

Three Wills of God?

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Romans 12:2

“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

The will of God for His people includes everything He desires for all of His people. It includes all revealed truth and doctrine as well as conduct, attitudes and actions; the good works in which He has ordained that we should all walk. (*Ephesians 2:10*)

All the will of God is good, acceptable and perfect; beneficial, pleasing and complete. God wants all of His children to experience all that His grace has provided for them. The sad reality, though, is that not all of God’s people choose to walk in all the will of God.

The will of God can be likened to a large banquet table full of food. Everything on that table is beneficial, pleasing and completely satisfying and completely the will of God. God desires everyone to eat everything on that table. Too many Christians only pick and choose what they are going to eat. Whatever they choose off God’s banqueting table will be beneficial, pleasing and completely satisfying and perfect, but they will miss out on the other good

things that God had prepared for them. There is loss of blessing and reward in this life and in eternity for choosing not to accept all that God has for you.

God does not have three separate banqueting tables to choose from; one table labeled "good," another table labeled "pleasing," and a third labeled, "perfect." He wants all of His people to eat all of what has been provided and placed on the spiritual banqueting table of His will. There are degrees of faith, but not degrees of God's will.

The following is an explanation of the Greek text of Romans 12:2 from a Bible question and answer website. I do not know the author, but agree with his concise explanation of the Greek that agrees with other trustworthy Greek scholars like Dr. Wuest.

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by Michael V. Frazier

The following is my response to a question posed to me asking if Romans 12:2 implies three separate wills of God.

I believe your question focuses primarily on the section of text that reads, "that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

That portion in the Greek reads, "εἰς τὸ δοκιμάζειν ὑμᾶς τί τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ εὐάρεστον καὶ τέλειον." (There is no difference between the Textus Receptus and the Critical Text,

so there is no need to get into those issues, thankfully.)

Let's break it down:

εἰς [FOR] τὸ [THE] δοκιμάζειν [TO PROVE] ὑμᾶς [BY YOU] τί [WHAT] τὸ [THE] θέλημα [WILL] τοῦ [OF] θεοῦ [GOD] τὸ [THE] ἀγαθὸν [GOOD] καὶ [AND] εὐάρεστον [WELL-PLEASING] καὶ [AND] τέλειον [PERFECT]. There is an implied verb [IS].

Take note that will of God precedes the words good and well-pleasing and perfect, and that there is a definite article the which separates the two phrases. This is an example in the Greek language of a **Restrictive Use of the Attributive Adjective.** Normally, the attributive adjective in Greek takes on an Article-Adjective-Noun format, e.g., the brown dog; the small house; the curious boy. But the Restrictive Use takes on the the form of Article-Noun-Article-Adjective. This form is used to give more emphasis to the noun that the adjective modifies.

A good example of the Restrictive Use of the Attributive Adjective is found in John 10:11 where Jesus says, "I am the good shepherd." In the Greek, the format reads, "I am the shepherd the good" (Article—Noun—Article—Adjective).

Notice that the adjective good follows the second definite article the which modifies the noun shepherd. The form is being used to place special emphasis on shepherd. Unfortunately, the English loses this special emphasis when it is translated into our language.

Now, back to Romans 12:2. The will of God is the noun-phrase that is receiving the extra emphasis

by the adjectives that follow the second definite article in the text: **THE** will of God **THE** good and well-pleasing and perfect.

Since the adjective follows a definite article, the Attribute Adjective form is occasionally regarded as a noun by English speakers. In English, only nouns can be modified by the articles a, an, and the. However, this is not the case with foreign languages such as New Testament Greek.

I hope this answers all your questions, including why some would say these are nouns and others that these are adjectives. The truth is, in Romans 12:2, the words are adjectives being used in a form that reminds English readers of nouns.

Finally, these adjectives are not attempting to describe three separate Wills of God, because θέλημα [WILL] in the original text was singular, not plural.

Wuest N.T. Translation

Romans 12:2

“And stop assuming an outward expression that does not come from within you and is not representative of what you are in your inner being but is patterned after this age; but change your outward expression to one that comes from within and is representative of your inner being, by the renewing of your mind, resulting in your putting to the test what is the will of God, the good and well-pleasing and complete will, and having found that it meets specifications, place your approval upon it.”