

***Choosing
Priorities
“Thy will be done”
A Clergy Care Note
from
New Day Inc.
1212 13th Ave.
Altoona, PA
16601
814-949-9210***

*Rev. David C. Hammerle, M.A., M.Ed., DAPA
Copyright 2008 Permission to reprint for free
distribution is granted,*

Have you ever noticed that our priorities and God’s priorities are not always the same? Isaiah 55:8-9 states, “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my, ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.” Nowhere is this fact more evident than at the scene in the Garden of Eden.

God’s desire for the human race was that we would only know good in our lives. Having been deceived by the serpent, Eve believed that to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil would make her wise as God, knowing both good and evil. She chose to know the evil along with the good (Genesis 3:1-6). The problem worsens when we realize that Eve’s choice would cause all of us to know evil along with the good. The evil is in our world because of man’s choice not God’s will.

Of course, it makes us feel less guilty when we can place the blame on someone else—Adam and Eve. This suggests that I don’t have to be responsible for my choices. The fact is that we have all made choices that were

not in agreement with God’s plan for us (Romans 3:23). We are all responsible.

When God made man in His image and likeness, He gave us a free will. This is one characteristic that makes us like God. The concept of a meaningful relationship with God comes when we reach that place where we are ready to surrender our will and choose God’s will.

The stubborn will of man creates a problem when our prayers reflect our will over God’s will. If God does not answer our prayer in the way that we directed, we want to suggest that God did not answer our prayer. This is why Jesus taught us to pray, “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.” (Matthew 6:10). These two prayers work together—if we want God’s kingdom to rule, then we must allow God’s will to rule.

The design of this prayer becomes clear when we note Christ’s example in the Garden of Gethsemane. It was here that Christ prayed, “Saying, ‘Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.’” (Luke 22:42) The cup to which Jesus was referring was

the cup of sorrows that included the pain of the cross. The human nature of Christ was asking for deliverance from a painful situation, but His greater desire to do the Father's will moved Him to ask that the Father's will would prevail.

Notice the word **nevertheless** that appears in Christ's prayer as it is found in the King James Version of the Bible. Whenever, I choose my will over God's will, I am choosing the less. God's plan is always higher than my plan—it will always be better for me.

If we were to take a closer look at the scene of the cross, we could note another situation where it was evident that God's thoughts are higher than ours. Consider the requests of the two thieves that were crucified with Christ. Luke 23: 39 and 42 shares the contrast of two different desires.

While hanging on a cross near Jesus, one man is asking in desperation that Christ would deliver him from a painful death. Note that the text states that this person railed on Jesus. It appears that he was not a believer, but desperately suggests that if Christ's claims are true, I want out of this mess.

Another dieing thief, while hanging on a cross on the other side of Jesus, scolded the first man. Admitting to his own guilt, he focused on Christ's innocence. This man's request was that Christ would remember him when He came into His kingdom. In response, Jesus promised the second man that he would be with Him in paradise that very day.

Christ's thoughts were higher than the one thief who was thinking only of extending his life on earth. The focus of Christ was on an eternal life—something that this man knew nothing about. The offer that He made to the other thief was far greater than that which the first thief requested.

How many times have you prayed for the healing of a sick person? Your prayer was in keeping with the Scriptures according to James 5:14-15.

Was there ever a time when the healing did not happen and you wondered why God did not answer your prayer?

The truth is that God does heal sick bodies, but there is another truth reminding us that God knows what we need most. His thoughts are focused on a higher level. God did answer your

prayer, but the answer was what God saw to be best. We have never seen the glories that God has prepared for us in eternity (1 Corinthians 2:9-10).

When God does answer a prayer by healing a person, the message suggests that God has something more for that person to do on earth. When God answers that prayer by not providing the healing, the message suggests that God has an eternal reward that He chooses to share with the person. We feel the pain of our loss, but our loved one is experiencing the joy of our Lord (Mathew 25:21).

James 4:3 teaches us, "Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lust." We are instructed to take every need to God in prayer (Philippians 4:6). In so doing we also acknowledge our need of God. This is of great importance to our faith. We are not only recognizing our need, but we are also recognizing that God is greater than our need.

However, we must also acknowledge that God knows what we need most and trust His will to be higher than our will. Remember, God is always looking out for our good, even when we cannot see His view.

