THE PURSUIT OF HOLINESS by Jerry Bridges

**Chapter Thirteen– “Holiness and our Wills ” -Philippians 2:13**

**“So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.” (Philippians 2:12-13NASB)**

*“In all that has been said so far about our responsibility for holiness—the necessity of conviction and commitment, perseverance and discipline, and of holiness in body and in spirit—the activity of our wills is always implied. It is the will that ultimately makes each individual choice of whether we will sin or obey. It is the will that chooses to yield to temptation or to say no. Our wills, then, ultimately determine our moral destiny, whether we will be holy or unholy in character and conduct.” (pg. 99)*

**H** ow our wills function is critically important for us to understand. What causes them to turn in

**O** ne direction or another? Why do our wills make the choices they do? Above all else we must

**L** earn how to daily bring our wills into submission and obedience to the will of God. pg. 99

**I** n order to understand how our wills function, let’s review the biblical definition of *the heart*.

**N** ow the word for *heart* in the N.T. is the Greek word “kardia”- It is “the fountain and seat of

**E** motions, thoughts, desires and the activity of the will.” It’s also defined as ”the soul or mind.”

**S** upernatually God implanted all of the complex components of the *heart* in us at creation but

**S** adly were all corrupted & severely damaged through man’s fall in the Garden of Eden. pg.100

**A** s we know, when God originally created us, the mind perfectly understood the will of God,

**N** otably, the will consented to God’s will, and the emotions delighted in doing it. But with the

**D** evastating effects of sin, the mind and the will and the emotions that once worked in perfect harmony began to work against one another and against God. pg.100

**O**  praise God! Due to His saving grace in our lives, our darkened minds are now restored, our

**U** ngodly affections and desires can be redirected, and our perverted wills can be restrained.

**R** enewing our minds (Rom.12:2), setting our affections on things above (Col.3:1) and submitting our wills to God’s (Jam.4:7) is not only a new way of life for the child of God, but is a growing process that we must continually work at with God’s help (pg.100).

**W** hile the will is the determiner of all choices, it is influenced in its choices by many sources.

**I** t may be persuaded by Satan’s lies or our own sinful flesh or even by a loving friend’s counsel.

**L** ittle do we realize how these kinds of influences affect our wills to make the choices we do.

**L** earning to guard our minds and our emotions through **a consistent intake of the Bible** we will

**S** ee the Holy Spirit working in us to conform our wills to His own (Philippians 2:12-13).

“Paul directs us to *set our hearts* on things above, that is, on spiritual values (Col.3:1). The psalmist encourages us to *delight* ourselves in the law of God (Ps. 1:2), and it was said prophetically of Jesus, “I *delight* to do Your will, O my God”, (Ps.40:8NASB). (pg.103)

Ladies, are you setting your desires on spiritual things or earthly things? Are you delighting yourself in the law of God and learning how to bring your will into submission and obedience to the will of God on a “practical, daily, hour-by-hour basis”? What or who are you allowing to influence your mind and your emotions…the world or the Word? What or who are you allowing to influence your choices whether or not you will be holy or unholy in your speech, character and conduct? Do you have a biblical plan--a disciplined way of life that will enable you to stay motivated to holy living?

“Our responsibility regarding our wills is to guard our minds and emotions, being aware of what influences our minds and stimulates our desires. As we do our part, we will see the Spirit of God do His part in making us more holy.” (pg.104)

Pressing onward and looking upward,

Christyn