

Heidelberg Catechism Lord's Day 49

124. What is the third petition?

"Your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven;" that is, grant that we and all men renounce our own will,¹ and without disputing obey Your will, which alone is good;² so that everyone may fulfill his office and calling as willingly and faithfully³ as the angels do in heaven.⁴

[1] Matt. 16:24. [2] Lk. 22:42; Tit. 2:12. [3] 1 Cor. 7:24. [4] Ps. 103:20–21; *Rom. 12:2; *Heb. 13:21.

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I. What is God's will?

Although God's will is one, the Bible speaks of God's will in different ways:

1. God's eternal will

God works all things after the counsel of His own will.
Eph 1.11

Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases.
Psalm 115.3

The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.
Deuteronomy 29.29

2. God's moral will

For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality.
1 Thes 4.3

God's eternal will refers to what **shall be** (God's decree which infallibly & inevitably comes to pass) and His revealed moral will concerns what **should be** (what God commands us to do).

As it reads in the Westminster Shorter Catechism ...

Q. 7. What are the decrees of God?

A. 7. The decrees of God are, his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.

Q. 39. What is the duty which God requires of man?

A. 39. The duty which God requires of man is obedience to his revealed will.

"God does not intend to bring about everything he values, but he never fails to bring about what he intends"

John Frame

II. How do we respond to God's revealed (moral) will?

And he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, saying, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done."

Luke 22. 41-42

A. We reject our own will

... that we renounce our own will...

Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."

Matthew 16. 24

B. We trust God's will

Your testimonies are wonderful; therefore my soul keeps them.

¹³⁰ *The unfolding of your words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple.*

¹³¹ *I open my mouth and pant, because I long for your commandments.*

¹³⁵ *Make your face shine upon your servant, and teach me your statutes.*

¹³⁶ *My eyes shed streams of tears, because people do not keep your law.*

Psalm 119. 129-131, 135-136

C. We carry out God's will

... and without disputing obey Your will which alone is good ...

Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world ...

Philippians 2. 14-15

Keep steady my steps according to your promise, and let no iniquity get dominion over me.

Psalm 119. 133

Bless the LORD, O you his angels, you mighty ones who do his word, obeying the voice of his word!

Bless the LORD, all his hosts, his ministers, who do his will!

Psalm 103. 20-21