

# **GOD'S CALL**

## **Major themes in the Scriptures**

### **The wisdom of God (7)**

#### **Wisdom in creation of man**

**Reference: GDC-S19-007-Mw-R00-P2**

(Originally spoken on 3 May 2015, edited on 8 May 2015)

Web site: <http://www.ajourneyinlife.org> and <http://www.ajourneyinlife.com>

This message is protected by copyright © 2015 Lim Liong. Permission is given to reproduce part (where the meaning is retained and the part is not quoted out of context) or all, of it, for personal use or for distribution, on condition that **no changes are made** and the message is **distributed free** of charge. Please do so prayerfully and discreetly.

Unless otherwise stated, Scripture quotations are taken from the NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE®, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

The paragraphs above as well as this paragraph must be included when the message is reproduced so that others who reproduce it will be conscious of the conditions stated above.

The Lord willing, today we will consider the subject, “The wisdom of God” the seventh message, in seeking to appreciate major themes in the Scriptures.

A short summary of today's message:

God is perfectly good and infinitely wise, but we often do not appreciate His wisdom because we are occupied with the circumstances rather than the moral and spiritual meaning that God wants to bring about. This is seen in His wisdom expressed in His creation of man.

We will seek the Lord to appreciate more of what this means.

As we live in this world, as we see that many people are living their lives in a manner that does not seem to lead anywhere – many are miserable, others are laughing and enjoying themselves, and we in our own lives have many struggles – we may wonder: What is the meaning of it all? Why are we in this world and is there anything good or meaningful that can come out of it?

In reality, the creation of man is an expression of the great wisdom of God, out of His infinite love and kindness. Unless we understand what He is seeking to do and we identify with Him, our lives cannot be of true, lasting and deep meaning. No matter how we try, no matter what we seek for, no matter what we achieve, we will find that life cannot be truly meaningful.

So, it is important for us to seek to understand what is it that God wants to accomplish and from there, we will be able to appreciate His great wisdom in the context of His moral perfection.

The apostle Paul was greatly motivated to preach and teach, to travel and to suffer, to be confronted with great problems and obstacles, all because he believed that he had a very meaningful message to communicate; there was something worthwhile for him to give his life for and he was prepared to go to great lengths in order to accomplish that.

What was at the heart of what the apostle Paul wanted to accomplish?

We read his letter to Timothy and we appreciate how he looked at the mission that God had given to him.

**1 Timothy 1: 5**

But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

He says, "This is the goal of our instruction..." All that he sought to do, to teach, to preach, to urge, was meant to move in this direction.

Yes, there are many different aspects that will arise from there but without this all the other things cannot be properly accomplished.

We must move in this direction: love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. In summary, we can say "good moral character of being".

We must develop this if we want to fulfil what God wants to accomplish. This is what God wants to accomplish: to build in each one of us that purity of love like that which is in the heart of God, how He so loved the world that He was prepared to give His only begotten Son in order to save us.

The Lord Jesus also made it very clear in **Matthew 5: 48**:

**Matthew 5: 48**

"Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect..."

In this context, the Lord Jesus was speaking about moral behaviour. He said it is not enough to be like the Gentiles who do good to those who do good to them, to care for those who would care for you; there must be a purity of love and kindness that goes beyond what we can get in return. "...you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect..." Here, He is referring to moral quality of being.

So, we can see that at the heart of what God wants to accomplish is moral quality of being of the highest level, like that of God Himself.

If we are the creators (like God) and we want to bring about such an outcome, how would we create human beings or moral beings? How would we go about it? What would we do to seek to bring this about?

Perhaps we may think that in order to encourage love from a pure heart, we should create man in an environment that will encourage such behaviour: where there is an atmosphere of love and kindness and beauty and pleasantness, and people living happily together. People will be encouraged to live like that.

At the same time if anyone were to move away from that, remove him – do not let this place be contaminated by people who are evil, ugly, self-centred. Only those who persist in the path that is good will remain and encourage one another in good fellowship being together, doing things happily together.

If there are difficulties and problems, there will be many solutions available very readily. So we need not worry, we need not be anxious, there will be plenty for everybody.

Perhaps that is how we may think in terms of bringing about such a result.

But we know that the way that God has created us is very, very different from that. God has created us with the potential to become the very best in moral quality of being and precisely because of that, He has to make sure that we go through sufficient difficulties, problems, obstacle, suffering and pain in order to be tested and to be trained and to be helped to develop those qualities. How best to do that?

We have considered in the last message, God created the angels. The angels could move about freely; they had significant power to do many things. But God knew that there is a way that can significantly give us the opportunity to go through much suffering, pain and difficulties in order to be tested and to be trained and to be helped: and that is to give us a body.

We may not appreciate this very much, but if we were to spend time to ponder about it – the significance of the body that God has given to us – we may then appreciate the great potential that man has because he is created with a body.

The body is like a house that we live in but it is not like any other house that we live in where we can just walk in and out: if you find this body not so good, you just walk out; change another one – buy a new house. This body is given to you and you will have it all your life on earth.

What are you going to do with it? How are you going to live your life in that body?

Bear in mind that you did not decide what kind of body you will have; God in His sovereignty decided that. Each one of us, we have a body as God sees fit that we should have. From there, you have a responsibility how you take care of it, what you are going to do with it. Just as in a house, all may be given a similar kind of house with various variations but how you take care of the house will subsequently manifest your character, your values, and what will happen to you.

We live in a body where generally we cannot get out of it while on earth. But this is not absolute.

The apostle Paul had an experience where he said he went to heaven – whether in the body or out of the body he did not know – but it was an exceptional experience where he heard and saw things not suitable to mention.

The little girl died and the Lord Jesus raised her from the dead, and we are told her spirit came back to her body.

So the spirit can leave the body, can come back, but as a general rule that is not meant for us. We cannot decide to leave and to come back as we wish. So what would that mean?

It means that the various experiences that we have in this body can be very pleasant, they can be very unpleasant; they can be easy, they can be very difficult; and much of it may be beyond our control.

The question is: How do you respond in such a situation?

Yes, there is much that is within your control, that you can do something about, but there is also much that we cannot.

There are many people who thought that they were so powerful, so capable, so able, but the next moment they are crippled, they are dying, and they cannot do anything about it.

Nebuchadnezzar thought that he was such a powerful king and soon after that, he was driven from his palace to live like an animal until he recognized who God was.

So, there are many things that God can do because He has given us this body.

We must first bear in mind that God has already given us an independent moral choice. That moral choice means that we are free to choose, including disobeying God, but the body that God has given to us does not have a moral choice.

The body is not moral; it is the spirit that is moral. The moral qualities in your heart will be expressed in the words that you speak, in the things that you do.

And so, God created man with a body and we can see how God dealt with the people in that context.

Let us turn to **Deuteronomy 8: 2-3**.

**Deuteronomy 8: 2-3**

- 2 "You shall remember all the way which the LORD your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not.
- 3 "He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD.

God led the people of Israel forty years through the wilderness. Here, Moses explains a primary purpose was: that He might humble them, testing them, to know what was in their heart, whether they would keep His commandments or not.

So, we see that the way we respond in this body can reveal what is in our heart.

When God brought them through the wilderness and He wanted to test them, we can see that there are two aspects in the test.

The first aspect we can say is that the situations that they went through that affected their bodies would reveal what was already in their hearts at that time.

So for example, a person who is a glutton will immediately complain when there is no food to eat; a person who is very disciplined in that area may be able to wait. A person who is very proud may find himself very angry when he has no opportunity to manifest his great abilities, just walking in the wilderness. So too various different traits, qualities of character in the heart may be revealed in the midst of such situations.

That shows the direction of your heart, the quality of the heart at that point of time.

But there is another aspect that is very important for us to recognize and that is: the test gives us the opportunity to change.

The test gives us the opportunity to choose what is good even though we have chosen bad before. But of course the danger is also the test gives us the opportunity to choose bad when previously we chose what is good.

So, the situation is a dynamic one; it continues to develop.

So throughout our lives, God will be testing us – each one of us. Every day, every situation that we are going through, we are under a test. We may not realize it but it is very important that we recognize it.

How do you go through that test?

When you see that you have done wrong, what do you do about it? When a student has his paper returned to him and he has failed and there are so many red marks, what should he do? He could just excuse himself and say, “I have a lousy teacher” or “My parents never disciplined me” or he could say, “Yes, I did not study; I was lazy, I was careless. I must do something about it.” So he has the opportunity to change, to develop from there.

So too when God tests us and when we fail, we must not give up, we must not think that it is hopeless. He tests us to help us understand ourselves, to know what is in our heart and when we have failed, we must come to Him in repentance, seek His forgiveness and ask Him to help us to change for the better, and this we can do and we can develop from there.

"He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD..."



So, hunger in the physical realm was actually meant to help the people appreciate the spiritual realm. This is something that we may not be so conscious of: What we are going through in the physical realm is meant to teach us something valuable in the spiritual realm.

God fed them with manna; they were hungry. What was so important about their hunger? Well, when they were hungry, they thought of food and they thought of food.

What about the Lord Jesus when He was hungry (forty days and forty nights without food), what did He think of? "My food is to do the will of My Father in heaven."

That is the difference between quality of character and poverty of character.

Where is our heart? Where is our treasure? What are we occupied with? Are we occupied with the circumstances of our lives, the physical situations that we go through, what our bodies like or dislike? Or are we occupied with what is precious to God, what is of eternal value: we want to live by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD?

**Deuteronomy 8: 15-18**

- 15 "He led you through the great and terrible wilderness, *with its* fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water; He brought water for you out of the rock of flint.
- 16 "In the wilderness He fed you manna which your fathers did not know, that He might humble you and that He might test you, to do good for you in the end.
- 17 "Otherwise, you may say in your heart, 'My power and the strength of my hand made me this wealth.'
- 18 "But you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth, that He may confirm His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as *it is* this day.

Notice that Moses said that God humbled them, God tested them, to do good for them in the end. That was the purpose: to do good for them. But they might not benefit from that which God intended.

If they did not cooperate with God, if they did not submit to the will of God, if they did not delight in the will of God then the good that God wanted to do for them would not come about. And this is a sad thing.

There is so much that God wants to give to us that is so very good but we may not receive that because we are drawn to other things.

And this also tells us that it is so very easy for us to boast with regard to what we have and what we can do when in reality we are created beings and God is the One who has given to us all this that we are capable of doing.

Again, this is a lesson in humility: the recognition of what is right and good, to live our lives based on what is meaningful.

In the Scriptures, we can see that the power of the body is very great, especially in the direction of sin and evil and God knows that, and He deliberately wants us to dwell in such a body.

If we do not learn how to combat the power of sin, the temptation of sin, how can we develop great strength of character? So God allows us to dwell in a body that can easily lead us to sin.

**Romans 6: 12-13**

- 12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts,  
13 and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin *as* instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God.

Sin and righteousness are very strongly related to this mortal body that we have. And this mortal body has inclinations; it has desires. The word "lusts" here means very strong desires, very often in the direction of what is not good.

Although the body is not moral in itself, its inclinations can lead us in a direction of what is morally bad because we know what we ought to be, how we should conduct ourselves but the inclinations of the body may draw us away from that.

So for example, in our spirit we know we should not steal what belongs to others but when the eye sees something nice, it likes it; it is inclined to move in that direction; so, you dwelling in that body may decide, "I would like to have that", and so we sin by committing theft; so too, with many other things.

We need not give in to the desires of the body but it is very easy to do so.

So the apostle Paul says, "do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts..."

When you give in to these lusts, you become a slave of the body and that is why there are many people who find that they cannot get out of the problems that they have, because they are enslaved by the body: their habits that they have formed, their desires that they have cultivated which bind them; day by day they live like that. They want to get out of it but they do not seem to have any power to get out. The lusts of the mortal body have reigned in their lives and made them slaves.

The correct response is in **verse 13**: and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin *as* instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God.

The correct response that will lead to righteousness is: that we first determine in our hearts that we want to honour God, we want the path of righteousness, so we present ourselves to God as those alive from the dead.

The phrase “alive from the dead” refers to the spiritual: we were spiritually dead; now we are alive from the dead and as those alive from the dead, we are called to present ourselves to God and in that context, we must be the master of our body.

We present our members *as* instruments of righteousness to God: the body that we have must be offered up to God as a living sacrifice so that it can fulfil all that God wants to do while we are on earth. We make use of all that we are capable of in this body to fulfil the will of God.

The power of this body is very great and because we dwell in this body, it is very easy to sin. The evil one has great influence on this body.

**1 John 2: 15-17**

- 15 Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.
- 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.
- 17 The world is passing away, and *also* its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

The world as ruled by Satan, the prince of this world, the ruler of this world, moves in the direction of sin and unrighteousness: the spirit of the world. So, we are not to love the world nor the things in the world.

Here, the apostle John is not saying that the physical things in the world are morally bad; he is talking about the spirit with which people treasure these things, pursue these things and are prepared to live unrighteously in order to gain the things of this world. So, they may gain the whole world but lose their own soul.

So, if anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. So we can see how serious that is; it is at the heart of what God wants to accomplish: love from a pure heart. This cannot be if we set our hearts on the things of this world.

For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh... the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. These are aspects that we experience in this body: the lust of the flesh... the lust of the eyes: the things that we like that we see and feel, we pursue them; "the boastful pride of life" basically refers to the vainglory of this physical life, the life of the body. Some people are very intelligent - where does that come from? From their brain: it is part of the body. Some are not very clever; it is the same thing, it is from their brain; but this does not affect their moral character. It is the way you respond to that that will affect your character: you become proud because you are intelligent or you become depressed if you are not so intelligent; this will affect your moral character, your response to God.

Ultimately in heaven, this body will not be with us and we may see people very differently. People who appear so very incapable, unintelligent, may suddenly come through to us as so very capable and full of glory because their hearts were so humble, they loved God so much, like the woman with the two copper coins. Let us not be drawn away by what this world may offer to us.

The world is passing away, and *also* its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever. The contrast is between doing the will of God and following the world.

At the heart of it, this is the problem that we need to face. What do you choose: the world or the will of God?

We can say it basically means: Will we choose to live by feeling and the likes and inclinations of this body or we choose to live by meaning that is in the heart of God, that is precious, that is good, that has eternal value?

This body has so much in terms of its manner of functioning that it can affect our spirit very significantly.

Consider: The angels and the evil spirits, they do not have a body; how do they respond to this issue of men having bodies?

If you observe in the Scriptures, you will recognize that the evil spirits like to dwell in a human body or even in an animal body.

We see in the time of the Lord Jesus, so many were suffering from demons controlling their bodies and the Lord Jesus cast out the demons; they were not supposed to be there but they liked the bodies so much they wanted to dwell in these bodies. And the Lord Jesus mentioned that when the spirits are cast out, they are restless and they are looking for another body and if you do not take care, more may come.

So, why is it that the evil spirits like to dwell in this body?

Consider the angels. I know of no record in the Scriptures where the angels seek to dwell in a human body. Why? I can say the likelihood is the angels are very satisfied with the way that God has created them; they are happy to abide in the will of God, to fulfil their part in the creation of God. They have a place; they have a function that is very important and they gladly fulfil their part.

The evil spirits on the other hand, they are not satisfied with what God assigned to them. They want power, they want authority, they want pleasure; they want to boast.

So, one way, is to dwell in a human body: they can control the body, they can exploit it, they can work through the body, and likelihood is, they also enjoy the inclinations of this body: the lusts of the mortal body. And because of that, it is very easy for the evil spirits to draw men and women in the direction of sin. They may instigate you in the body, excite your senses and draw you in the wrong direction.

We need to be very, very careful.

Why does not God remove all these evil beings? Just leave those people who are positive, healthy; we can be happy together.

We see that the underlying reason is in a major sense that God wants us to face opposition; God wants us to face the enemy; God wants us to learn how to fight the good fight of faith.

Do we really believe in what is good? Are we prepared to be committed to the path of righteousness? Will we be loyal to God whatever comes?

This will constantly be a test in our lives. When times are easy, we can praise God, thank Him very freely; when life is difficult, it is very easy to complain, grumble and even attribute to God what is improper and wrong.

So, God sees fit to create us in a body because of the great potential it has to help us in the path of righteousness.

So then what can we do about it? How can we dwelling in this body develop in the direction that God intends for us?

**Colossians 2: 20-23**

- 20 If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as,
- 21 "Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!"
- 22 (which all *refer to* things destined to perish with use)--in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men?
- 23 These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, *but are* of no value against fleshly indulgence.

So, people have thought of different ways to control this body so that they may move in the right direction and in the history of mankind, people have entered into all kinds of practices in order to deal with the problem of sin in this body. So one of them is described here: "Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!"

You must not do this; you must not do that; you must not do this; if you keep away from all these things, you will be all right. But the apostle Paul says these are a reference to things destined to perish with use--in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men.

Instead of seeking the will of God, we may be seeking the wisdom of men: These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom... It appears wise, but he says: "they *are* of no value against fleshly indulgence."

We cannot deal with the flesh in this way. It is not possible for us to overcome the inclinations of the flesh by our own natural wisdom and power.

The apostle Paul describes that quite clearly in **Romans 7** and the outcome of our seeking to deal with the flesh by ourselves is to become a wretched man.

So we need to learn what it means to come to God. The only way that we can overcome sin is to have the power of life.

It is the life from God that will enable us to overcome the attractions of sin and the power of sin; there is no other way that we can overcome. We have no life in ourselves and we can only have life when we come to the Lord.

So, to live our lives on the basis of meaning in the heart of God, the will of God, is the critical issue, and it is when we do that, it will then truly do us good.

When we learn to walk with God, appreciate His ways, submit to Him, we will begin to appreciate more and more the glory of God: how good He is, how wonderful His being, and not only that, we can be transformed to become more and more like Him.



So let us have a look at the perfect example of how this life should be lived.

**Luke 22: 41-44**

- 41 And He withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and *began* to pray,  
42 saying, "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done."  
43 Now an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him.  
44 And being in agony He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground.

This is a description of great agony in the life of the Lord Jesus: agony first and foremost deep inside His heart, and expressed in His body at such a time.

He prayed to God and He said, "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me..." We know that that is because the suffering was tremendous; it was extremely difficult, not primarily in the physical realm but in the moral and spiritual realm, bearing the sins of the world, the wrath of God upon sin, becoming sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

If there were any other way, the Lord Jesus would choose some other way; this was the most difficult path possible. But in spite of that, He said, "...yet not My will, but Yours be done." This does not mean that there is a conflict between His will and the Father's will.

His will was in line with the Father's will always and when He says, "Yours be done", it means that He is totally committed to the will of God, but "yet not My will" is an expression of how difficult it was for Him to go through that situation, and in such a situation, one might wish that it need not be, but that is not what He chose. He always chose the Father's will.

And this is the perfect example for us.

If we want to fulfil God's intentions for us then we must learn to choose the will of God at any cost, whatever the situation.

So that would mean that in whatever situation that we go through, we do not just act based on our natural inclinations, our natural thinking, what people expect of us, what the world can offer us; we do not respond like that.

First and foremost our hearts are occupied with what is in the heart of God, what would this mean to Him: would He be pleased, would He find it meaningful to be with us as we go through this, will we be walking with Him when we take this step?

But it is so easy for us not to be conscious of all this: we just carry on day by day, doing the things that come our way.

If we appreciate the wisdom of God in His creation of man, we will realize that all that we are going through every day in this body has great significance. There is so much good it can do to us if we respond correctly and there is so much harm it can do to us if we do not respond correctly.

The situation was very difficult in the physical realm as well, and we can see an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him. It affected His whole body.

From the depths of His heart, the issues had implications on His body. And being in agony He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground. That was the physical expression of the agony within Him.

The Lord Jesus prayed very fervently in that situation. We also need to learn to pray constantly, to seek God in every situation, to understand what is of value to Him; then it will truly be valuable to us.

The apostle Paul understood this. Not only was he concerned to help others to develop quality in the heart, he was very conscious to make sure that he himself would always live that way. He knew that he could also falter, he could fail, and he was very careful to guard his own life.

How did he do it?

**1 Corinthians 9: 24-27**

- 24 Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but *only* one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win.
- 25 Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then *do it* to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.
- 26 Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air;
- 27 but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.

He says, "...those who run in a race all run, but *only* one receives the prize..." that is, in the earthly race generally only one receives the prize.

But in this spiritual race, anyone and everyone can receive the prize if he runs well. We are not competing with one another to see who is the best; we are all working together to be the very best that we can be. We are to help one another to develop the highest quality in our lives and all of us can receive the prize.

Let us not think only of ourselves, and wanting to be better than others, but let us help one another to be what we ought to be and all of us can then receive the prize. But he says, "Run in such a way that you may win" – "you may win" not in the sense that you are better than others but "you may win" in the sense that you receive the prize.

"Run in such a way..." – so there is a right way and there is a wrong way. What is the right way he compares in the physical realm: "Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things."

Self-control is a key quality in this race. In the physical realm, if the people did not have self-control, they would not be able to compete; they would give up easily when things are difficult. Self-control requires that we be prepared to go through difficulties, we are prepared to deal with areas that are not good so that we become more fit and able to do what we ought to do.

So many people are prepared to go to great lengths in self-control for the purpose of a perishable wreath, but ours is an imperishable wreath. How much more so should we be motivated to learn self-control: self-control in what kind of direction?

Here the apostle Paul says, "I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air..." This tells us that he was very definite: he knew what he was doing, he knew where he was going, he understood his goal, his objective; he worked hard.

It is easy for us to live our lives not knowing where we are going; living day by day, wandering aimlessly, just doing things here and there, what appears good, enjoyable, appreciated; perhaps helping people here and there but without adequate understanding of what God wants of us in our lives.

So there must be a direction arising from our oneness with God, our fellowship with Him guiding us to know where to go, what to do, how to live.

So how does it work out?

He says, "I discipline my body and make it my slave..." This is, you can say, the secret. "I discipline my body and make it my slave..."

This is God's intention.

He gave us a body that it should be our slave but often, it has turned out the other way: we have become slaves to this body – the body “dictates” what is in our heart, how we respond to situations in terms of the moral direction – that is our choice.

Yes, the physical state of our body may dictate in some ways what we can do in the physical realm, but it cannot dictate the quality of your heart, it cannot determine the attitude within you. That is your choice.

So if we live according to the will of God, we will learn to discipline our bodies, to make our bodies our slaves. What would that mean?

It would mean that whatever God wants us to do, we will be able to do because our body is our slave in the context of God’s enabling. As we look to God, He will strengthen us, He will enable us to do what He wants us to do.

But often we may be frustrated because we cannot do the things that we would like to do, what we think we ought to do and we are not able to do them, so we may get discouraged. But we need not be.

Whatever God wants us to do, He will enable us as long as we have done our part: we discipline our body as we should and it is our slave; and the body will obey us.

And the issue is serious because the apostle Paul says, “...so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.” So this tells us that he recognized he could be disqualified if he did not take care to discipline his body, to make it his slave.

God is very great in His wisdom but we often do not appreciate because we respond to circumstances rather than respond to God in what is in His heart.

If we learn to respond instead to God, seek His will to understand what He wants in the situation, how He wants us to go through it, then we will find life always will be meaningful.

There will be no situation when life is not meaningful because God's will is always perfect.

If we respond on the basis of circumstances, then we may live our lives constantly wanting circumstances to change in our favour, in accordance with what we prefer and when circumstances are more favourable, we want to hold on to them and we do not want to change.

So in that kind of state, our lives cannot be free to respond to God. He cannot call us to move, to go, to do, as is appropriate. "Let me first... bury my father; let me first... say good-bye to those at home..." So there are many things that can keep us from responding to God's call. "Foxes have holes, the birds of the air have their nests; I also want to have a comfortable bed." So when the Lord calls to move, we cannot.

So if we want to live our lives well and fulfil God's call in our lives, we must learn to appreciate the wisdom of God in His creation of man and seek to identify with God in the rich moral and spiritual meaning that He wants to accomplish and we work together with Him gladly and in faith to fulfil His will.

Let us learn to appreciate more and more the value of dwelling in this body.

God has created us special with this body, but that does not mean that the outcome will be good; the outcome can be very bad, but the potential for development is very great. That is the reason why God Himself became Man: to dwell among us, to be identified with us.

He took on a body like ours; He went through all the difficulties, temptations that we could experience and He shows to us how, if your spirit is positive, you can overcome; you can live a life of righteousness in spite of dwelling in this body – a body described as a “body of sin”, a “body of... death”.

We can instead communicate the love of God, the power of God, the wisdom of God, the message of God through this mortal body if we walk by the Spirit and the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus leads us day by day in the way we live.

Let us then come before the Lord and ask Him to help us to understand more deeply why He created us this way and how we can properly benefit by learning to identify with what is in His heart and committing ourselves to do His will wherever this may lead us.

Let us thank Him for all that He has done for us in order to make it possible for us to attain the goal that He has for our lives.