

I remember the day I realized that God's will for my life wasn't necessarily my will for my life. I was ten, and my parents were sharing with us kids that they felt God was calling them to leave our little farming community of Mud Lake, Idaho to serve with Flagstaff Mission to the Navajos in Flagstaff, Arizona and the Navajo Reservation.

My dad was a pastor. He served with Village Missions, a mission organization that provides pastors to small rural churches that can't fully financially support a pastor on their own. We had lived in Mud Lake for five years—all of my school years to that point. Before that, he had pastored churches in Monticello, Utah, Bridge, Oregon, and Sunnyside, Oregon. Our whole family was rooted deep in Mud Lake, where Dad pastored both Mud Lake Community Baptist Church, and Dubois Community Church. We loved Mud Lake and all the little communities surrounding it—Monteview, Terreton, Dubois, Hamer, Arco—the Mud Lake basin was our home.

Before that day, I had never really thought about God's will. I knew being obedient to His Word, the Bible, was His will, but didn't think any deeper. That day I realized God's will might well take me out of my comfort zone and away from the ones I loved. It might mean saying goodbye to a life I knew well, and take me to a place I'd never been before. What I didn't realize then was that when we love God and are called according to His purpose, He works all things, good and bad, easy and hard, together for good. (Romans 8:28)

For a couple of years after moving to Flagstaff, I wallowed in my sadness. I didn't really make very many friends. I thought about Mud Lake and my friends there all the time. I missed the alfalfa and potato fields and country dirt roads (we were now living on a street with sidewalks!). I missed our huge backyard and my climbing tree. I missed ice skating in the flooded fields. I just really missed our life there. I also missed out on being thankful for God's blessings in our family's new life—how He provided

over and over for our needs even though our family didn't have "full support" monetarily, and how dear these people from a different culture and language were becoming to us.

My parents always included us kids in their ministry. Telling people about God's love for them and His plan of redemption and salvation through His Son, Jesus, was a family effort. We all worked together on things like Christmas meetings, camp meetings, and vacation Bible schools. We took part in monthly days of prayer when we weren't in school. We helped with family camps and stuffing (in the envelope) the mission prayer letter. Indian Bible Church became our home church. As I served God alongside my parents, I saw their joy in serving God and others. I realized that God gives us a much greater joy in serving Him than any we could ever get by doing our own thing. God grew my faith, and I started to look for ways to serve Him. I played the piano and flute for church and developed a deep love of music and worship. I taught Sunday school and summer vacation Bible school, where God taught me to study His Word so that I would be a good and accurate teacher of the Bible. He taught me to pray for others. He taught me to care for the needs of those around me. He gave me lifelong friendships that felt (and still feel) like family. He was working all things together for good for me, whom He had called according to His purpose. He was teaching me that serving Him would be my greatest joy.

As each of my children were born, I gave them to God, asking Him to use them to bring others to Him, whether in full time ministry or lay ministry. God has already started working through some of them, but not all—yet. I'm excited to see how He will use each of them, as well as me, in the future—for I'm persuaded that He is able to keep that which I've committed unto Him against that day (2 Timothy 1:12). I pray that they will learn early in life that God's will isn't always going to be their will, but it will be oh, so much better.

I Know Whom I Have Believed

Words By Major Daniel Webster Whittle
Music By James McGranaham

I know not why God's wondrous grace
To me He hath made known,
Nor why, unworthy, Christ in love
Redeemed me for His own.

I know not how this saving fait
To me He did impart,
Nor how believing in His Word
Wrought peace within my heart.

I know not how the Spirit moves,
Convincing men of sin,
Revealing Jesus through the Word,
Creating faith in Him.

I know not what of good or ill
May be reserved for me,
Of weary ways or golden days,
Before His face I see.

I know not when my Lord may come,
At night or noonday fair,
Nor if I walk the vale with Him,
Or meet Him in the air.

But "I know Whom I have believed,
And am persuaded that He is able
To keep that which I've committed
Unto Him against that day."

Blessed Assurance

Words By Fanny Crosby
Music By Phoebe Knapp

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!
O what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.

Perfect submission, perfect delight,
Visions of rapture now burst on my sight;
Angels, descending, bring from above
Echoes of mercy, whispers of love.

Perfect submission, all is at rest,
I in my Savior am happy and blest,
Watching and waiting, looking above,
Filled with His goodness, lost in His love.

This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Savior all the day long;
This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Savior all the day long!