

THE CHURCH IN BOSTON PERFECTING TRAINING

GROWING IN LIFE

Session One

The Function of the Will

Scripture Reading: Prov. 4:18; Phil. 2:12-13;

- I. **The heart is a master switch, a key control point in man's inner being; everything must go through the heart; nothing can go through us unless it goes through our heart—Prov. 4:18; Eph. 3:17:**
 - A. The heart is composed of the mind, emotion, will, and conscience—Matt. 9:4; Acts 11:34; Heb. 4:12; John 16:22, 6; Heb. 10:22; 1 John 3:20.
 - B. The function of the will is to express the intention of our whole being; the emotion is only what we feel, the mind is only what we think, but the will is what we want.
 - C. The will of man is his “rudder;” as a ship turns according to the rudder, a man moves according to his will.
 1. Man's will is the organ with which man makes decisions; our willingness or unwillingness, our wanting or not wanting, and our deciding or not deciding are all the functions of our will.
 2. Man's will can be said to be his true self, the man himself, because the will represents the man.
 3. The will is the most important part of our whole being; man's will is deeper than his emotion and mind.
 - D. There are two unions between God and man; one is the union in life; the other is the union in the will; these two unions are mutually related and dependent.
 - E. Therefore, when a believer pursues after the spiritual life, he has to pay attention to the will.
- II. **The kind of heart we must have in our pursuit of the growth in life:**
 - A. We not only must have the proper kind of mind in our pursuit of the growth in life, but we must also have the proper will.
 - B. All the commands that the Lord gives us in the Word are directed to the deciding and determining function of the will; examples of this include such commands as “Be transformed” (Rom. 12:2), “Watch and pray” (Matt. 26:41), “Be saved from this crooked generation” (Acts 2:40), “Present your bodies a living sacrifice” (Rom. 12:1), “Be diligent” (2 Tim. 2:15), “Be burning in spirit” (Rom. 12:11), and “Do not quench the Spirit” (1 Thes. 5:19).
 - C. We must have a will that has two characteristics:
 1. First, it must be submissive:
 - a) A submissive will is a will that always submits to the Lord.

- b) It is also a will that is not independent but rather is dependent on and submissive to the regenerated spirit.
- 2. Second, it must be strong—Judg. 5:15-16:
 - a) We need to be strong and bold in our will in order to make a decision that matches the spirit's leading. To do this is to have a strong will.
 - b) As believers who are seeking the Lord, we must have a goal and a direction; that is, we must have a "strong backbone," a strong will.
- D. Because in ourselves we do not have such a will, our will must be renewed; a renewed will is a will that, on the one hand, is submissive to the Lord and to the regenerated spirit and, on the other hand, is so strong that no one can change it.

III. We must see the difference between God "willing" in place of us and our cooperation with God through the exercise of our will—Phil. 2:12-13:

- A. God will only work within us to the extent that we are willing to will and work; God will not work further than this; He will only work to this point.
 - 1. God will not will and work for man. Rather, God will only work when man becomes willing to will and work according to His good pleasure.
 - 2. The meaning of God's operation is that God works within us, moves within us, softens us, and encourages us in order to produce in us a heart that is inclined to obey His will.
 - 3. God does not will for man; neither does He want man to will on his own.
 - 4. He wants man to rely upon His power to will. It is not that God takes our place in the willing, but that we will by His working—Matt. 26:41; Acts 2:40-42.
- B. The correct attitude should be, "I have my own will, but my will wants God's will."
 - 1. We should put our will on God's side, not by our own strength, but by the life of God.
 - 2. The real truth is that the life that used our will in the past has been put to death; now we use our will by the life of God. We have not annihilated our will; it is still there—only the life has changed.

Ministry Excerpts:

GOD CREATING MAN THAT MAN MIGHT EXPRESS HIM

The Bible tells us that God created man and moreover that He created man in His image and according to His likeness (Gen. 1:26-27). Hence, man is the most meaningful of all of God's creatures. Man is most meaningful in that God wants man to be like Him and to receive Him. God wants to come into man to be his life and content so that man might live for Him and express Him on the earth.

THE MEANING AND THE PURPOSE OF HUMAN LIFE

As I see thousands of young people here, I deeply feel that while you are still young and promising, you should see clearly what the purpose of human life is and wherein lies the meaning of human life. You all are studying hard, longing for and striving toward successfully completing your education. For this, I ask the Lord to bless you all that each one of you may be successful in completing your education. However, I would ask you, after you have completed your education, what are you going to do? World culture has already been developed to the utmost. For example, in Taiwan education has raised its standards and has been made widely available. Consequently, you all have been fully enlightened in your understanding. Even though you are quite young, you have already started to consider life. I want to tell you that the meaning of human life lies in God. Without God, man is meaningless; without God, human life is without purpose.

HAVING GREAT RESOLUTIONS IN HEART AND GREAT SEARCHINGS OF HEART—LIVING FOR GOD

The Bible says that among God's people there were great resolutions in heart, and there were also great searchings of heart (Judg. 5:15-16). For whom did they have great resolutions and great searchings? A person of aspiration, though he lives on the earth, always turns his heart to the Lord. We should have great resolutions in heart and great searchings of heart toward God. May all the young people, starting from today, be willing to have great resolutions and great searchings of heart. To have a great resolve is to make a firm decision, and to have a great searching is to devise a plan. This is not just to have a resolve but to have a great resolve, and not just to make a plan but to make a great plan. May today be the day that you have a great resolve and make a great plan.

Some may ask, "What is the purpose of having a great resolve and a great searching?" It is to live for God on the earth. The meaning of these three words living for God is quite broad. In brief, it means to receive God as your life for your entire life. God will lead you to live on the earth for Him. In other words, God will lead you to express Him on this earth by going to every place, every country, and every nation to testify on His behalf and to lead people to know Him.

Due to the advancement of transportation in recent times, the world has become a smaller place. People all over the earth are able to communicate with each other. The world situation today is

surely full of darkness and wickedness, and the primary reason is that men do not know God or receive God. If they knew God, they would get out of darkness and enter into light, staying away from wickedness and drawing near to good. Therefore, all the people on the six major continents of the whole globe need to hear the gospel and know the true God so that they can be saved out of darkness into light and out of corruption into the eternal life. Now who will go and do this? Certainly it is you, the younger generation. You should believe in Jesus and receive Him as your life and Savior. Not only so, you should have a great resolve and make a great plan before Him to live for Him.

A TESTIMONY

I was born and raised in Christianity and educated in Christianity. Before I was twenty, even though I often went to Christian worship services and also listened to the words of the Bible, I was not saved. I had not had personal contact with the Lord, nor had I personally received Him as my Savior. I did not receive the Lord Jesus until I was nineteen years old. Seven years later, the Lord raised up a church in my hometown through my testimony for Him. From the day I was saved, I had a feeling within me: "Lord Jesus, I want to spend my whole life serving You and bearing witness for You." It can be said that at that moment I had a great resolve and made a great plan to spend my entire life to live for Jesus and to study the Bible.

In the past sixty years, I cannot say that I have had any academic accomplishments, but I can testify that all that I have learned and obtained, as well as my entire heart, are for the Lord Jesus. Initially, I had hoped to stay in my hometown, carrying my Bible bag, preaching Jesus village by village, county by county, and city by city, bearing witness for the Lord. However, in His good pleasure He brought me from northern China to southern China, causing me to travel to many places on both sides of the Yangtze River. He also brought me from mainland China overseas to Taiwan, and then He brought me to Southeast Asia for ten years. Later, He brought me from Taiwan to the United States, and I have been living in the United States for more than twenty years. Today I truly worship the Lord from within my heart, as Judges 5:31 says, "O Jehovah. / ...may those who love Him be like the sun / When it rises in its might."

MAY THOSE WHO LOVE THE LORD BE LIKE THE SUN WHEN IT RISES IN ITS MIGHT

Young brothers and sisters, I hope that from the days of your youth you will have a great resolve and make a great plan to live for the Lord. May you all travel to all parts of the world and to all the nations, using different languages to bear testimony for the Lord Jesus, glorifying Him so that you may also share in His glory. May your future be, as the Bible says, "Like the sun / When it rises in its might." May the Lord bless you according to these words you have heard.

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