

Being Strong-Willed For the Lord

We have the good fortune of having four of our five grandchildren living near us, including one just born on June 30. All of the local grandchildren are under the age of 3 so you can imagine the joy and challenges we experience being with them. They haven't reached the age of reason so they are single-minded in their desires. If they are hungry they don't want to hear "wait until supper." If they want something they want it now. If they don't want to



The five grandkids were not particularly cooperative when we wanted to take this first picture of all five. They are lined up from left to right, youngest to oldest. Their will and ours was clearly different.

eat something at the dinner table they push it away, hand it to you or they may even dump the plate on the floor. We often refer to it as being "strong-willed." Our oldest grandchild is now four years old and beginning to think creatively on how to get his own way. Attempts to reason with him are really more of a "negotiation." It is fun to watch him lobby for something that he wants. He drives a hard bargain.

In many ways adults are like the grandchildren, often strong-willed in their desires. Sometimes they are relentless and won't settle for anything less than what they want. At other times they are willing to negotiate but always with a goal in mind.

It comes down to our will vs. God's. What God wants us to do is often opposite the tendency of human nature. God wants us to love the unlovable, to embrace those who oppose us, and put ourselves last in the hierarchy. He wants us to run towards opportunities to serve in difficult circumstances while we would prefer to run away from those situations.

The question is, do we give in to God's will for our lives? Do we try to negotiate so we get what we want. An appropriate starting point to seeking the answer to these questions is the familiar verse from Joshua, "*Choose for yourself this day whom you will serve*" (Joshua 24:15). It sounds simple but the choice you make is the compass for your remaining life choices. Make a conscious choice to serve Him or you will go in your own direction. Oswald Chambers said, "Your choice must be a deliberate determination – it is not something into which you will automatically drift. And everything else in your life will be held in temporary suspension until you make a decision." If you make the decision to serve the Lord you become faithful to Jesus Christ and often go against your own human nature. *Then Joshua said, "You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen to serve the LORD* (Joshua 24:22). Now you can make the right choice in God's eyes because you realize that you need to give in to the Lord.

As they get older my grandchildren will begin to consider more than just their own will in their decision making. As they understand right from wrong and follow the direction of adults around them they will begin to make informed choices, and for the right reason. As adults, the same is true with our own desire to understand and please God as we mature in our faith. The goal is for our will to be consistent with God's will. It takes discipline to put God first, others second and ourselves last. Be strong-willed, but let your determination be to serve the Lord. It all starts with the conscious decision of whom you will serve. Let Thy will be done.

Question: What are some examples of when you sought to do *God's will* even though it differed from your own desire?

Prayer: Heavenly Father. At times we are selfish and want our own way. We have our own agenda and goals. Help us to set those aside and instead seek to do Your will. Amen.