

The High Cost of an Unbroken Will

World Wars I and II brought indescribable pain and suffering to millions of people, brought death to millions more, and possibly 1.5 trillion dollars or more worth of damage. In today's world, violent crime is up 467%, the number of incarcerated criminals up 463%, and out of wedlock births up 461% all in the last 40 years. Is it too simplistic to say it is all because of the unbroken will?

As we can see from the statistics above, the human will is nothing to trifle with. The will is a part of what makes you. It is one of the three major aspects of the mind. The intellect is comprised of thinking and memory functions and processing of the information received from the senses. Proverbs 23:7 "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he." It would also include our conscience and personality makeup. Our intellect develops our philosophy of life— our world view.

Our emotions, what the Bible calls "the heart", activate feeling and movement. How we feel is influenced by our life's experiences, education, beliefs, and by our inherited temperament.

Our will then is a drive or desire that is derived from our emotions and intellect. It is influenced by temperament, parental training, life's experiences, and by what the senses pick up, but in an adult it is a conscious choice. Because it is a conscious choice we bear responsibility for what our will chooses.

The Bible has much to say about our will. We are either following the will of the flesh (our carnal nature) or the will of God. The will of the flesh is referred to in Eph 2:3. "Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." The word "desires" in this verse is often translated "will." It is also noted in 1 Peter 4:3. "For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries."

The will of God as expressed in the heart of the believer is noted in verses like Eph 6:6. "Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart." Also in 1 Peter 4:1-2, "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God."

How does our carnal human will take on the likeness of the will of God? Several things make this happen. First and most importantly is the new birth and a life of repentance. It changes our focus. 2 Co 5:17 "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." But does this automatically change our

will? No. The new birth makes us a new creature through the grace of God and the blood of Jesus Christ but our will is only changed when we choose, determine, or desire it to. It is only when self life is broken that we become instruments that God can use. We either choose to allow God to break our will or in the end we become a casualty of high cost. We are free moral agents; God provides the means- we choose our destiny.

Proper child training is also very influential in the developmental stages of life to help a will conform to God. Proverbs 22:6 “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” The dedication, example, and perseverance of Christian parents go a long way to bend the will toward God. Sometimes we hear the phrase- “Breaking the will of the child.” The will of a child is not a bad thing, it should not be broken. It is healthy to have opinions, even strong ones- if they are right ones. It takes the wisdom of God to know when to punish or encourage an expression of the will. It needs training, guiding, and bending to conform to the image of the Father.

A study of the life of King Saul brings out many truths regarding our will. In the introduction to his life that we have in the chapters of I Samuel 9-11, we have several indications that his will was conformed to do right. Chapter 10 verse 9 tells us that “God gave him another heart”, a confirmation of the phrase in verse 10 - “The Spirit of the Lord came upon him.” The humility he showed when he was crowned king in 10:22 is noteworthy. And the Spirit of the Lord moved him to action against the violence of the Ammonites in 11:6.

But something begins to happen by chapter 13. He becomes impatient while waiting for Samuel to appear, and disobeys him and God by offering a sacrifice. From this time forward his will toward God fades away and is replaced by a downhill slide away from truth. We can trace this slide as follows:

Chapter 14: 24 - 46 He places a foolish curse on any man of Israel who eats food before a battle- showing his lack of judgment and self-centeredness.

Chapter 15 We see his direct disobedience, rebellion, and open defiance of God’s command to utterly destroy the Amalekites.

Chapter 18 Jealousy and envy in his heart drove him to throw a javelin at David.

Chapter 20: 30-33 His maniacal anger leads him to attempt to murder his own son.

Chapter 22 He orders Doeg, the Edomite, to murder the priests of God because of the help they give to David.

Chapter 23-27 Details his war against David, even though he knew that David was God’s anointed.

Chapter 28 He dabbles in the occult and actively enlists the help of a witch to give him the direction he so desperately needs because of God’s silence.

Chapter 31:5-6 The sad end. Saul commits suicide.

What is the cost of an unbroken will? Romans 1:18-32 paints a bleak and sordid picture of those with unbroken wills. It seems the longer God allows time to last, the clearer we can see the depravity in society around us. The cost is very high and getting higher. See especially Romans 1:28-32 “And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.”

What is the cost? The cost is death. It is first of all a spiritual death. This death occurs while the individual still lives. Relationships suffer, church support lags, conflicts abound, strife is rampant, and bitterness grows deep. Philippians 3:17-19 “Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. (for many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)” Finally, it brings an eternal death. Galatians 6:8 “For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption.” Romans 8:6-7 “For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” Revelation 20:14-15 “And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”

What is the remedy? First, by surrendering to Jesus Christ—Luke 20:17-18 “And he beheld them, and said, What is this then that is written, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner? Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder”. Also by the renewing of our mind- 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”.

May we be faithful in allowing the godly influences around us, the examples of faithfulness in our time, and the Word of God to daily conform our wills to His divine nature. 2 Peter 1:3-4 “According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust”.

~David Sweigart