

Fearful Cost of Having Our Own Way

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Study by W. D. Frazee—April 22, 1961

The subject I wish to study with you is the fearful cost of having our own way.

"Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not. Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" Isaiah 53:1-6.

There it is--the fearful cost of having our own way. Calvary stands as the eternal reminder that for me to have my own way is to break the heart of God.

Is not that what every human being naturally seeks after? The little child as it toddles around, what does it want? Ah, it wants its way.

What is the thing that makes problems between the wife and husband in the home? Why is there one divorce out of three marriages today? At least one, and sometimes two, wants what? Their way. You hear it said, "He wants his way all the time. I think I ought to get my way part of the time."

What is it that makes problems in institutions? Wanting my way is the underlying cause of most of it. I want my way. The manager wants his way, of course.

Ah, look where you will over the world. What a toll has been taken. Think of it as it reaches gigantic proportions. Think of an Alexander, a Napoleon, a Hitler, and what do you have? Millions of lives ground to pieces as the chariot rolls over them soul and body. What for? So some man can have his way.

And back of it we see the great, lurking figure of Lucifer, the son of the morning. Way back there before this world was he turned aside from the path that God had arranged and began to seek his own way.

Somebody says, I wouldn't want my way if it was wrong, but my way is right.

That's what Lucifer said. And that's what millions of others have said since. I want my way because it is right.

When we get down under the basic truth, I wonder if sometimes there lingers the flavor that the way is right because it is my way.

But we do not need to look far. We do not even need to look about us. It is closer in our own heart. We all like sheep have gone astray. Every one of us has turned to his own way. And the Lord hath laid on Jesus the iniquity of us all.

What iniquity? The iniquity of turning to our own way.

Since this is a basic problem, I want to study it with you as it begins. Where does it begin? In the home with the infant.

I read something that struck me forcibly in 1 Kings. Here is a man by the name of Adonijah. He was the son of David. David was getting old. Absalom was trying to be king. He met his death. Time passed, and Adonijah conceived an idea. Notice how it is expressed:

"Then Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, I will be king: and he prepared him chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him" 1 Kings 1:5.

I wonder when that started? I find the key to it. How the sacred Word lays bare the problem.

"And his father had not displeased him at any time in saying, Why hast thou done so?" verse 6.

That's it. Think of it. The king of Juda and Israel has an infant. He comes around and cuddles him. He had not displeased him at any time. What a record in successful public relations.

I wonder if there are any parents who are seeking to get or keep in that class with king David?

You say, "That's good. It is nice not to displease people, especially our children."

"Any child that is permitted to have his own way will dishonor God and bring his father and mother to shame" *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, page 325.

Did Adonijah do that? Certainly he did. He led a rebellion against David, his father. And his brother, Absalom, had done the same thing before him, because he had the same kind of training.

Not just Adonijah and Absalom. Not just Hophni and Phinehas. But any child that is permitted to have what? It doesn't say whiskey. It doesn't say a cigarette. It doesn't say a rattlesnake. Any child who is permitted to have his own way will do what? Dishonor God and bring his father and mother to shame.

I suppose we would like to think that poor human nature would always want the right thing. But there is something deeper and more basic in this matter than the problem of simply wanting the wrong way from time to time. There is something in the surrender of the will to constituted authority. There is something in the alignment of the will with the will of God. It is submission. Not what I wish to do or go, for who am I that I should choose my way?

That is the thing I trust that God will bless us with a deeper understanding of, and a deeper appreciation of the privilege of turning aside from that wayward way which cost Calvary and broke the heart of God. For we all like sheep have gone astray. We have turned to our own way. And as a result, the Lord has laid on Jesus the iniquity of us all.

Let's go back to Eden and see what the basic problem is. In Genesis chapter one we have God creating the heaven and earth, filling it with beauty and love. In the second chapter we have a garden home for our first parents. Everything lovely and delightful. In the midst of the garden was the tree of life. But there was one more thing. And lurking in the minds of some people is the thought that right there is where God made a mistake when He arranged a tree in Eden and said, Thou shalt not eat of it.

I want to ask you, did the fruit of that tree have arsenic in it? Did it have opium? No. The third chapter of Genesis says the tree was good for food. Well then, it's all right to take everything that is good, isn't it? That depends upon what God says. Do you see that the basic problem in Eden was not the problem of avoiding poison. It was the problem of submission to the will of God. That's what the basic issue was. And even in Eden man needed a test to see whether he would choose God's way, or turn to his own way. And when the test was brought, what did Adam and Eve do? They turned to their own way. Right there is where everyone of us is tested.

The serpent's argument was that there was nothing wrong with that fruit. It wouldn't hurt them to eat it. The serpent's argument was that he had eaten it, and had acquired the gift of speech. So he said that it surely won't kill you if it has done so many good things for me. But notice the basic problem in the third chapter:

"And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food,
and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired
to make one wise" Genesis 3:6.

Who desired it? Eve did. "She took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat." In other words, she chose her own way. She desired it.

Did God permit her to have her own way? Oh, yes. And it is amazing what God has done through these six thousand years of human history in allowing individuals to have their own way. He does it for several reasons. He has given man the power of choice. He hopes that at least some, by choosing their own way and getting the consequences, will learn before it is eternally too late what a sad thing it is to choose one's own way. And the universe looking on, here in this world and in worlds afar, will learn by the experience of others. Have we learned it, friends? Or are we still choosing our own way?

One of the greatest fears of human beings is that somebody is going to keep them from having their own way. And in most cases they need not worry. They will get it one way or another. But with it comes a disappointment. Any child that is permitted to have his own way will dishonor God and bring his father and mother to shame.

"Children who are allowed to have their own way are not happy" *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, page 202.

I wonder why? What a strange thing. Surely if you would let a child have his own way he would be happy, wouldn't he? No. Why not? Simply because he wasn't made to work that way. The watch wasn't made to tick that way. God made us. He never intended that we should find happiness by having our own way. No. That is selfishness. He intended that we should find our happiness in love. And love is outgoing. Love is thinking of the wishes of others. Specifically, and primarily, God's way. That's the way to be happy. There is no other way.

God intends that the child should learn it in the mothers arms, and in the cradle. And if it were learned then, we could get along without most of our jails and penitentiaries. And we could close up a large share of our hospitals.

To give up the way. Have you learned that lesson? Have you really learned it?

Somebody says, Oh, I give up my way when I am convinced I am wrong. But I dare anybody to convince me.

It is interested in looking through the *Testimonies* for the church and find in them letters and messages addressed to individuals. When we read them we wonder what the individual did with it. There was a letter to an orphan boy. His father and mother died, and he was living with somebody else. He wasn't an infant. He had reached the place where he thought he could act like a man. Looking back on my own boyhood I can imagine about how old he was. So Sister White wasn't writing to an infant or a child, as we think of it. Listen:

"Dear Friend: In the last vision given me, I saw that you had faults to correct. It is necessary for you to see these before you will make the required effort to correct them. You have much to learn before you can form a good, Christian character which God can approve. From your childhood you have been a wayward boy, disposed to have your own way

and to follow your own mind. You have not loved to yield your wishes and will to those who have had the care of you. This is the experience you must obtain" *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, page 307.

Oh, what a paragraph! What a thought to meditate upon. Wouldn't it be a wonderful thing if every child here this morning could learn, before the hair is gray, to love to yield the wishes and will. Then we could have some happy homes. And we are going to learn that before we get to heaven. In heaven everyone there has just one desire. Not to carry out his way, but to yield his wishes and ways to make others happy. This is the cross that Jesus suggests. He more than suggests. He urges that we pick it up and carry it.

"Then said Jesus unto His disciples, If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it"
Matthew 16:24-25.

As we come to the will of God and find it running straight from heaven to earth like a great beam of light reaching down to where we are, we often find that in many ways our own will crosses it. We have our ideas that run counter. We have our plans that we want to carry out, our life that we want to live. And what Jesus wants you and me to do is to recognize that cross, to accept it, and enter in with God into the process by which our rule becomes certainly and finally and eternally aligned with His will. Let me read it:

"All true obedience comes from the heart. It was heart work with Christ. And if we consent, He will so identify Himself with our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His will, that when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses" *The Desire of Ages*, page 668.

"There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" Proverbs 16:25.

So eventually we will have our own way. This is the only way we ever will have our own way. But here is the way to have your own way. Just give it up completely, and eventually you will have something else. You will say, This is what I really wanted, and didn't have sense enough to know it. That's what Jesus meant when He said, Whosoever shall save his life shall lose it.

Oh, how people are battling for their life, their position, their reputation. In the orient it is called face. It is a terrible thing to lose face. Well friends, we had better be willing to lose face and everything back of face, because that is what is going to happen to us before we get through. We will be counted the off scouring of all things. Our name will be cast out as evil as far as this world is concerned. All the evil things that are being said about communists today will be said about commandment keepers with several more thrown in for good measure. And whosoever will save his life will lose it. And whosoever will lose his life, be willing to

lose his reputation, be willing to give up his own way, will find its highest delight in doing Jesus' service.

"When we know God as it is our privilege to know Him, our life will be a life of continual obedience" *The Desire of Ages*, page 668.

Parents, do you see that this is a basic lesson that is important to teach as early as possible? You who have children in your arms, teach it now. If you have children who are partway grown, don't sit and sigh and say you wish you had known this long ago. Thank God, you know it now. Let us put away entirely this idea that comes from Babylon that our business as parents, teachers, youth leaders, is somehow to entice young people to choose the good way thinking it is their own way; to so camouflage the spinach and fix up the other things that are filled with minerals and vitamins that the children say, Oh, I want that. It tastes so good. Of course they will get the minerals and vitamins without knowing anything about it.

Don't misunderstand me. I believe in making health reform attractive. Oh, yes. I believe in all that. But I would hate to get to the place where a mother here on the mountain has gotten. Some time ago my wife was nursing in that mother's home. When it came time for the little fellow to be put to bed, the mother found a way that was most successful to get that little fellow to get undressed and go to bed. It was to tell the little fellow not to do it. My wife heard her say, "Tommy, don't you dare take your clothes off."

From the bedroom would come a voice, "I am undressing Mommy."

"Don't you dare do it Tommy."

"I am doing it Mommy."

That mother had studied the psychology of that boy, and of course he was undressed and in bed before long because he was having his own way. That would be something to report to the PTA or the home and school association, wouldn't it? A wonderful victory on how to get the child to bed early.

Do you see what I am dealing with friends? It isn't always as stark and bald and naked as that. There are thousands of subtle variations on the theme. I know it is very possible to go away to extreme in the other direction, but we are so far from it that we could journey several days before we would need to have very many red lights.

Oh, if we are going to get ready for heaven, and get ready soon, as individuals, students, teachers, parents, children, we must come to grips with this thing. We must see the awful cost of having one's own way. We must come to the place where we love to yield our wishes and will to those who are in proper authority, whether it be in the home, the school, the institution, the church, or in the universe. We must come to the place where we love law, and love to be in harmony with law. And when we do that, friends, we are at peace.

"Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them" Psalm 119:165.

"He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal" John 12:25.

Dear Lord, my will from Thine doth run
Too oft a different way;
I cannot say, Thy will be done
In every darkened day;
My heart grows chilled to see Thy will
Turn all life's gold to gray.

My will is set to gather flowers,
Thine blights them in my hand;
Mine reaches for life's sunny hours,
Thine leads through shadow land.
And all my days go on in ways
I cannot understand.

Yet more and more this truth doth dawn
Through failure and through loss;
The heart that beats transverse to Thine
Doth hereby make its cross.
Thine upright will cuts straight and still,
Through pride and dream and dross.

But if parallel to Thine
My will doth gladly run;
All things in heaven and earth are mine,
My will is crossed by none;
Thou art in me and I in Thee,
Thy will and mine are one.

We all like sheep have gone astray. Let's come back, what do you say? We have turned everyone to his own way. And as the consequence, Calvary. The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

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