



## World Christian Fellowship

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### Romans 130 Priority & Purpose Romans 15:25-33

**Romans 15:22-33**, *For this reason I also have been much hindered from coming to you. <sup>23</sup>But now no longer having a place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come to you, <sup>24</sup>whenever I journey to Spain, I shall come to you. For I hope to see you on my journey, and to be helped on my way there by you, if first I may enjoy your company for a while. <sup>25</sup>But now I am going to Jerusalem to minister to the saints. <sup>26</sup>For it pleased those from Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints who are in Jerusalem. <sup>27</sup>It pleased them indeed, and they are their debtors. For if the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister to them in material things. <sup>28</sup>Therefore, when I have performed this and have sealed to them this fruit, I shall go by way of you to Spain. <sup>29</sup>But I know that when I come to you, I shall come in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.*

*<sup>30</sup>Now I beg you, brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in prayers to God for me, <sup>31</sup>that I may be delivered from*

*those in Judea who do not believe, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints,<sup>32</sup> that I may come to you with joy by the will of God, and maybe refreshed together with you.<sup>33</sup> Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.*

Paul sees himself as a priest, offering up to God a sacrifice of redeemed Gentiles which God has used him to reach.

Paul sees himself as a prophet whose task is to proclaim the saving gospel of Christ in every place the Lord calls him.

Paulk sees himself as a pioneer whose desire is to serve in areas where the message has never been heard, and not to build on any man's foundation but his own.

We find him here the underlying characteristic in all his ministry, whether seen as a priest or a prophet or a pioneer, and that is that what he did he did under the direction of what he believed to be the will of God. Always!

The ruling principle in the life of any person and in the pattern and direction of any ministry.

We can see how much Paul was committed to function in the will of God.

Last week we saw three things from Apostle Paul.

Precision,

Providence, and

Plan.

## **Priority.**

The person who is effective in the will of God in the service of the Lord, the person who is useful to the Savior has plans and dreams for the future those never choke off the priority of the present.

Spain was Paul's target.

He had a priority to go there in his heart, in his mind. But he had another priority that was a priority, and that demanded him to go well over one thousand miles in the opposite direction.

This priority was not an easy one for him to fulfil.

He had this dream of reaching Spain.

He had already evangelized, verse 19 says, from Jerusalem to Illyricum, he had covered all the territory God wanted him to cover.

The next thing was Spain, and it was burning in his heart.

**V 25, *But now I am going to Jerusalem to minister to the saints.***

This is the test of a man's heart in the ministry.  
Can he set his dream aside for a menial priority?

The apostle Paul has burning in his heart Spain, but he has a present priority, and that is to go a thousand miles in the opposite direction and that's a very difficult journey on foot and by ship, to minister to the saints in Jerusalem.

In **verses 20-21** when Paul says that his whole calling "is to preach the gospel where Christ is not named."

**If it's your whole calling, why are you going to Jerusalem?**

**Why are you going back to take care of the church if you are called to the lost?**

Because the Spirit of God had laid it upon apostle Paul that the needs of those believers and the unity of the church was a greater present priority than the evangelization of Spain.

There was poverty in Jerusalem.

We see it there first in Acts 6 when the widows don't have enough food.

There was overcrowding in Jerusalem, because there were many people who came heard the gospel and never went home.

They had to move in with people and people didn't have a lot and there was poverty.

There was a great famine, **Acts 11&12**.

Because of the persecution people were put in prison in Acts 8. The Christians had a very difficult time in earning a living.

There was a great need because of the poverty there. That need compelled the apostle Paul had arranged for a collection. He had arranged to take an offering and take it back to the poor saints.

**Galatians 2:9-10**, *and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.* <sup>10</sup>*They desired only that we should remember the poor, the very thing which I also was eager to do.*

In his commissioning he was told not to forget the poor. So, as he had been traveling around Asia Minor and in Achaia and Macedonia, he had been collecting money.

**V 26**, *For it pleased those from Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints who are in Jerusalem.*

The Macedonians made a very generous contribution.

**2 Corinthians 8** tell us how that the Macedonians out of their deep poverty gave liberally to Paul to take back to these poor saints.

The Corinthians were to have a share in that as well.

**1 Corinthians 16:1**, *“Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I gave orders to the church of Galatia, you do the same.”*

Paul was collecting it from Galatia, from Achaia, from Macedonia. Everywhere Paul went he was collecting this money.

When Paul went back with the money, he also took representatives of all those churches so when he came back to Jerusalem. Finally, he not only had a large amount of money for the poor, but he had representatives from all the Gentile churches there with the money.

Two factions in the church.

- Jewish church in Jerusalem,
- Gentile church in the rest of the world.

Everybody at that time knew Jew and Gentile had very little relationship.

This act that was not only meant to relieve some distress by virtue of the money but also to demonstrate the unity of the church.

Paul was committed to taking this money, along with the Gentile representatives who gave it, so that there might be reconciliation.

**V 26**, “*contribution*,” the word is ***koinōnia*** means fellowship. Sharing money is so essential a part of fellowship that three times in referring to this collection Paul uses the word ***koinōnia***.

**Romans 15:26, 2 Corinthians 8:4, 2 Corinthians 9:14**, he calls the collection fellowship, common sharing.

Paul in his mind knew that, ultimately, the evangelization of the world would be hard pressed to succeed unless there was unity in the church.

Paul was committed to the strengthening of the base church, that it might be strong and have its needs met before he went out to reach the world.

**V 27**, *It pleased them indeed, and they are their debtors. For if the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister to them in material things.*

The first reason they did it because they wanted to do it.

- They did it because it was in their heart to do it.
- They did it because of love.
- They did it because Paul told them it was right.
- They did it because they wanted to do it.

Even though they did it willingly they certainly were in debt to the Jews.

All of us who are Gentiles have a great debt we owe the Jews. The gospel came through the Lord Jesus Christ who was a Jew. It was preached by Jewish apostles in fulfilment of the Old Testament written by Jewish authors.

The first church in Jerusalem was Jewish. That first church sent out the first missionaries to Antioch seven years after its founding to evangelize the first group of Gentiles.

It was that great Jew Paul, who reached the Gentiles.  
The great Jew Peter, who reached the Jews.

The Gentile church owes its life on a human level to Jewish preachers, teachers and evangelists and missionaries. We would never have the Word of God if it weren't for Jewish authors.

**V 27**, *For if the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister to them in material things.*

If we have received the spiritual things from them, we certainly ought to minister back at least the material things.

Paul is saying they gave this out of the love of their heart, but they also had a debt.

**Isaiah 2:3**, *“Many people shall come and say, “Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths.” For out of Zion shall go forth the law, And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.*

We all indebted then to Zion and Jerusalem.

They receive the covenants and the promises and the Word of God, and we are their sort of product by God’s grace.

**V 28**, *Therefore, when I have performed this and have sealed to them this fruit, I shall go by way of you to Spain.*

Great sense of priority.

I must take care of this offering first, then I will come.

The offering must happen because I want to see the saints relieved in their distress financially.

Secondly, I want to see the Jew and the Gentile conciliated.

Paul says I can't come by you to Spain until I have performed this and have sealed to them this fruit.

Until I have sealed to the Jews in Jerusalem this fruit.

**Now what would this fruit be?**

Money, and he has got these Gentiles with him.

The money was the proof of the transforming power of the gospel to Gentiles.

The struggle of the Judaizers, who wanted to say that you could never become a Christian until you first became a Jew and the Gentile couldn't just become a believer. There were those who thought that salvation only belonged to the Jews.

Paul wants to do is take back the money as the expression of love and the proof that the gospel had indeed changed the lives of Gentiles.

The generous gift of love was fruit demonstrating a transformed life among the Gentiles, visible evidence that the Holy Spirit had visited the pagans and taken out a people for God.

Sending this gift sealed to the Jews or verified or guaranteed or certified this great truth that Gentiles had been saved.

It was the fruit of the gospel, and it was also the fruit of the Christians at Jerusalem from whom the gospel first came.

*V 29, But I know that when I come to you, I shall come in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.*

Paul says that he is going to come in spiritual prosperity.

When I come to you, I am going to come with blessing. Despite difficulties and trials, I am going to come in blessing.

I know when I come to you, I am going to be blessed.

No matter what negative circumstance they may have, they enjoy the blessing of God.

Paul has enjoyed the fullness of the things of Christ throughout his ministry, so Paul is certain.

**How are you so sure?**

Experience.

Because of obedience.

Paul was planning to come, whether he came or not. But he said when I do come, I know one thing, I will be blessed.

I don't know where I will be tomorrow, but I know one thing, I will be blessed.

**How can you promise yourself that?**

Because the key to that is an obedient life.

Now that is true positive thinking, not the cheap substitute we hear about today.

Paul did get to Rome.

He got there as a prisoner.

But this still came true.

Even as a prisoner he wrote the Philippians.

**Philippians chapter 1**, he talks about the difficulties, chains, and some people are criticizing him.

**Philippians 4:7**, *and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

**Philippians 4:19**, *And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*

Paul knew prosperity.

Prosperity in the spiritual sense is the mark of ministry in the will of God. Not necessarily larger crowds, not necessarily

greater popularity, or reputation. It doesn't necessarily mean that the publisher is going to print your book.

## **Persecution.**

It is also true that someone serving effectively in the will of God is going to experience persecution.

*V 31, that I may be delivered from those in Judea who do not believe, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints,*

The word "delivered" is a very interesting word.

***Rhuomai*** means to be rescued out of a dangerous life-threatening situation.

I want you to pray for my rescue.

I want you to pray that I will be delivered from a very dangerous situation.

It was not uncommon for Paul to face danger.

Paul was in danger most of the time. He continually asked for prayer because of that.

**2 Corinthians 1:8-11**, *For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we*

*despaired even of life. <sup>9</sup>Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead, <sup>10</sup>who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us, <sup>11</sup>you also helping together in prayer for us, that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the gift granted to us through many.*

We are in great danger day after day need to pray that God in His grace will deliver us.

**2 Corinthians 4:8-10**, *We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; <sup>9</sup>persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed— <sup>10</sup>always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.*

We always are on the brink of death, dying for the cause of Christ.

Paul saying that when a person in the will of God moving ahead for the glory of God that they are going to be persecuted because they are invading the kingdom of the enemy.

Now he had no idea at the time of the writing of Romans what was to come from those who do not believe in Judea. Jews who resented him, he had no idea at this time what they would do

to him. But it was very predictable that they would be hostile toward his message.

- He was confrontive,
- He was direct,
- He spoke the truth of God.

Because of his tremendous, confrontive ministry he endured a great amount of persecution. He knew inevitably on his way back to Jerusalem, with the money to give the Jerusalem saints, he knows that there will be a negative reaction to his arrival on the part of the Jews who hate him.

The Jews in Judea hated Paul because of his renouncing of Judaism. At one time he was their hero.

He was the guy representing the Jewish establishment going around killing Christians.

Now he is the ultimate traitor.

- He has abandoned, in the mind of the Jews, Judaism.
- He has abandoned his heritage.
- He is vocally proclaiming the lordship of Jesus Christ.
- He is saying the Old Covenant is passed away, and the Jews are greatly hostile to that.
- He is also hated for preaching, no doubt, the equality of Jew and Gentile in Christ.

- He is hated for preaching Christian freedom from Old Covenant ceremony, ritual, and law.

A great amount of hostility to Paul.

Pauls asks them to "Pray for me that I might be delivered."

The inevitability of hostility toward an aggressive Christian moving in the will of God. It's to be expected.

Persecution comes to those who move out in God's will.

Satan tried to hinder Paul.

God allowed him a certain amount of activity in Paul's life.

"Satan hindered us," on one occasion Paul says.

On another occasion he says he had a messenger of Satan in his flesh to buffet him.

The enemy was always after him.

## **Purpose.**

One who serves in the will of God also is marked out with a very clear purpose.

*V 30, Now I beg you, brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in prayers to God for me,*

I plead with you to pray for me that I might carry out my ministry.

**Why?**

**For my own sake?**

No.

**For the sake of my safety?**

No.

**For the sake of evangelism?**

Not really.

The thing that motivated Paul was the Lord Jesus Christ's glory and his great love for the Holy Spirit.

**Why do we preach, teach, pray, give, serve, or do anything?**

For the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ, not for our sake.

It is always the goal of ministry for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**1 Corinthians 9:23**, *Now this I do for the gospel's sake, that I may be partaker of it with you.*

I do it for the sake of the good news that redounds to the glory of Jesus Christ.

Always the right motive and purpose.

**2 Corinthians 4:5**, *For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake.*

**2 Corinthians 12:10**, *Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*

The bottom line is very simple.

**What is our motive?**

The proper motive is to do what we do for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul knew that if he went to Jerusalem, had all this money and these Gentiles going with him and if he got there with the money and with the Gentiles and expressed love and if the church received them.

If his trip to Jerusalem was successful, Christ would be glorified.

**Why?**

For one thing, Christ desired Jew and Gentile to be one.

If Paul could pull that off that would be to the glory of Christ.

For another thing, Christ desired the church to demonstrate love to its own, visible love so the world might see it. This would glorify Christ. Christ would be glorified if the ministry of the apostle Paul could continue with success and that's his desire.

**1 Corinthians 10:31**, *Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*

**Galatians 6:17**, *From now on let no one trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.*

It was his pleasure to suffer persecution in bringing glory to Jesus Christ.

In **V 30** about his purpose is not only for the sake of the Lord Jesus but a very unusual phrase, not used anywhere else in the New Testament, "For the love of the Spirit."

The best way to understand that is the love for the Spirit. I do what I do for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ and my love for the Holy Spirit.

**Psalm 143:10**, *Teach me to do Your will, For You are my God; Your Spirit is good. Lead me in the land of uprightness.*

It is his love for the Lord Jesus Christ, it is his love for the precious Holy Spirit who works in him that compels him in his ministry.

### **Does that compel us?**

Are we compelled to serve because of what Christ has done for us?

Because of what the Spirit of God is doing in us, Christ's gracious and magnanimous and eternal goodness to us.

We should serve in the will of God to bring honour to Christ and show love to the Holy Spirit, whose work it is we do and who is the one empowering us.

So, his purpose is very clear. And anyone in the will of God has this as a set purpose, to demonstrate honour and glory to Christ and love to the Spirit of God.

## **Prayer.**

*V 30, Now I beg you, brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in prayers to God for me,*

Paul realizes that ministry in the will of God is dependent on prayer.

The word ***agōnizomai*** is a word taken from gymnastics/athletics. It is a gymnastic term meaning "to agonize." It could be translated "to fight."

It takes tremendous exertion and energy and maximum effort to fulfil the significance of this word.

In **John 18:36** it is translated as "fight."

It is a word of great intensity.

Prayer is a battle.

Prayer is a war waged against the forces of evil.

**Isaiah 64:7**, *And there is no one who calls on Your name, Who stirs himself up to take hold of You; For You have hidden Your face from us, And have consumed us because of our iniquities.*

Arousing oneself to take hold of God in prayer.

**Genesis 32:24-30** where it says that Jacob wrestled with the Lord, and he wouldn't let go of the Lord until he was blessed.

**Colossians 2:1**, *For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh,*

**Colossians 4:12**, *Epaphras, who is one of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.*

Prayer is a battle, an agonizing experience.

A certain paradox between the sovereignty of God and fervent prayer, but the Bible teaches us to pray fervently.

**Ephesians 6:18-20**, *praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—<sup>19</sup> and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel,<sup>20</sup> for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.*

Pray for me.

**Colossians 4:2**, *Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving;*

The battle is great, and we need your prayers.

**1 Thessalonians 5:25**, *Brethren, pray for us.*

We need divine help.

**2 Thessalonians 3:1-2**, *Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified, just as it is with you,<sup>2</sup> and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for not all have faith.*

This was common for Paul to do.

I pray for you. You pray for me.

Paul has three specific requests in mind.

One is for his safety.

*V 31, that I may be delivered from those in Judea who do not believe, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints,*

Jewish leadership in Jerusalem hounding Paul that ultimately brought about the death of Christ.

It's the same hostility still there.

He knows he will meet them on his return with the money and the Gentiles, he knows it.

**a) Pray for me and for my safety.**

**Acts 9**, the conversion of Paul.

He has just converted to Christ, come out of Judaism into the New Covenant. He now knows Christ, he preaches Christ.

As soon as had he been converted and baptized.

Immediately he preached Christ in the synagogues.

He goes to a synagogue and preach that Jesus is God's Son.

All were amazed and said isn't this the same person who was persecuting Christians and now he is saying Christ is the Son of God.

He proved Jesus to be the Messiah.

### **What was their response?**

**Acts 9:23**, *Now after many days were past, the Jews plotted to kill him.*

Because of his fearless preaching they wanted to kill him.

He had hostility from the very beginning.

He had been away for three years in Nabatean in Arabia where God had prepared his heart.

When he came back and began to preach right after his conversion with that little interlude of three years, when he came back the hostility began.

As soon as he reaches back the persecution broke out and they were after him.

Paul got on a basket, and he escaped Damascus where the Jews wanted to kill him.

### **How did Paul escape?**

They let him out of a basket.

**Acts 9:29-30**, *And he spoke boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus and disputed against the Hellenists, but they attempted to kill him. <sup>30</sup> When the brethren found out, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him out to Tarsus.*

The brothers got him and sent him to Tarsus. Go to Tarsus and cool off a little. Then had the churches rest.

When Paul started to preach, they not only persecuted him, but they persecuted all the Christians.

The churches grew and were strengthened. It didn't take long.

### **Acts 20.**

Paul is in Macedonia and preaching around that area and comes into Greece. He was there three months. It took only three months and the Jews plotted against him. As he was about to sail into Syria they set a plot for him.

During those three months he wrote Romans and sent it off with Phoebe, who was a deaconess at the church at Cenchrea.

After the winter had passed, he planned to take a trip by ship from Cenchrea to Jerusalem to be there for Passover. But a change in plans made him delay it 50 days so he wouldn't get there till Pentecost.

But here he is preaching for three months and the same reaction. Here are these Jews who are angry, they are furious.

**Acts 20:19**, *servng the Lord with all humility, with many tears and trials which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews;*

He was getting used to their plotting, their hostility. Everywhere he went they were after him, they wanted him removed, they wanted him dead.

**1 Corinthians 15:30-31**, *And why do we stand in jeopardy every hour? <sup>31</sup> I affirm, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.*

**Acts 20:22-24**, *And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, <sup>23</sup> except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me. <sup>24</sup> But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.*

I am not going to worry about whether I live or die, that's immaterial to me. I just need to finish the project.

I need to get the money back there and try to bring the Jewish and Gentile factions of the church together.

I want to do what the Lord wants me to do. I am bound in my spirit. I am strongly compelled to do this.

Self-preservation was absolutely no issue to this man. He had no regard for self-preservation.

Paul was constantly under the threat of death at the hands of the Jews.

**b) Prayer for acceptance.**

*V 31, that I may be delivered from those in Judea who do not believe, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints,*

**How do you pray for your pastor?**

**How do you pray for your missionaries?**

**How do you pray for those who serve?**

Pray that the saints will accept the offering.

**Why wouldn't they?**

Because some of those saints were also so strongly Jewish that they were hostile to the Gentiles, too.

There was much opposition to Gentile conversion and Gentile inclusion into the early church. Even some believing Jews resented Paul for renouncing the old ceremonies.

There were many Jews who were still hung up on their old Jewish habits. Paul feared that they might see this as little more than a bribe to make them accept Paul and make them accept

the Gentiles. It was by no means certain that they would accept the gift.

Also, they would like to know whether this money was collected properly with proper explanation.

**c) Pray for the fulfilment of my plans.**

*V 32, that I may come to you with joy by the will of God, and may be refreshed together with you.*

Pray for the goal. Pray that I will get to Rome with joy, that I will come with a joyful heart in the will of God and be refreshed with you.

Ignatius, the early church father, prayed that he might be crowned with the honour of martyrdom. Not Paul.

Paul says pray that I get through and back to you alive. He was more concerned with the glorification of Christ than the glorification through martyrdom of Paul.

Duty first, then glory later.

He sought the refreshment of the redeemed people in Rome.

Serving in the will of God believing in the precision of gifts and callings, commitment to the providence of God as He works out the circumstances does not mean we don't pray.

Any theology that weakens a believer's commitment to prayer is heresy.

**Did Paul's prayers and those of his Roman prayer partners get a positive answer?**

Sure did.

**Did he experience safety?**

Yes.

When he got to Jerusalem the mob tried to kill him and the Romans rescued him.

The Jews said that to transfer him from the jail and bring him over here and we want to discuss his case again. The whole idea was to kill him on the way. But his sister's son heard about it and warned him. He was saved again.

Then safety brought him to Caesarea and literally the whole Roman guard guarded him for two years to keep the Jews from killing him. They got the whole Roman army together to just answer that prayer.

God does whatever He has to do.  
Yes, the prayer was answered. He was safe.

### **Was he accepted?**

Yes!

When he got there, they received him wonderfully.

*Acts 21:17, And when we had come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly.*

Their prayers were answered. The plots of the Jews were foiled. They never did kill him.

### **Did he ever get to Rome?**

Paul did.

The Romans themselves sent him there so that he could have a trial before Caesar. After two years of being kept a prisoner for his own sake in Caesarea, they then sent him to Rome.

There was a terrible shipwreck. But not only did Paul escape but so did everybody else on board, Acts 27. He made it to Rome.

The testimony to the power of prayer.

### **What does it take to serve in the will of God?**

Precision, serving in the will of God means I know my gifts, I know my callings and I maximize my life in those areas.

Serving in the will of God means I understand the providence of God. I never worry and fret because God is in control of all the circumstances.

Serving in the will of God means I plan, and I set goals and I dream, and I establish targets and I give my whole heart to that kind of planning.

But it also means that I know my priority for the moment. None of my plans cause me to be ineffective in the present.

Doing the will of God also means purpose.

I do what I do for the Lord's sake, so persecution isn't a big issue because for His sake and the love of the Holy Spirit.

Serving in the will of God demands prayer, intense prayer on the part of God's people. We need to be praying for each other. I need to pray more faithfully and regularly for those who serve alongside me and for you.

You need to pray more faithfully and regularly and intensely over the spiritual battle that is engaging all around you among the people you know and love as well as those who lead and serve you in the church.

All of these we see, as we get a glimpse into the heart of Paul, are the factors of ministry in the will of God.

Paul closes this chapter before some final words of commendation with a beautiful and simple benediction.

**V 33,**"Now the God of peace be with you all, amen."

The God of peace is to say that God is the source of peace. God is the source of peace in two ways.

He provides peace with Him. Before you came to Christ you were at war with God. In Christ you are saved, you make peace with God. We call that peace with God.

God also provides the peace of God which is the settled heart confidence that all is well that removes anxiety and brings tranquillity to the soul.

He is the God of peace, He reconciles men to Himself. He is the God of peace, He brings tranquillity to the reconciled soul.

Paul was a man who lived in constant turmoil and yet never lost the sense of peace because he functioned in the will of God.