

# GRACE GAZETTE

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*Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees. And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.*

*Hebrews 12:12-13*

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## YEAS AND NAYS

*For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that. James 4:15*

There are certain phrases, that are commonly used among people who are somewhat familiar with the Bible, that, while containing some elements of truth are nonetheless not exactly scriptural in the way they are used. One that comes readily to mind that is used quite frequently among those who wish to express the open invitation of CHRIST to sinners is "Well you know the Bible says whosoever will may come." Yet the Bible nowhere says that. John does say in the book of Revelation, "*Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely*" (Rev.22:17); but he is not making a blanket invitation to all of humanity but is specifically addressing those who hear and those who are thirsty. Another one is "*GOD is not willing that any should perish*"; as if to say that the fact that some men perish is something that frustrates GOD's purpose. Yet again this is not at all what the Bible means or says when Peter said, "*The LORD is not slack concerning HIS promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*" (2 Peter 3:9) Once more the statement is not made in a general sense but Peter is speaking of a longsuffering which is directed at a specific group of people. He says to "*usward*". The us is the same as the "*beloved*" in verse 8. Then there is the classic, "the truth will set you free". Once again a close look at the scripture reveals that this is not what the LORD JESUS said. What HE actually said was, "*If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*" (John 8:31-32) Those who are made free by the truth are those who are the disciples of the LORD and have been given an understanding of the truth. (see Mat.13:11; John 16:13) Natural men who have heard the gospel preached and have not been quickened by the SPIRIT are not made free by the truth; because it is foolishness unto them. (see I Cor.2:14)

So we are brought to consider another catch phrase which is widely used by even the children of GOD. How often do we hear the phrase "if it is HIS will"? Now one thing that we can be certain of is that all things are going to be done according HIS will. (see Dan. 4:35; Ps.115:3) But the little phrase; "if it is HIS will" is many times used as a kind of escape clause for us in case anything doesn't work out like we intend. It is even used to excuse our laziness, lack of discipline, and weak commitment. An example of what I mean is this: I am asked to attend a meeting or to perform some service for someone at a future time. I am not sure that I want to do this or not but I don't really want to just come right out and say that, so I say, "sure I'll do that, if the LORD's willing". Now I'm off the hook. If I decide I really don't want to do the thing asked I can always fall back on my "escape clause." Some try to support such action by saying that's what the Bible says in the book of James. Yet a close examination of what James says reveals that what he is actually saying is the opposite of the sentiment expressed in the illustration I just gave. We are instructed in GOD's word to let our yes mean yes and our no mean no. Or in other words say what you mean and mean what you say. To paraphrase what James says in the verse before us (i.e.; 4:15;) rather than saying we are going to do something for a certainty; we should say, we are certainly going to do something if GOD does not take our life. Now obviously as creatures we are always subject to the fact that the unfolding purpose of GOD may cause us to change our course of action, we are neither the captains of our soul nor the masters of our fate. But that fact should

not prevent us from being straightforward and honest with our commitments or expressing our intentions plainly. In speaking to the Corinthians, Paul said, *“But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will”*. (1 Cor 4:19). The Corinthians had no doubt Paul would do everything in his power to come to them and if he did not come, the only reason would be that GOD did not allow him to. So I believe we need to be very careful in the commitments we make, understand that GOD may prevent us from accomplishing those commitments, but don’t allow ourselves to use “GOD’s will” as a way to beat around the bush with those obligations.

Of all people in the world, the true children of GOD, should speak plainly and not be guilty of double-talk. James says, *“But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.”* (James 5:12) I remember as a kid if someone promised to do something and their sincerity was questioned, they might respond with “I swear on a stack of bibles”; as if the quantity of the scriptures sworn upon insured compliance. As the LORD’s children we do not need to swear on anything at all, our word should be our bond. The LORD said, *“A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.”* (Luke 6:45) As the children of GOD let us speak:

**Truthfully.** “Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds.” (Col 3:9) The TRUTH has made us free.

**Plainly.** “Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech” (II Cor 3:12) The truth does not need any enhancement.

**Slowly.** “Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.” (James 1:19) Truth does not require a speedy reply.

**Boldly.** “And they were all filled with the HOLY GHOST, and they spake the word of GOD with boldness.” (Acts 4:31) Speaking truth causes fear to flee away. What can men do to us?

**With grace.** “Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.” (Col 4:6) Knowing truth makes us wise.

**Soundly.** “Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed.” (Titus 2:8) Truth mounts its own defense.

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