

# THE THREE WILLS OF GOD – SHORT VERSION

by John H. Painter  
23 September, 2003

When Jesus restored sight to the man, blind from birth, in [John 9], His disciples asked Him why the man had been born blind. Was it the man's or the parents' sin that had caused it? The Israelites viewed physical affliction as being caused by sin. Jesus said that the man was born blind so that God's dynamic works could be later demonstrated in the man. In other words, it was a "Will of God thing."

Christians still wonder why bad things happen to good people. Sometimes, the only answer offered by other Christians is that it is a "Will of God thing." That's not a very satisfying answer. So, God gave us the Bible as a guide for life, so that we can understand about such things as faith and His Will. Then, maybe we'll have more satisfying answers as we minister to our Christian brothers and sisters.

A ministering Christian needs to understand, so that he or she doesn't try to do something for Jesus that is out of God's Will. The classic Biblical example is the Church group to whom Jesus denies access to heaven. They claim to have been doing good works in Jesus' name, such as prophecy and deliverance ministry [Mat. 7:21-23]. But, they are denied entry because Jesus says that they have not been doing the Will of God. He calls their good works, iniquity, and says that He never personally knew them.

In [Rom. 12:1-8], Paul writes that Christians should minister to each other, out of the different "charismatic" gifts God has given them. But, Paul said that to do this requires that they get their minds "renewed" (by the Holy Spirit – [Tit. 3:5]), so that they can figure out what the Will of God is. It is only the Holy Spirit who can help us size up the whole situation with another Christian, and determine what the Will of God is, in their circumstances. That way, we won't make a mistake like those "ministers" of [Mat. 7], who were doing the iniquitous good works.

Over the last sixty years, several Christian authors<sup>1,2,3</sup> have agreed that God's Will has three parts. These can be seen in [Rom. 12:2]. They are:

- 1. God's Intentional Will** – These are the desires of God's heart for us, His ideal plan, flowing out of His goodness, such as that none should be lost [Mat. 18:14].
- 2. God's Permissive Will** – This is what God will accept, given our choices, good or bad, in particular circumstances, so as to not limit the free will He has given us. He accepts that some will be lost [1 Cor. 1:18].
- 3. God's Ultimate Will** – This is how God achieves His ends, given man's choices, be they good or bad. He works all things together for the good of those He called, who love Him [Rom. 8:28]. This means he can ultimately get His good in spite of man's bad.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Will of God, by Leslie D. Weatherhead, Abingdon Press, 1944, 1972, ISBN 0-687-07482-7

<sup>2</sup> The Church in the New Testament, by Kevin J. Conner, BT Publ., Portland, OR, [www.btpublishing.com](http://www.btpublishing.com), 1982, ISBN 1-886849-15-3.

<sup>3</sup> Healing Your Heart of Painful Emotions, by David A. Seamands, Inspirational Press (BBS), 1993, ISBN 0-88486-080-9.