" (Romans 9:20).

Because you are God's clay – His "workmanship" – He is responsible for who you are and what you have. God will use these in His own wisdom and at His own discretion.

When Moses was chosen and called by God to deliver His people out of Egyptian bondage, he was overwhelmed. Moses focused on what he didn't have. He looked at his inability. He was a man of excuses. Yet,

"it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not" (II Corinthians 8:12).

Let's listen in on the conversation (Exodus 4:1-5):

God: "What's in your hand?"

Moses: "A rod."

God: "Throw it on the ground."

Moses threw it on the ground and it became a serpent. Moses ran away.

God: "Reach out and pick it up by its tail."

Moses did what God said and it became a rod in his hand again.

God would use this as a sign that He had appeared to Moses.

God's call of Moses was not about Moses, it was about God. It was about God's ability and purposes. It was about what God would do with what Moses had, not what he didn't have.

We must always remember that God can use anything to do His work and bring Him glory. Thus, Paul could write,

"For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not" (II Corinthians 8:12).

Do not be discouraged about your shortcomings, your inabilities, your failures, your inadequacies, your lack of talents and your weaknesses. God is the Master of them all.

"For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in His presence" (I Corinthians 1:26-29).

Look at the things that God specializes in using.

God has chosen to use "*foolish things,*" "*weak things,*" "*base things,*" "*things which are despised,*" and even the "*things which are not.*"

Can you identify with any of these? Do you sometimes feel stupid, or meager, or low class, or without value? No problem. These are the very things God has predetermined to use in carrying out His work.

Look carefully at the passage and you will see that He even specializes in the use of nothing – "*and the things which are not.*" Do you ever feel worthless, even to the point that you feel

like nothing? Then you qualify for the use of God!

By way of illustration: everyday as God asks of you, “What is in your hand?” (so to speak) ... Open up your hand and let Him have His way with you and what you have. Rest in who God has made you! Rest in the place where God has you at this time in your life. Rest in His resources. Rest in His ability. Rest in His faithfulness.

You may not have any confidence in yourself. That’s ok. It is all about Him. Have full confidence in Him.

“Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will *perform* it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:6).

Here Paul clearly answers his own question of dilemma from some years earlier. As we have already seen he wrote to the Romans, “... **for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not**” (Romans 7:18); but now how clearly he writes the answer to the Philippians, “... **that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ**” (Philippians 1:6).

What you can not “perform” in and of yourself, God “will perform.” You are His work. He started you. He will complete you.

Therefore, we can rest in Paul’s wonderful words:

“For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not” (II Corinthians 8:12).

God is placing His in-working “will” in you, to use you ... as you are, where you are, with what you have ... all for His glory alone.

“That no flesh should glory in His presence” (I Corinthians 1:26-29).

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