

It Won't Be Easy!

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Genesis 12:5-6

The phrase found at the end of Genesis 12:6, “*the Canaanites were in the land,*” does far more than just identify the land’s inhabitants. This phrase reveals a very depraved culture that ruled that region. The culture of the Canaanites was very offensive and repulsive to God because of their gross sin. Several years ago, while leading a tour in Israel, we visited the Canaanite ruins in Megiddo. Our guide informed us that these ruins dated back to the time of Abraham. Among these ruins was a large, round, altar where literally millions of gallons of human blood was spilt in human sacrifice to their pagan gods. The Canaanite religion was very violent and demonic. Canaanite worship centered on torture, sexual perversion and ultimately, murder.

Led Into the Middle of a Perverse Culture

Even at a casual glance into this passage, it is easy to see that God was the one who led Abraham into the middle of the perverse culture of the Canaanites. As Abraham walked obediently into the will of God, he found himself making his new home in a culture that was an abomination to God. Make no mistake, God was not erroneous when He led Abraham to dwell among the Canaanites ... it was a divine appointment.

As you search the record of Scripture, one principle consistently leaps out at you regarding the plan of God: He has always desired to have a people that would remain blameless in the midst of a perverse generation. He foreknew that sin would make an entrance onto the stage of human drama. However, God has always looked for a people who would remain faithful to Him in the middle of the twisted thinking of their society and the abundance of temptations. God has always looked for a people, who, by their very lifestyle of obedience to His Word, would shape their society instead of letting their society shape them. The Apostle Paul told the young church at Philippi; *In everything you do, stay away from complaining and arguing, so that no one can speak a word of blame against you. You are to live clean, innocent lives as children of God in a dark world full of crooked and perverse people. Let your lives shine brightly before them. Hold tightly to the Word of life, so that when Christ returns, I will be proud that I did not lose the race and that my work was not useless* (Philippians 2:14-16).

Misconceptions About the Will of God

There is a prevalent misconception regarding the will of God today. Many Christians believe that walking in the will of God will lead them down a beautifully flowered garden pathway to enjoy repetitive moments of happiness until they finally reach Heaven’s golden shore. They somehow believe that being in the will of God means that they will live their lives in a problem-free environment. However, the Scriptures teach no such thing about the will of God. In fact, the Scriptures repeatedly warn us that walking in the will of God will often lead us through difficult seasons of our lives as I Peter 4:12-13 tells us; *Dear friends, don’t be surprised at the fiery trials you are going through, as if something strange were happening to you. Instead, be very glad—because these trials will make you partners with Christ in His suffering, and afterward you will have the wonderful joy of sharing His glory when it is displayed to all the world.*

There will be fruit that will come from this misconception of Scripture. This misconception will drive the self-righteous to assume that you are harvesting from some hidden sin in the past if you are experiencing a problem in life. The Scripture does not support such nonsense. We are often guilty of making such assumptions because we are not comfortable associating “suffering” with being in the will of God. However, I Peter 4:14-16 addresses this issue; *Be happy if you are insulted for being a Christian, for then the glorious Spirit of God will come upon you. If you suffer, however, it must not be for murder, stealing, making trouble, or prying into other people’s affairs. But it is no shame to suffer for being a Christian. Praise God for the privilege of being called by His wonderful name!*

Tragically, if you are one who doesn’t believe that walking in the will of God can sometimes lead you into some unpleasant and uncomfortable seasons of your life, you will likely become a casualty to the things of God. When trouble comes, you will be tempted to get mad at God. You may even be tempted to quit your walk of faith, especially if you perceive that quitting will garner you some relief from your problems.

Following the Will of God

Following the will of God is not always easy; just ask Jesus. Walking in the will of God led Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. Walking in the will of God led Jesus into the Garden of Gethsemane to be arrested and imprisoned in the dungeon at the house of Caiphas. Walking in the will of God led Jesus to stand before Pilot. Walking in the will of God led Jesus through the Roman Praetorium to be beaten, scourged, and crowned with thorns. Walking in the will of God led Jesus down the Via Dolorosa and up to the brow of Calvary to be crucified and then, buried in a borrowed tomb.

There were others who found that following the will of God is not easy; just ask Peter ... he was crucified upside down. Following the will of God is not easy; just ask Stephen ... he was stoned for his faith. Following the will of God is not easy; just ask Paul ... he was beheaded. Following the will of God is not easy; just ask the thousands in the early church who were martyred for their faith ... *Others trusted God and were tortured, preferring to die rather than turn from God and be free. They placed their hope in the resurrection to a better life. Some were mocked, and their backs were cut open with whips. Others were chained in dungeons. Some died by stoning, and some were sawed in half; others were killed with the sword. Some went about in skins of sheep and goats, hungry and oppressed and mistreated. They were too good for this world. They wandered over deserts and mountains, hiding in caves and holes in the ground. All of these people we have mentioned received God’s approval because of their faith (Hebrews 11:35-39).*

Today, just like Abraham of old, we live in a godless, violent, rebellious, and immoral society. Unfortunately, our society has tempted many Christians to feel fatalistic about the times in which we live. They openly complain how hard it is to live a Godly life in the prevailing culture. They often whine about how hard it is to raise children with Christian values. They lament that they will be mocked for standing up for what they believe; particularly if what they believe flies in the face of the values of today’s society.

The truth of the matter is that everything may be different, but nothing has changed! God is still looking for a people who will stand for righteousness in the midst of uncertain dark days.

Salt and Light

Jesus said that His followers would be like “salt” and “light” in the world; *God blesses you when you are mocked and persecuted and lied about because you are My followers. Be happy about it! Be very glad! For a great reward awaits you in heaven. And remember, the ancient prophets were persecuted, too. You are the salt of the earth. But what good is salt if it has lost its flavor? Can you make it useful again? It will be thrown out and trampled underfoot as worthless. You are the light of the world—like a city on a mountain, glowing in the night for all to see. Don't hide your light under a basket! Instead, put it on a stand and let it shine for all. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father* (Matthew 5:11-16).

Salt is a preservative. As Christians, we are to be a preservative against the devastating impact of sin. We are to also be a preservative against the deteriorating effect of sin on our lives. Salt is also a catalyst for thirst. As we live out our Christian principles and values, the people with whom we come into contact with should be influenced for Christ. Literally, just because they know us, they should develop a thirst for God.

Light is a property that exposes darkness. We are to live our lives in such a way that we expose the works of darkness around us. We are not permitted to judge; but we are expected to openly live out our Christian values. We must demonstrate a notable difference from those who do not claim Christianity.

We Must Be Honest With Ourselves

Are you a preservative against sin or are you a facilitator of sin? Do the people that know you want to have a relationship with God like yours? If anyone follows your steps, not just your directives, will they ever find God?

Walking in the Will of God Isn't Easy, but it is Rewarding!

Don't Let Problems Discourage Your Pursuit of God's Will for Your Life!

Stand Faithfully for Righteousness in the Midst of this Perverse Culture!

Be a Preservative against Sin's Devastating Impact!

Live Your Life with a Notable Difference!