



Ministry in the Will of God

February 22, 2026

Romans 15:22-33

(Video 57:11)

You know, I couldn't help but think 19 years and three months of faithfully never missing a week and providing those quizzes. You know what that means? That means Manny Statini started that aspect of his ministry when he was 75...75. So, again, you never retire from the Christian life. Thank you again, Manny. What a blessing you are to my soul, all of us.

Okay. Turn, if you will, in your Bibles to Romans chapter 15. Romans chapter 15. You'll recall last week when we read, and I'm not going to read it again for you today. We will be in this passage next week as well. But we're in verses 22 through 33, to the end of the chapter. And I made the comment, you'll recall, that some passages of Scripture and the teachings that they have are very explicit. Pray without ceasing. In everything, give thanks. And on and on. Pretty direct commands. Train up a child in the way that he'll go. And so, direct commands. Pretty explicit. But once in a while, you come across a passage of Scripture that's not as explicit in its teachings, as its teachings are implicit. This is one of those passages. From verse 22 all the way to 33, you've got Paul talking about, for this reason I've often been hindered from coming to you. And I wanted to go to Spain, but I want to come to you first. And then I'm going to do this. And it just seems like he's sort of laying out his plans. It's seemingly a bunch of disconnected thoughts. Well, let me tell you something. This is a part of sacred Scripture. This is divinely inspired text. And therefore, it is profitable for instruction for you and for me. For teaching and reproof. But what is that teaching? What is that instruction? Well, there's a lot of it there. But we're going to unpack some more of it a little bit in the time that we have today before we get to the Lord's table.



He ended up last time pointing out the fact that Paul absolutely is focused on doing nothing that isn't in the will of God. Remember, I recited 1 Corinthians 1:1, 2 Corinthians 1:1, Romans 1:8. I'm Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the will of God, by the will of God, by the will of God. Constantly **by the will of God**. We ended up by saying that in this passage of Scripture, we're given many features of a man, or a woman by analogy, who ministers within the will of God. And by seeing the features that are evident in Paul's life, who was striving to constantly minister in the will of God, you can compare your life and see are those features evident in my life? And if they're not, why not? And therefore, enable you and me to be more and more and more living in the direct center of the will of God. You remember, I used the example last time of Teri and I moving here 45 years ago, and shortly after we got here, you know, Prime hit 21 and a half in the company I came to be a lawyer in, had issues and sold their properties, etc. But through all that vagaries of life, through all those struggles and so forth, one thing we were sure of: We knew we were in the dead center of the will of God when we came here. And that gave us great comfort. Great comfort. And the point of all that was simply when you know, whether it's your ministry, whether it's your job and so forth, there is no secular or sacred in God's economy. It's all supposed to be sanctified. It's all supposed to be holy. We're presenting our life a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God and so forth. And therefore, there is no sacred and secular. We're to be in the will of God in everything we do and looking to bring forth fruit for the Lord.

What are some of these character qualities that are brought out here? Well, we're going to stick our toe in it and see a couple of them, hopefully, this morning. And I want to back up a little bit. Before we jump into verse 22, back up in verse 20. He said, **And thus**, Paul says of Romans 15, **I aspired to preach the gospel, not where Christ was already named, that I might not build upon another man's foundation; but as it is written...** And then he quotes



that passage there from Isaiah. What's the point? Paul, and you'll see this with anybody who has an effective ministry in the will of God, he had a precision. One commentator says, he was precise. I like the word focused. He was laser focused. He didn't try to be everything to everybody. He knew what his calling was. He knew what the will of God was. And I like that word precision. You talk about a precision watch. Someone will say, oh, that's a very expensive time. It's a precision watch. It works, functions perfectly, accurately, right on time, without flaw, without error. Paul had that same sense of precision. He had a precise calling. He knew precisely that he was called to be the apostle to the Gentiles. He absolutely knew that.

You say, what's the point? The point is simply this. Many people can do many things very well. You can be good at a lot of things. But what is a blessing can end up being a curse because the good, a lot of times, swallows up the excellent. The excellent. I remember I was a freshman at Purdue and there was a Charles Schultz cartoon on the thing we were given. Snoopy at the end. I'll spare you the example. But he makes a comment at the end that has stuck with me my entire life. Snoopy is laying on his doghouse at the end with a thought bubble over him. And he says, "There's no heavier burden than a great potential." And you know, that becomes a problem for a lot of people. They're good. They're good at a lot of things. And yet they never seem to seize upon the one that they sense God's good pleasure in the most, and therefore strive to be excellent at it. Most people, if they work hard, almost everybody in this room, I'm assured. If you work hard, you'll be good at whatever you choose to do. But the question is: Are you pursuing God's best, God's perfect will for your life? In whatever it is at any time that you're doing. I'm talking about vocational calling. I'm talking about ministry. I'm talking about everything. You say, well, how do you know? It's a, do you sense God's good pleasure in doing it? And most people don't make the effort to discern that. To discern it. David McKenna called



it *the great economy of effort*. You know what the best illustration of that is? The Lord Himself. Jesus Himself.

The Lord economized His life almost in an amazing way for a being who's absolutely supernatural. Think about it. He never travels more than 90 or 100 miles or so from where He was born. Literally. He doesn't preach the gospel to everybody. He has a defined ministry. I've come to the lost sheep of Israel. The Jews. The lost. And by the way, even among that group, He defines it further. He says, I didn't come to call the righteous. I came to call sinners to repentance. And by the way, a very tight geographical area. Very tight message. Very tight, tight people focus. Very tight timeframe. He only ministers three years. And what's He say in the upper room discourse? Father, I have glorified you on the earth. I have accomplished all that you gave Me to do. And what's he ended up saying on the cross? It's finished. I did it all. Did He preach to every Jew? No. Did he preach to every Gentile? No. Did he heal everybody? No. And yet, He was incredibly focused. He focused on 12 guys. One of them was a traitor. Eleven guys, really, who were faithful. And of those 11, three, Peter, James, and John, were the focal point of most of His time. Very, very precise, focused on doing... He says, I don't do anything that's not the Father's will. Neither should you or I. We need to be in the direct center of God's will in whatever that calling might be. As a matter of fact, think how perfectly parallel and how perfectly lined up that is with the gospel itself. What does Jesus say in Matthew 7:13 and 14? Enter, by the way, this is an aorist imperative. It is a command. **Enter**, Jesus says, **by the narrow gate**. The gate. Why? Why? **For the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction**. Get this. **And many there are who enter in**. But he says, **for the gate is very small and the way is narrow that leads to life**. And get this, **few there are who find it**. People say, oh, you Bible-believing Christians, you are so narrow-minded. Yes, we are. God is very narrow-minded. There's one way to eternal life through the person and work of the Lord



Jesus Christ whose death, burial, and resurrection and atoning work we'll remember towards the end of this service this morning. It is very narrow. It is very narrow. It's a narrow message.

But, you know, to apply that to our calling, Paul didn't try to do everything. He did exactly what he was called. Jesus didn't race anywhere. He wasn't in a hurry. He was always on time. And yet, He did just what He was focused to do. You and I are to do the same.

We say, well, how do you... It just so happened, Teri and I were able to... I was able to share this with a young man to give him some encouragement just a couple of days ago. And it jumped in my head and I reminded and I thought, well, I'm going to share that again with the congregation. True story. True story. There was a man named Harry Winston. Harry Winston was a jeweler. A jeweler's jeweler. He opened a jewelry store in New York City in the 20s and 30s. He died in 1978. Harry Winston was known as the King of Diamonds. During his life and career in jewelry and diamonds, over one-third of the world's most expensive and valuable diamonds, he either owned or worked on or had his hand on in some way or brokered in his lifetime. We're talking... He actually donated the Hope Diamond to the Smithsonian. He worked on the Junker Diamond. He worked on the Star of India. I mean, it's just unbelievable, his career. He was called the King of Diamonds. Harry Winston had a Dutch businessman who he knew had a diamond collection. And this Dutch businessman was looking for a special diamond to complete his collection. Harry Winston called this guy and said, I think I have the perfect stone for you. The guy gets on a plane, flies to New York City, goes into Winston's jewelry store in New York City in Manhattan, and spends almost an entire day with one of Winston's salesmen going over this stone and so on and so forth. After almost a day of doing this, this Dutch collector and businessman said, nah, it's just not for me. And he starts to leave the store. He's going to leave. Harry Winston, across the store, sees this guy walking out. And he goes over and stops him and says, you're leaving. He says, "Yeah, it's just not for me, Harry."



And Harry said, "Well, let's look at it one more time together." They go back and Harry Winston talks to him for less than 30 minutes. And after 30 minutes of time, Harry Winston didn't talk about the carat and the cut. Harry Winston held that diamond and talked about its beauty. In about 30 minutes, the guy says, "I'm going to buy the diamond." He said, in those days, this is a massive number, \$300,000 purchase. As it's being wrapped up to be given to this Dutch businessman, the Dutch businessman turns to Winston and says, "You know, Harry, I've just spent almost an entire day with your salesman. And I said, I was going to leave. In 30 minutes with you, here I am buying the diamond. What's with you?" And Winston said this. He said, "Oh, that man over there, he is my best salesman. He knows about diamonds. He knows cut and carat and quality and clarity. As a matter of fact, he knows more about diamonds than I know." He says, "But I've got one thing that he doesn't have, and I would pay him twice what I pay him now if I could instill it in him." The guy says, "Well, what's that?" He says, "My friend, that man, he knows diamonds. But me, I love them. I love diamonds." That's the difference. You need to prayerfully ask God what it is you're to do. What it is that gives Him good pleasure. And what it is where you sense God's good pleasure on your life. And literally, when you are doing something you love, you know God loves you're doing it because He's given you a love for it. I guarantee you, you literally will be doing the most excellent thing. I won't go into all the reasons why, but I will tell you something. Oh, John, you sacrifice. I sacrifice nothing to be in this pulpit on Sundays. Because you know what? I love sensing God's good pleasure in enabling me to teach the word of God. When you sense that calling on your life, you'll know you're in the very center of God's will. You will be focused.

Turn to Acts chapter 9. Turn to the book of Acts chapter 9. I wanted you to see this so much. And we can unpack more of this, like I said, next week. But in Acts chapter 9, we have this account of the conversion of Saul, the apostle Paul. But I want to walk through it real quick



because I think it underscores some things that will help us along this line in figuring out what it is that gives, that puts you in the perfect will of God. Verse 9, chapter 9:1. ***Now Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, and asked for letters from him to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. And it came about that as he journeyed, he was approaching Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him; And he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" And he said, "Who art thou, Lord?" And He said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting, but rise and enter the city, and it shall be told you what you must do."*** How's that for direct guidance from God, knowing what the will of God is? Now he hasn't been told yet. So he goes on, verse 7. ***The men who traveled with him stood speechless, hearing the voice, but seeing no one. And Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; And leading him by the hand, they brought him into Damascus. And he was there three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank.*** Now, Paul doesn't know this next event. He's just in Damascus three days blind, okay? And he's been told, I, the Lord, will tell you what to do. Verse 10. ***Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias. And the Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Behold, here I am, Lord." And the Lord said to him, "Arise, and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for a man from Tarsus named Saul. For behold, he is praying."*** Underscore that. He doesn't know what God's will for his life is yet. He's been told, "Go to Damascus, and I'll let you know." He doesn't know that God is dealing with this guy named Ananias right now. We know the story. Paul didn't. What's Paul doing? He's praying. What do you think he's praying about? Well, he's just been told by Almighty God, "Hey, I'm going to show you what you're supposed to do." What do you think



he's praying about? God, show me what I'm supposed to do. And that's exactly where you and I are supposed to be. You want to know if you're in the center of God's will, you need to be prayerfully asking God what you are to do in every situation and what is going to give him the greatest glory and ask him to give you that sense of His good pleasure. So, what's he say? Verse 11. Verse 12. ***"And he"***, meaning Paul, ***"has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him, so that he might regain his sight."*** So, God has told Paul in answer to his prayer, I'm going to send you a guy who's going to do this. ***But Ananias answered***, I love this. Ananias has heard of Paul's reputation. This guy's going around killing Christians. He's not so sure he wants to go do this. ***Ananias answered, "Lord, I've heard from many about this man, how much harm he did to Thy saints at Jerusalem; and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call upon Thy name."*** ***But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine,"*** How's that for directly knowing the will of God, Ananias? ***Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine, to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name's sake."*** ***So Ananias departed and entered the house, and after laying his hands on him said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming, has sent me so that you may regain your sight, get this, and be filled with the Holy Spirit. And immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he regained his sight and he arose and was baptized;*** that ought to encourage all of you who got baptized two or three weeks ago. Stop right there. When did Paul get converted? On the Damascus Road? Or three days later when he was indwelt with the Holy Spirit? Some say the former. Some say the latter. I'll tell you what I say. Both. It was a process. He hears God's voice. And he's drawn inexorably to do something. By the way, notice how salvation is always in the first instance of the Lord. You don't cooperate. He's on his way to kill Christians. And God



knocks them down and says, Hey, you're one of mine. And now I'm going to let you know. And that's exactly how salvation comes to every human soul. There are no seekers after God in the first instance. God does the seeking. And he tells him to go. And so, many times it's a process. You learn some truth. You're drawn to Christ. You pray a prayer, whatever. And over time, eventually, the light clicks on and you come to a saving knowledge of Christ. But the thing I want you to see here at verse 9:20. **Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales. And he regained his sight.** What was the first thing Paul saw when the scales fell off. This guy walks up to him. Puts his hands on his eyes. The scales fall off. Paul's what? What's he looking at? He's looking into the face of Ananias. Okay. Do you know what Ananias means? The name Ananias means *God is gracious*. The grace of God grips Paul's life. Talk about wanting to know the will of God. Being told the will of God. Having it with precision.

Let me ask you a question. Does God have a will for your life? Well, yeah. I'm not talking about does God have some general will out there where he's working everything out for good. And you're sort of along for the ride. Does God have a specific perfect will for your, individual, life? The answer is yes. Where are you getting that? Well, many places. Start off with Jeremiah 29:11. **I know the plans I have for you.** For you. Well, you know, that's sort of generally said to Israel as a whole by Jeremiah. So, you know, maybe it didn't... Okay. Let me give you another one. How about Ephesians 2:10. **For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus created for good works...**, don't stop there. ...good works, **which, He, God has foreordained beforehand that we should walk in them.** There's a perfect will for your life. There's a whole series of a gazillion works for you to do that He's ordained for you and me to walk through. He's got a perfect will for your life.

Now, second assumption. Do you think that God wants you to know that will? Absolutely. Proverbs 3:5 and 6. **Trust in the Lord with all your heart... and he will make your paths**



straight. Psalm 32:8. ***I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you shall go; I will guide you with My eye upon you.*** He wants you to know. Good grief. The passage of scripture that started the whole section off back in Romans 12:1 and 2. ***...present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God which is your reasonable service of worship. And, what? be not conformed to this world; but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you might prove*** what? Prove out the ***will of God.*** What is the acceptable perfect good will of God for your life? Okay.

He's got a specific will for you. He wants you to know that specific will. Do you think if you ask Him, He'd let you know? Well, of course. What's it say in James 4:2 and 3? You have not because you ask not. And you ask, you ask amiss. You want to consume it on your lust. And if any of you lacks wisdom, what's wisdom? Wisdom is taking knowledge from the word of God and knowing how to apply it to your life. If any of you lacks that wisdom, just ask and the God who gives wisdom liberally will give it to you. I mean, it's absolutely concrete that He will do that.

And so, God, as the men come up to serve us the Lord's table, I just want to underscore that God has a precision. Come on up, men. God has a precise focus, absolute perfect will for your life and mine. And He is absolutely not only going to answer your prayers if you're in prayer and you're seeking. God, this is the desire of my heart, but if this is not your will for my life, take away this desire and give me a different desire. I want to glorify You, but I want to sense Your good pleasure knowing that I'm in Your perfect will. God's not a cosmic masochist. He is going to answer that prayer. And for starters, what you're going to celebrate and remember as we go to the Lord's table right now, talk about having a perfect will for your life. God chose us, Ephesians 1:4, ***chose us in Him,*** in Christ, ***before the foundation of the world, that we would,*** not should, would, will ***be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined***



us to walk through all those good works. Talk about a perfect will for your life. The cross of Christ is the penultimate, it's the ultimate, I should say, is the pinnacle, example of His good will for your life. He rescued you from an eternal hell, taking your sin, paying that penalty, so that you could live out and fulfill His perfect will in this life and the next.

Yes, come to the Lord's table right now with a sense of tremendous gratitude. But come to the Lord's table with a heart that says, "God, I want to live out Your perfect will for my life. By Your grace, enable me to do so. And by Your grace, I commit to You, I will follow." Men, serve us the elements.

(Video 1:27:25) You talk about living out God's perfect will for your life, think of His agony in the garden. Father, if it's possible, let this cup, this cup of wrath, this cup of judgment, this cup of punishment for sin that I'm about to drink, if it's possible, let this cup pass. Nevertheless, not My will, but Thy will be done. The cross was in the perfect center of the will of God, and it was in the perfect center of God's will for His children's lives. The night before He was crucified, the scriptures say He took the bread and He broke it, gave it to His disciples, and He said, take, eat of this. This is My body that is given for you. And remember, He isn't just talking about His death, He isn't just talking about His body given in sacrifice in a few hours. He's talking about the entire righteous 33+ years of perfect life that is going to get laid to the believers account at the time the believer's sin is placed on Him. With hearts of gratitude, and I pray hearts of humble recommitment to wanting to live in the perfect center of the will of God for your life, let's remember the body of our Christ.

The scriptures also say that in similar fashion, He took the cup. And He said, this is the cup of a new and an everlasting covenant. A new and an everlasting promise that I'm making to you. The old has been fulfilled. The old has been consumed in Me, the Christ. I will not drink of this



fruit of the vine again until I drink it with you one day anew in My Father's kingdom. Ah, once again, God's perfect will for your life. You know Christ. You're forever with Christ. You know Christ. It's God's perfect will for your life that you will reside with Him one day in glory. And until that time, we'll keep walking through all those good works in this earthly life that He has foreordained, gives you the desire to do, gives you the ability to do, enables you by His grace to carry out for His glory, and which not only after doing them, when you go to glory in love, He rewards you for doing what He enabled you to do in the first place. But a greater love than that, no man has that he would lay down his life for his friends. And what did He say in the upper room just hours before the cross? I no longer call you servants, but friends. Let's remember the shed blood of our Christ, a friend of sinners, the blood of Christ.

Father, as Brian comes to lead us in this closing hymn, we once again bow our hearts before You and thank You for loving us so. Help each one of us in the various seasons of life that come, will be with us for years, and then we'll change. But as they do, just as they've done for Manny Statini, just as they will be for all of us in various ways, help us each stage of life to know that we're in the perfect center of Your will because we've sought Your will, because we've sought Your truth in Your word, and because You, in loving guidance, have given us that sense of Your good pleasure in what we do. We thank You for it all. We ask it all. Again, in the matchless name of Yourself and the person of Jesus, our Christ. Amen and amen.