

August 4, 2019

Session 20: The Good, Acceptable and Perfect Will of God

Last week we were talking about being transformed.

Transformed is what I am talking about when I say, we are going to be transformed from: a natural, ungodly man, with ungodly thinking, ungodly conduct and with no natural capacity to labor with God.

And what are we being transformed into? If you say we are transformed into the image of God's Son, that is a good answer. And if we are conformed to the image of God's Son, then we will demonstrate that (prove that) in three particular ways.

Just remember, this transformation begins with the renewing of our mind; a change in our thinking. Our mind is the natural starting place for this transforming to take place because our thinking is the foundation upon which will be built our godly living and godly labor. Therefore, when the thinking is godly, it allows for godly living and godly labor to take place. In other words, the only way to be conformed to the image of God's Son is by the sonship doctrine working in you. Nothing else can accomplish that.

All of man's systems may educate and inform with data, but none of them can produce godly edifying.

1 Timothy 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, *which is* our hope; ² Unto Timothy, *my* own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, *and* peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord. ³ As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they **teach no other doctrine**, ⁴ **Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies**, which minister questions, rather than **godly edifying** which is in faith: *so do*.

Godly edifying is the building up (edifying) of the components of godliness (godly describes the kind of edifying) in our inner man.

The only thing that renews our mind so that godliness in all its aspects can take place is the sonship education.

Going to church, being involved in various activities and having fellowship can be valuable in certain situations, but they are not the final goal.

Next, we will define each of the particular aspects of God's will and show them each to be a purpose for which we are being transformed.

Romans 12:2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

As we said earlier, the “will of God” will be manifested in these three aspects: good, acceptable and perfect. Before we identify these, let us look at the issue of God’s will for a moment. We are going to “prove” or demonstrate God’s will.

Now, getting back to the question, “What are those three aspects of God’s will?” They are: good, acceptable and perfect.

Before we define those 3 descriptive terms, just remember what we talked about at the beginning of the last several sessions:

1. God’s word to us is an education curriculum that produces edification (unto godliness)
2. Godly Edifying takes place as God’s word effectually works in us
3. As we are edified, we are conformed to the image of God’s Son
4. That edification is the “transformed” that we are exhorted to be in Romans 12:2 (“be ye transformed”)
5. The transformation process makes us into the godly creatures we were designed to be

To sum those up together, the purpose behind our creation, the reason we have been adopted is so that we might possess godliness; that we might be godly (like God) in our thinking, living and labor. And the accomplishment of that is what our sonship education is all about.

Romans 12:2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

God’s will:

- is not about the details of our lives which differ one from another, (such as who we should marry, what kind of work we should do, where we should go to college, etc.)
- is the same for every saint. (to be conformed to the image of His Son; to be edified unto godliness)

Therefore, it is God’s will for us to be “godly” in three particular ways; how we think, how we live and how we labor. And in order for that to take place, every saint is to be transformed by the renewing of [their] mind, and that is God’s will too.

The “good” will of God concerns our thinking. The “good” will of God concerns the start of our transformation process; the “renewing of your mind.” Renewing our mind is not all there is to our being transformed; it is the beginning of it.

As we read vs. 2, there is a tendency to see these three aspects as “adjectives” that describe God’s will, but I do not see it so much as a three-fold description of God’s will. For example, I do not think “good” is describing God’s will as something that “contains a satisfactory degree of qualities which are useful.” Instead, I see “good” as the first aspect of God’s will in the transformation process; the renewing of our mind, or godly thinking.

Within the context of the verse, we are to expect the sonship curriculum to transform us, beginning with the renewing of our mind so that we might demonstrate the totality of godliness (thinking, living and labor) which are all God’s will for every saint.

The first aspect of God’s will as it concerns our being “godly” is for us to think like God thinks. The sonship education is what makes our mind “good,” but the “good” in verse 2 is not describing our mind, it is describing the first aspect of something that is God’s will for every saint.

And when we put godly thinking on display, that is God’s “good” will for every saint. This godly thinking is what replaces the corrupt, evil and worldly information that occupied it before. That is called “the renewing of our mind.” The good will of God is describing the effects of the education on our thinking.

Our education is comprised of “sound words” which formulate “sound doctrine” which produces a “sound mind.”

2 Timothy 1:13 Hold fast the form of **sound words**, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

Titus 2:1 But speak thou the things which become **sound doctrine**:

2 Timothy 1:7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a **sound mind**.

The next aspect of “acceptable.”

Romans 12:2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and **acceptable**, and perfect, will of God.

OED: acceptable – capable, worthy, gladly received...

Acceptable focuses on the part of our education which allows us to demonstrate our godly thinking in our conduct and behavior. This is the way we live; godly living. This kind of living is acceptable unto God.

The last one, of course, has to do with godly labor.

Before we get into that, do you understand the difference between godly living and godly labor? The “labor” has to do with a particular thing that God is working to accomplish in this world through His sons and daughters. The godly living has to do with any and every way that we can incorporate the godly thinking into our everyday conduct.

Beyond that, there is something in particular that God desires to have done in this world. Only a son who has godly thinking and godly living working in him will be able to labor with God in this particular job.

Romans 12:2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and **perfect**, will of God.

Then, based upon the godly thinking and living, the son can labor with God in a way that has “perfection” to it. And what do I mean by “perfection?” When a son is able to emulate the Father in all that he (the son) does, that godly labor is said to be “perfect.” That is what it means to “come unto a perfect man.”

2 Timothy 3:17 That the man of God may be **perfect**, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

There are three words to look at here: 1) perfect 2) thoroughly and 3) furnished. Let’s start with “perfect.” This is not talking about sinless perfection or never failing.

OED: perfect – 2) fully accomplished; thoroughly versed, trained, skilled or conversant.

Session 21: Review of the Checkpoint

Now we come to the word, “thoroughly.”

OED: thoroughly – in all respects; fully, completely, wholly, entirely, perfectly.

So the first part of the verse is saying that the man of God may be “completely and entirely trained and skilled.” That is the goal. The goal of what? Well, just look at the verse that comes before.

2 Timothy 3:16 **All scripture** *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 **That the man of God may be perfect**, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

It is the goal of the scriptures to completely (thoroughly) train the man of God...

The goal of that training is given the second half of the verse:

2 Timothy 3:17 That the man of God may be perfect, **thoroughly furnished unto all good works.**

OED: furnished – 2) Generally preceded by a qualifying adverb

2a) provided or stocked with something material or immaterial

2c), informed, instructed, prepared

With this much definition, we would say the man of God who has been thoroughly versed, trained and skilled is “stocked with information which equips, informs, instructs and prepares” him unto every good work.

So, “thoroughly” would be describing how the man is equipped, informed, instructed and prepared.

Therefore, the correct word to describe “furnished” would be “thoroughly” ‘and not “thoroughly” as he is furnished according to the definition:

OED: throughly –through, from beginning to end

Let me give you an example of the proper use of “thoroughly” instead of thoroughly.”

- If the toothpick comes out clean, the cake is **thoroughly** baked.
- Use a meat thermometer to ensure that meat, poultry and fish products are **thoroughly** cooked.

Thoroughly is the correct word because it is describing the completeness of the process from beginning to end, not the detail within the process, which would be thoroughly.

By definition, from Romans 12, “good” works would be works that emanate from “godly thinking.”

Ephesians 4:13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto **a perfect man**, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

2 Timothy 3:17 That **the man of God may be perfect**, throughly furnished unto all good works.

Colossians 1:28 Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may **present every man perfect** in Christ Jesus:

Paul is teaching every man in all wisdom so that they will be “perfect.” That is to say, that they will be finished, complete, wanting nothing.

Therefore, the “perfect” will of God is when a man takes that renewed (good) thinking and the resultant (acceptable) behavior, and utilize them in some aspect of God’s business (labor!) This is the clue that in the book of Romans, our education is going to follow this pattern: thinking, living and labor. That is the order of the doctrine throughout.

In each form of doctrine we will be taught things designed to change the way we think. Next, we are taught something about how to incorporate that renewed thinking into our everyday conduct

and behavior. Finally, once those are up and running in us, we will be given the opportunity to put that form of doctrine to work in one of God's operations.

And that is what it means for us to "prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." That is the entirety of the package of godliness.

This second aspect of the checkpoint is to acknowledge to God that you understand that His will is not be conformed to this world: but to be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove (put on display) every aspect of godliness; or "what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service.

- What are the Mercies of God?
 - They are the good things which are given to us by God in response to our faith in Christ
- Why are they important?
 - They are the basis for presenting our bodies unto God
- What should we be doing with them?
 - We should talking to God about our understanding of what they are and why they were given to us, along with an expression of our gratitude for them
- What is the significance of the word "present?"
 - Present involves a more formal act than "to give" which means this is something we are expected to do; this is the 3rd VTP

What does Living Sacrifice involve?

- Yielding our members as servants of righteousness instead of servants to sin
- Dealing with sin in our members by means of the doctrine; specifically the first two components of our sanctification: 1) dead to sin, and 2) alive unto God

Being a living sacrifice requires:

- knowing what those two components are
- and how they work

What are Dead to Sin and Alive unto God?

- They are the first two components of our new identity in Christ in connection with our sanctification.
- They are the replacements for the first two components of our old identity in Adam and they make it possible for us to live unto God on a daily basis.
- They make it possible for us to be spiritually fit to be utilized by God.
- They make it possible for us to produce the righteousness of God without the efforts of our flesh.

- Specifically, this doctrine comes from Romans 6:1-8:13.

What does it mean to be Dead to Sin?

- It means that our old relationship with sin has been done away with; we are no longer servants to sin

What does it mean to be alive unto God?

- It means that we now have the ability to produce a righteousness that God is pleased with
- Righteousness is not determined by the nature of the act which is committed, but by the source of the act. If the source of our “good deed” is us (our flesh), then the act is condemned as “self-righteous.” If the source is God (what God has provided and given to us as a gift of grace) then the act is righteous.
- When we deal with sin in our members by means of our new identity components of being made dead to sin and alive unto God, when we say “no” to sin because God has set us free from sin and its mastership and because God has made us to be holy (set apart unto Him) for the purpose of serving Him, that is what it means to:
 - Live out of your new identity in Christ
 - Walk after the Spirit
 - Live out of grace
 - Live out of the doctrine

What does Holy involve?

- Holy has to do with more than being generally “set apart” unto God as sanctified people, but more specifically involves the issue of being adult, adopted Sons and Daughters. We are “set apart” for the purpose of having our Father’s wisdom installed in us so that we are able to labor with Him in His business.
- This doctrine comes out of Romans 8:14-15

What does Acceptable involve?

- Acceptable has to do with the doctrines which are designed to give us an absolute confidence in 1) Our Father, and 2) His word. Acceptable means that we trust what our Father says to us in the face of the competing and conflicting wisdoms of this world, of men and of the princes of the world.
- The doctrines which make us Acceptable are found in Romans 8:16-39.

What is Romans 12:1 asking us to do?

- Romans 12:1 is asking us to demonstrate that we are ready and prepared for the Sonship Education.
- We are asked to recite our understanding of 3 specific issues which have to do with our sanctification and report on how they are working in us.

- In a nutshell, those three issues concern our ability to deal with sin by walking after the Spirit, to make the intelligent and honest cry of Abba, Father and to be persuaded of the integrity of our Father and His word.

Romans 12:2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

- What is working to Conform us to this world?
 - Satan's course of this world
- Instead, we are to be conformed to what?
 - We are to be conformed to the image of God's Son
- How are we to be Transformed?
 - We are transformed by the Renewing of our Mind
- What is the Renewing of our Mind?
 - It is the replacing of our old ways of thinking with our Father's way of thinking
- In what way does Paul use the word "Prove?"
 - Paul uses "Prove" to say that are to demonstrate or put on display, the 3 aspects of God's will
- What is the "Good" aspect of God's will?
 - This is the godly thinking
- What is the "Acceptable" aspect of God's will?
 - This is the godly living
- What is the "Perfect" aspect of God's will?
 - This is the godly labor
- What is Romans 12:2 about?
 - Romans 12:2 is the future prospect of our Sonship life
 - Romans 12:2 should be the thing we desire more than any other; to be educated by our Father to think like Him, to be able to do things the way He does them, and to be trained to labor with Him in what He is doing

As you can see, Romans 12:1-2 involves a lot!