

A STRONG WILL

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Each of us has his own individual will. With that will we resolve to do all kinds of things, some insignificant and others quite significant. Some deeds require more will than others. That is, it takes more resolve of the heart to do certain things than it does to do others. It would take far more will to confront someone trying to break into your house than it would to go out to fetch the morning paper. With some matters we really have to focus and brace ourselves in order to accomplish what it is that we have decided to do. According to the Bible, we need the will to:

Comprehend. Most of us can identify with the concept: “I don’t want to hear that.” We may say such a thing upon hearing something trivial but detrimental to someone’s reputation. We may, in some settings, hear far more than we really wanted to know. It is better that some things not be learned. However, when it comes to the saving of my soul, I cannot afford the “luxury” of not wanting to know what it is whereby my soul can be saved. Jesus said, “If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself” (Jno. 7:17). I must force myself, if necessary, to be honest. Indeed, I must be honest enough to want to know the Father’s will! I must be honest enough with myself to realize whether or not I am hungering and thirsting after righteousness. It is only the honest and good heart that makes it to glory (Luke 8:15). It is only by being honest about my soul that I can in God’s eyes become good.

Control. Solomon long ago said, “He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city” (Prov. 16:32). Much later James warns us, “Ye know this, my beloved brethren. But let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God” (Jas. 1:19, 20). When we think of mighty men, we usually think of feats of strength and courage in physical combat or such like. But the mighty are not as significant as one who can control his anger. And the man who can control his passions is better than the man who can take a city. Of course, the New Testament teaches us that in the matter of self-control we do indeed need God’s help, and that help is given to all those who become his children (cf. Rom. 8:14; Gal. 5:23). We need the will to want God’s help in this crucial matter. There are various passages where God tells us, as his children, what we are to do (cf. Eph. 6:10ff), and then there are passages where we are told that God will indeed help us (cf. Phil. 1:6; Col. 1:9-12).

Confess. Everyone in becoming a Christian makes what the New Testament terms “the good confession.” This is the confession that Jesus made before Governor Pilate (1 Tim. 6:12). Paul encouraged Timothy to be faithful to that confession. It is the confession that a penitent believer makes prior to his being baptized into Christ. But even before the Christian era began, the Lord commanded of his twelve apostles that in their first commission that they confess him before men (Matt. 10:31, 32). As they preached to the house of Israel, they were to confess the Christ. Furthermore, Jesus told them that if they refused to confess him, that he would refuse to confess them before the Father. In fact, these words regarding the matter of confession refer to any man. Paul later reminded the Roman brethren: “because if thou shalt

confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved: for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Rom. 10:9, 10). This was said to those who had already been baptized into Christ (Rom. 6:3, 4). And in harmony with his words to his apostles in Matthew 10: 31, 32 when we come to *Revelation*, we find that Jesus promises through John that to every Christian who “overcomes” he will confess his name before his Father and before his angels “(Rev. 3:5).

Confront. The church must confront religious error. Like David of old, we must “hate every false way” (Psalm 119:104). The gospel and the church in the book of Acts are referred to as “the Way” (Acts 19:9; 24:14). Any “way” that is not that “way” is the wrong way. After all, Jesus is the only way (Jno. 14:6). We must earnestly contend for the once for all delivered to the saints faith (Jude 3). There is only one faith (Eph. 4:5). We must reprove the works of darkness (Eph. 5:11). With the help of God’s Holy Spirit, since he is joined to our spirit (1 Cor. 6:16, 17), we must confront the “works of the flesh” in our own lives and show the world that there is reason for hope (Gal. 5:17, 22-24; 1 Pet. 3:15).