

Obey and Serve the Living God

By Senior Pastor Prince Guneratnam

"I can do everything through Him who gives me strength" (Philippians 4:13). The word "everything" needs to be understood. "Everything is permissible for me" - but not everything is beneficial. 'Everything is permissible for me' - but I will not be mastered by anything" (1 Corinthians 6:12)

The Apostle Paul says that everything is permissible or lawful, but we have to make sure that it is helpful or beneficial to us. They may be permissible, but if we do them, we can become a slave to them. The question we must ask is, "Do the things that we do have mastery over us or do we have mastery over them?"

There are two things that we need to consider. First, is the "everything" we do, in the will of God? Second, are we willing to serve and be a servant of God?

Doing the Will of God

Moses was willing to do God's will. God revealed His will to him while he was tending his flock in the wilderness. The Bible says, "There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. So Moses thought, 'I will go over and see this strange sight - why the bush does not burn up.' When the Lord saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, 'Moses! Moses!' And Moses said, 'Here I am.' 'Do not come any closer,' God said. 'Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.' Then He said, 'I am the God of your father, Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.' At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God. The Lord said, 'I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey - the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt'" (Exodus 3:2-10). Moses obeyed and became the deliverer by God's power and might. So can you, if you depend and abide in Christ.

Paul says, "I CAN DO..." in the light of God's will and as his servant. We can do God's will and serve God no matter what the challenge if our source of strength is from God. Jesus in his earthly life had the same challenge. He knew the will of God and was obedient. The Bible said He knelt down and prayed, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done." An angel from heaven appeared to Him and strengthened Him. And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground" (Luke 22:42-44). We can find strength to do God's will if we abide in Him.

Be a Servant of God

Gideon was willing to serve God. In the book of Judges we read, "The angel of the Lord came and sat down under the oak in Ophrah that belonged to Joash the Abierite, where his son Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites. When the angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, he said, 'The Lord is with you, mighty warrior'" (Judges 6:11-12). Though Gideon belonged to the weakest clan in Manasseh and was the least in his family, yet God called him a "mighty warrior". There is a lot of difference between what God thinks of us and what we think of ourselves. Sometimes we do not have faith in ourselves but God has faith in us! Let us have faith in God, who has faith in us.

God was sending Gideon to fight with the Midianites who had been oppressing the Israelites. He wanted Gideon to deliver the Israelites by trusting in His strength for He was the One who had sent him. God had also promised to go with him. As Paul says, "What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Roman 8:31) "No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us" (Roman 8:37). John, the beloved disciple of Jesus, has this to say: "You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in this world" (John 4:4). God's grace is sufficient for every task and challenge that He brings to us.

We often ask, "Lord, why me? " God's answer is: "If I choose somebody who has the ability, power and wisdom to do the task, credit will go to him and not to Me." "But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things - and the thing that are not - to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him" (1 Corinthians 1:27-29). Likewise, God chose Gideon from the weakest clan in Manasseh and who was the least in his family to do His will. God specifically instructed him what to do in order to fulfill His will. "The Lord said to Gideon, 'With the three hundred men that lapped I will save you and give the Midianites into your hands. Let all other man go, each to his own place'" (Judges 7:7). God did this in order that Israel may not boast that her own strength had saved her. The weapons, which they used to fight their battle were only trumpets, empty jars and torches.

These weapons are very significant. The trumpets speak of celebration, which is our praise and worship. Similarly, Jehoshaphat appointed men to sing to the Lord as they went out to their battles, "As they began to sing and praise, the Lord set ambush against the men of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir who were invading Judah, and they were defeated" (2 Chronicles 20:22). Our enemies will be defeated when we praise and worship our God. The empty jars speak of lives that are empty of self and hungry for God. We need to be willing vessels in our Master's hand. The torches speak of the lights that shine for Jesus. Paul says, "Therefore I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God - this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but transformed by the renewing of your mind.

Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - his good, pleasing and perfect will" (Romans 12:1, 2). We can do God's will and serve Him through Christ who strengthens us!

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