

Be Clay

Thy will be done

In Matthew 6 Jesus teaches us how to pray. Jesus teaches a prayer using the line, “your will be done.” Those who are followers of Jesus are to pray this. I was taught this prayer as a child, but no one showed me how to do God’s will. For me to learn it, I had to become a student willing to learn. I invite you to do the same.

Isaiah 6:48 But now, O Lord, You are our Father; We are the clay, and You our potter; And all we are the work of Your hand.

God is love and if I am going to do God’s will, I need to see how to love more and more. If the potter is love and I am clay, I will give my thoughts more toward love. The potter will be forming me with love to be love. But I must choose to be clay to what forms love. I must choose to be soft clay that gives in to be formed more in love.

I can choose to be hard clay and resist love. I can choose to ignore the call to be love. I can focus on being tough, hard, and unbreakable. I can be without care. I choose inwardly which spirit and attitude to obey. Either a humble submissiveness to love or a hard protectiveness toward detachment. To be clay, I must choose humility.

Let’s choose to be soft clay and learn more how to accept formation into God’s love. Let’s learn from God like a new student who doesn’t know anything and is ready to soak up spiritual teachings.

Page 62 of Alcoholics Anonymous says it this way, “. . . God was going to be our Director. He is the Principal; we are His agents. He is the Father, and we are His children.”

It’s a good idea to meditate upon this each day and let it sink deep into our being.

Spiritual Foolishness

We are going to discuss spiritual foolishness. I redirect myself a lot from focussing upon problems. I try to focus on solutions. However, we must guard against ourselves, our own thinking. We all have dangerous thinking that can lead us into misguided choices. We can all do something about it. Each day we can rely more upon God than ourselves.

Some of us may struggle with this idea and think we can't. We may decide it is not for us. This can be dangerous thinking. We can be convinced not to accept new and different Godly beliefs into our being. One of the essentials in recovery is to be open minded. People cannot change unless they are willing to be changed and be different than who they currently are. Becoming open minded is a process for many of us.

When I began my journey, I had to argue with myself to just let other people help me, because letting others help me would mean I owe someone a debt. And I would not allow that. This idea went against my beliefs. In fact, most of what I was told to do in recovery went against my beliefs. I just couldn't understand how these ideas could work. But I was curious to test them.

There are many instructions in the Bible that can go against our beliefs. We can instinctively and quickly decide not to do them. Acting upon the instructions can be so different it can threaten our identity. Our being can instinctively resist out of self-protection of our identity.

We can quickly choose to obey our immediate fear away from obeying God. We can quickly close our mind from the instructions without taking any steps to test them.

Such a snap decision without testing can keep us from learning. Making choices like this without reasoning the pros and cons can be without discernment. We can learn to understand what guides our choices better and gain strength to correct them, if we are willing.

We must think about our thinking and learn our disbelief. With a willing mind we can seek to make corrections. We must grow discernment to

make better choices. Spiritual discernment will involve more objective analysis with the pros and cons of spiritual reality. We will need more humility to see where we can correct our own beliefs. We will need to admit where we are wrong in our thinking.

I believe everyone has the ability to learn how to think deeper about thoughts, choices, and character. I believe with God, all things are possible. But we first need to be willing to trust God's ideas more than our own. The only way to do that is to grow our understanding to learn God's ideas and know just how good they really are through experience.

If I keep responding quickly without examination I will be reacting with preprogrammed habitual responses and not change. Nothing new can happen. I must be willing to let my current identity change to be more with God's purposes.

We need to learn how to stop making snap decisions. We need to examine errors in our thinking longer and discover more Godly ones to practice as replacements. We all motivate ourselves and convince ourselves toward action. We must build ways to motivate ourselves to live by God's righteous ways.

Our ideas about spiritual information can be in error. We must learn as directly as possible how the Bible and the Spirit work together to teach us spiritual realities. We all sin so that means our thinking misses the mark. To improve requires investigation and correction. Thoughts and choices can be created based upon fear, resentment, self-seeking and many other forms of sin. We must identify these thoughts and replace them.

We are instructed to serve God. Either we do it or we don't. We act upon our beliefs. What we believe is our faith. We tend to follow what we seek.

Ephesians 5:15-17 See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord *is*.

We ought to think about how well we "understand what the will of the Lord is." Can we teach this to others and share from our own personal experiences what it is like to do that will? I believe this is what Christians are to do.

Ephesians 5 uses the word “circumspectly”

biblehub.com defines the word circumspectly as “with exactness”

Some might think, “no one can be perfect,” then believe that thought and immediately give up trying. They become convinced not to give themselves to God, believing it is not possible. They can think it’s easier that way.

But none of this is true. Being perfect is simply giving our all to love God. Thinking a life is better with less love and peace is not true. It’s better to struggle imperfectly growing into perfection. God wants us to change. In John 15 Jesus says how. We can change and improve. We can. When our thoughts begin to resist we can choose to set that thinking aside, knowing it is wrong. We must identify and humble our foolish thinking.

There is a quote used in the Book Alcoholics Anonymous in the section called “Spiritual Experience.” Here is the quote:

“There is a principle which is a bar against all information, which is proof against all arguments and which cannot fail to keep a man in everlasting ignorance—that principle is contempt prior to investigation.” —Herbert Spencer

We must investigate and do it daily. We make guesses, assumptions, and draw conclusions about many things everyday. We will be wrong at times. All of us. We must be watchful and be open to being wrong.

Correction

Jesus corrected many. Paul corrected churches. Disciples were often corrected and needed to give into such correction. Churches needed to give into correction. Jesus did not follow the crowd. Jesus followed God. Biblical Christians grow to be more like Jesus beyond the crowd and that includes churches. For more information about Biblical Christian behavior please visit www.inwardauthority.com or do a concordance search using the word Christian.

2 Timothy 4:3-5 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

2 Timothy says, “turn their ears from the truth.” Do we “turn (our) ears from the truth” when it becomes challenging or uncomfortable? Do we select truth we want and quiet truth we don’t? What thoughts do we have when told to serve God and do God’s will in all things each day?

We need more teaching on Bible discernment. Here are some simple ways to learn discernment:

1. Learn the difference between fact and opinion. Practice separating fact from opinion within our own thoughts and words. It is easy to unconsciously learn facts and then reframe it with our own views or opinions. It’s good practice to verify our conclusions. There could be a difference between what the Bible says and what we think it says.
2. Learning the Bible directly involves us reading it ourselves. Are we learning about the Bible through other people? This is information about how to save souls. Lives are at stake. Isn’t that worth more investigation? Inward Authority is to help make the investigation process easier. Discerning the information involves much time putting the pieces together.
3. We will need experience with the Bibles instructions to get new inward information about love and peace. We can use this evidence to help us discern spiritual things. Experience with spiritual things like mercy and forgiveness involves new spiritual sensations that can be educational in nature. We can learn best about love by doing it. God is love.

We absolutely must learn uncomfortable truth that can challenge us to grow. Sticking to information that is tolerable and comfortable may have little affect toward spiritual improvement.

We can learn to discern better truth more objectively through testing. One way I do it is to think to myself, maybe I’m not seeing the whole picture

here. Maybe I'm wrong or maybe the other person is right. Maybe there is something I can learn here about myself. Is there something more here that I might be missing?

Emotional reactions can often lead to defensiveness. When emotions like fear or anger raise a defensiveness within me, my mind can slam shut from new information. Resentments, fear, and pride can stunt growth and create much spiritual destruction. We can learn to pause and question ourselves. Pausing can require self-control and strength.

2 Corinthians 10:5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,

We can do this and we are instructed to do it. And yeah, it takes concentration which can feel like work. Learning involves our minds working to figure out new information.

Pride, vanity, resentment, fear, and self-seeking are mental attitudes we have learned that can quickly sabotage our development. Decreasing such mental attitudes are absolutely necessary for us to improve with humility, sincere truth, peace, and love. It takes more energy to restructure. We will be not only learning new Godly ways, but we will at the same time be guarding against faulty thinking. We can do this, but we must accept the struggle.

Some thought messages can involve blaming others for what we choose to do. We must own our choices no matter what and look more closely at how we rationalize them. What logic are we using to make our choices. It's okay to make foolish choices, but it's not good to avoid making corrections.

Words like always and never can close the mind. If I believe I can't do something I won't even try. I simply will not exercise any effort to make it happen. The words always and never predict the future. Our choices will follow the prediction and make it true. It can help improve our discernment and objectivity to correct such future predictions. For more information please learn about Self-fulfilling Prophecy.

The first two steps in 12 step programs involve admitting unmanageability, insanity, and hope in God. These are not easy ideas to accept. Many people struggle with the principles of these steps, admitting wrongs. Few will own and accept that their way of thinking involves foolishness. Yet we cannot rely upon God while we rely upon ourselves. We must believe God knows better than us and listen as a student ready to learn.

We all do things that are foolish, right? Many of us will try to hide it when it happens. We can even hide it from ourselves. Some of us can spend every waking minute hiding from the truth. The second someone says anything faulty about us we can jump into defensiveness. This is a way to hide from truth.

We need humility to see truth that can help us grow. Pride interferes with humility. Pride can disrupt God dependancy. God cannot restore us to sanity unless we are relying upon God. God is love. We grow towards what we think about. If we rely more upon God, we rely more upon love, the way the Bible describes it. We must believe God's ways are better than our own and then let ourselves be changed by them.

Ego deflation is a necessary process in recovery. Lowering our pride and eliminating our defensiveness must happen. This is the same for all people. Didn't Jesus humbly submit to God's will through tremendous suffering and tears. The Apostles testify to this process, that we are to make ourselves less and improve our character with God more.

When defensiveness comes we can evaluate ourselves to see if it is motivated by resentment, fear, pride, or vanity. How are we responding when our ego or pride is challenged?

Every system has error. Religious teachers error. There are many people who believe they have been hurt by religion. People can hold onto resentments toward religion and the Bible. Whatever the reason for our resentments, condoning or continuing in them can only make matters worse. Reconciliation and forgiveness is needed for peace. Blaming and hating can hurt our love. We will need to own our thoughts and attitudes. We will need to keep assessing ourselves for them with humility and prayer to God for willingness to forgive and be at peace.

Learning uncomfortable truth is necessary. Letting go more and more of our resentments will be part of our journey into God's righteousness. Continued humility will be needed. This can mean a drastic change in how we think each and every day. As we grow, our identity will change. We must be okay with being different and even accepting a new and better identity.

We must own our foolishness in order to correct it. To own it, is to look for it, and understand it better. We carefully investigate ourselves diligently to find our errors so we can make corrections.

James 1:23-24 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.

Since ego-deflation is helpful to grow we ought to guard against ego-inflation. Serving God is not about making ourselves look better. Focusing on how right we are is not part of the process. This is spiritual foolishness because it sabotages humble sincere love. God is not about self-love. Self-love is very different from God's love. We can love ourselves without pride, vanity, or arrogance. Loving ourselves God's way means we love ourselves as much as we do our spiritual brothers and sisters.

The greek word móros: is defined at biblehub.com as dull, stupid, foolish.

Foolishness is defined by <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/foolish> as "having or showing a lack of good sense, judgment, or discretion."

Do we lack in good sense, judgment, or discretion or do we think we have perfected such things. It's good to think about our foolishness as normal. If we think it is wrong to be foolish, we might try to avoid it or hide it. That would not be helpful. Instead, we can understand it is normal to make mistakes. It's good to realize we make mistakes everyday. This way, we can see them and be more likely to make corrections.

If we believe that God's ways are better than our own and trust in this principle, then our actions will prove it. But if we live by principles like impatience, lack of tolerance, resentment, fear, dishonesty, and pride we

will be proving a lack of trust in God. Saying we trust God and acting as if we don't may be a lack of good sense and judgment.

Growing in righteousness involves doing things that are not comfortable. Humbling ourselves when we are proud can hurt. Others humbling us can hurt. Life humbling us can hurt. But the humbling process is good. Our minds can progressively develop a complex system of defensiveness and denial. I have been imperfectly walking against my evil desires slowly toward God for many years. It is not easy, but its worth it.

There are some who practice falsehood pretending that everything is wonderful when it is not. This is deceit.

We need to be thoroughly honest. We stop pretending. This falsehood is not with God.

Here are some things that can help us learn more about our foolishness:

1. Watch the series Brain Games
2. Search online about Learned helplessness
3. Read the list of Cognitive Bias at wikipedia - There are over 100 of them. Slowly go through the whole list to find your own.
4. Asch Conformity Experiment
5. Milgrams Obedience Study
6. Learn why we do not notice our own visual blind spot
7. Phantom limb
8. Mandella Affect
9. Heard Mentality
10. Group Think

It is normal for people to learn these ideas and principles and think it doesn't apply to them. When I teach these to children they get amazed and excited, but when I teach them to adults, they respond with far less enthusiasm. Many people do not seem interested in knowing how they are foolish. Yet isn't excepting our weaknesses a great way to humble ourselves. It's not easy standing up in front of proud people saying I am weak, but it's humbling, and that's what God tells us to do, right?

Try asking a loved one, family member, or someone you've been emotionally honest with what your weakness is, chances are they can help

you find it. Then ask them how you can do better and listen. The first step toward growing requires us to really take into our beliefs our weakness so we know what to correct. For more on this please listen to other podcasts. All the podcasts can work together to grow understanding.

God wants us to be down to earth, unafraid, and building loving relationships with each other, including ourselves. To really love others and experience love, we must practice humility. We are not to be self-seeking nor resentful. So when we think this way, it's foolish.

For more about foolish teachings and the word foolish in the Bible please go to www.inwardauthority.com and find the notes for this podcast.

I have found it helpful to humble myself with the idea that there is a fool within me trying to keep me from growing in God's righteousness. Each day I need to discern whether I am going to follow the fool or follow God. To be clay for the potter is to create within me an open mind to God's instructions and trust them.

Thy will, not mine, be done.

Thank you for listening and God bless.

Foolish Teachings

There are many foolish teaching out there. Since we all sin and experience foolishness, every teacher, including myself, will have foolish teaching.

We must work together to practice objective analysis with teaching. A whole Chapter is written on this in 2 Peter 2.

I'm a fool. I get foolish ideas. I can say foolish things. Sometimes things I say that can seem foolish can be good, and some things I say that can see good can be foolish. Discernment, deeper thought, examination, and testing are so important. We can learn to separate facts from opinions. We can study the Bible on our own to learn more accurately what it says.

The word 'Fool' appears 196 times in the NKJV.

That's a lot. It appears in 29 books of the Bible. And Jesus uses it seven times in the Book of Matthew. The word has depth, meaning, and purpose. We ought to objectively see how it affects our spiritual conditioning.

The word 'Hypocrite' appears 41 times in the Bible. Jesus uses this word 15 times in the Book of Matthew.

We ought to lower our defensiveness and humble ourselves to find our foolishness.

Do we resist correction? Do we avoid it? Do we hate it.

What is hating correction? I hate correction. I do. When I show my wife my writing I feel fear. She is an editor. I mean when I speak to her I believe she imagines the my spoken words appearing like close caption on the screen. When she reads my material the first thing she evaluates is the writing. This has helped me improve my writing tremendously, but I hate the feeling of being corrected.

I don't like hearing the dentist tell me to floss more. I don't like the doctor telling me to do more cardio exercise. It's uncomfortable to acknowledge my imperfections, but they exist. The only correction that I really need to improve with is toward God. I need to continue to grow in God's righteousness. I must not hate correction toward Godly character.

Proverbs 12:1 Whoever loves instruction loves knowledge, But he who hates correction *is* stupid. A good *man* obtains favor from the Lord, But a man of wicked intentions He will condemn. A man is not established by wickedness, But the root of the righteous cannot be moved.

I had to learn to read the Bible in a way where I am looking for instruction on how to improve my behavior and character. When proverbs 12 describes how good it is to establishing God's righteousness inwardly, I can investigate how to do that better and discover what kind of new action I can take to make it happen.

2 Corinthians 13:5 **Examine** yourselves *as to* whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? —unless indeed you are disqualified.

We need to test ourselves. We need to know ourselves. And we need to accept there are many foolish thoughts created to prevent us from examining and testing. We need to think deep into why we are not learning more about our own inward errors.

Here are some principles we can utilize to prevent us.

We can use excuses. “I’ll do it tomorrow,” “no one else is doing it,” “I don’t have time,” “I don’t feel like it,” “I don’t want to,” or “I can’t.”

Then we can justify, rationalize, or explain why. It may be best for us to imagine God sitting right next to us as we apply this way of thinking. And then try to understand God’s view about it. Are we using facts or opinions?

We need people in our lives that can help reveal this hypocrisy and foolishness. We need people guiding and encouraging us toward solutions whether comfortable or uncomfortable.

Sometimes I’m the one that is stupid. And because I know I’m foolish and stupid, I know I need to keep alert. My pride, defensiveness, and anger can often be indicators of my foolishness. The first solution steps are always toward humility, examining and testing myself for Righteousness, and to see where I am missing the mark.

Right Foundation

The Rock

Luke 6:46 - 49 “But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do the things which I say? Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like: He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock. But he who heard and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth

without a foundation, against which the stream beat vehemently; and immediately it fell. And the ruin of that house was great.”

Jesus seems to be implying here that if we call Jesus ‘Lord,’ then we should do what Jesus says. If we are to lay our foundation on the rock, we need to understand what Jesus is saying and do it. And we ought to be careful to do it correctly.

There are people who build homes on poor foundation. It happens. And time reveals the consequences.

Deuteronomy 32:4 *He is the **Rock**, His work is perfect; For all His ways are justice, A God of truth and without injustice; Righteous and upright is He.*

On what principles do you make choices? God’s or the world’s?