

At Ease with the God We Serve

Mark Beard

Knowing, doing, and living within the will of God is of great concern to many in times of distress and decision. We rush about anxious and worried that God may not intervene or that we may not understand and may miss the mark in some way. People often pray, “Not as I will, but as you will...” (Mathew 26:39 NIV) and then struggle with urges to resist God’s apparent will or plan for their lives. We have probably all done it to some degree. It is not easy to give up control of one’s life and one’s plans, and genuinely say and maintain an attitude of, “God, whatever you want to do is okay with me.”

It is unnerving to feel one is not in control of one’s life. Of course, in reality, we have absolute control over little in our lives, but as long as we do not try to yield control to God, we are able to maintain the illusion of being in control. We comfort ourselves with this false sense of control. We reinforce it with schemes and plans. It is a delusion in which we indulge to help us feel better about all the uncertainty in life. The problem is the person who wants to live the life of faith in Jesus Christ knows it is just a fantasy and feels drawn back to dependence on God.

The dilemma we face is, when the apparent will of God differs from our hopes, *how can we know, do, and live in the will of God with any true sense of comfort?* Yes, I know, “have faith.” What does that mean? “Just believe.” Sorry, but “bumper sticker answers”—as true as they may be—just do not cut it. Is it *faith in faith* people are advocating? Are we talking about resignation or acceptance of the inevitable?

For years I overlooked what I believe is the answer, before finally hearing what God’s word is saying. The secret is in knowing Him—and I do not just mean being “saved.” Think about this, we trust the ability and intent of people we know well and have experience with, but not with the intent of others who have not proven themselves. Memorize and quote all the scripture you want, that is good, yet it is no substitute for a real relationship with God. Sing in the choir, never miss a church service, that is good too; but do not expect that to bring comfort that a deep personal relationship will bring. In fact, it is likely all that is pointing you and me back to Him.

John 14:1 is a well-known example of scriptures that direct us back to faith in the God we serve. In this passage, to comfort his disciples in a moment in which their lives were about to drastically change and there were many things happening they did not understand, Jesus said, “You believe in God; believe also in me.” NIV

Faith must be on God’s terms; therefore, comfort with Him is essential. We will never allow him to direct our lives unless we trust His heart and his power. We cannot wrestle God’s work into conformity with our comfort level. We must believe in Him, because ultimately we will never get comfortable with the *will of God* until we get comfortable *with the God we serve*.