

CHAPTER 11

What Can I Do?

In the last chapter we thought about the important question, "WHAT CAN GOD DO?" Here are some of the things we learned:

God created all things.
 God holds all things together (preserves and sustains).
 God holds the world and manages it.
 God controls the movement of mice and men.
 God wills, and He carries out His will.
 God inhabits or dwells in eternity.
 God has a purpose and plan for men and women.
 God provides grace to meet our needs.
 God can enlighten me, encourage me, enable me, enlarge me, and help me to endure.

In this chapter we want to ask another important question: "WHAT CAN I DO?" As we seek to answer this question, we will follow the same outline of the last chapter (Chapter 10).

1. The World We Live In

Can I create anything (make something out of nothing)? Could Pharaoh's magicians create lice (Exodus 8:16-18)? _____ Can I control the universe and keep it going? Can I stop the earth from rotating on its axis? Can I stop the moon from revolving around the earth? Can I make the sun and moon stand still (see Joshua 10:12-14)? Can I stop the waves of the ocean from pounding against the shore? Can I make it rain or snow or stop it from raining or snowing? Can I control the outside temperature? Can I stop the birds from migrating or the bears from hibernating? Can I make summer come after the fall and winter come after spring (see Genesis 8:22)? Can I make the sun set in the morning and the sun rise in the evening? Can I make 50 billion snowflakes and make them all different? Can I make seven billion people and make them all different? WHO IS THE ONLY PERSON WHO CAN DO ALL THESE THINGS?

2. The World And Those Living In It

Can I manage the world and direct its affairs? How well can I hold the world? I can't even hold myself! (Try it! Try to pick up yourself and see how well you can do it!)

Suppose the official leaders of your town were to come to you and say, "From now on you are in charge of this entire town. You are to take care of every person in this town and every problem that this town might have! You are in charge of the big details and also the little details, and if anything goes wrong, we will blame you!" Could you handle this assignment? Your town is only one small town located on one tiny speck of the globe. How could you ever take care of all the towns on the face of the earth? How could you ever take care of the whole world? Are you thankful that "the earth is the _____ and the fullness thereof" (Psalm 24:1)? What does God rule over (Psalm 103:19)? _____

How many stars can I name? (Compare Psalm 147:4 and Isaiah 40:26.) How many galaxies can I name? (The one we live in is called "the Milky Way.") How many stars are there?

Suppose there is a wicked ruler somewhere in the world who is cruel to his subjects. Can I remove him from power? Can God? How?

In the last chapter we talked about God's will. How good is my will? I can will and wish all

kinds of things. I can say, "MY WILL IS...

...THAT A MONEY TREE MIGHT GROW IN MY BACK YARD. "

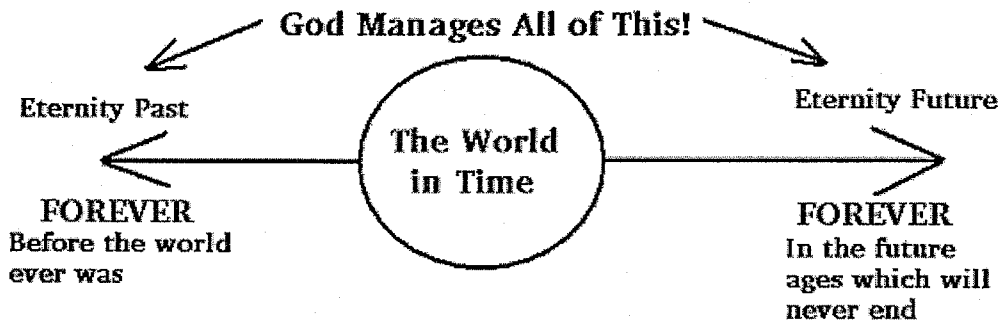
...FOR PERFECT HEALTH THE REST OF MY LIFE."

...FOR ALWAYS HAVING STRAIGHT A's ON MY REPORT CARD."

What are some other things that I might will and desire? Is "my willing" going to make it come to pass? Can I say the same thing that God says at the end of Isaiah 46:11? _____ Do I always want *my will* to come to pass? Do I always want what is best for me (see Psalm 106:15)?

What if a person said, "I will to be saved *my way* by trying to perform good works and by trying to love my neighbor." Will this person be saved? _____ God's will is for people to be saved *His way*. God is willing to save all those who are willing to be saved *His way*. If a person wants to be saved some other way, then God is not willing to save him. What is *God's way* to be saved? When it comes to SALVATION, what is *God's will* (John 6:39-40)?

3. Beyond This World



God is "From E _____ " (Psalm 93:2 and Psalm 90:2). Where am I from? When did I begin? Was I here when God laid the foundations of the earth (see Job 38:4)? _____ Was I here in the days of Abraham? _____ In the days of David? _____ In the days of Paul? _____ In the days of Columbus? _____ In the days of George Washington? _____ In the days of Abraham Lincoln? _____ In the days of the Second World War? _____ In the days when man first landed on the moon? _____

As I think about the world and time, I realize that I can only stand in one tiny spot in the world. The world is so big, and I am so little. I am like one grain of sand among the thousands of beaches of the world. I am like one tiny snowflake among all the snowflakes that have ever fallen!

I am very limited as to where I can be. Suppose a friend in Boston calls you up and wants to see you, and suppose that another friend in New York calls you up and wants to see you at the same time. Can you be at both places at once? Can God? Suppose a believer in Boston and a believer in New York both call upon God in prayer at the same time. Does God have a problem being in both places and reaching both of these believers?

God was here BEFORE I WAS BORN, and God will be here AFTER I DIE! God is there in the past, and God is there in the future, but when I think about the past and the future, I am very limited.

1. **THE PAST** – I cannot return to where I have been. The past is forever gone! If I have done something, I can never take it back. If I have said the wrong words, those words have

gone out, and I can never get them back. They have done their damage. The past is like water that runs under the bridge. That water will never return again. What is one thing that I can do about the past. (Philippians 3:13)?

2. **THE FUTURE** – How much can I really do about the future? How much can I really control the future? Can I really make things happen the way I think they should happen? There are certain things that I can do about the future. I can make certain plans; I can plan to do certain things for my classes at school, I can hope to do something or to be somewhere or to see someone, but I cannot make these things happen. What does God tell me about the future (Proverbs 27:1)?
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3. **THE PRESENT** – Even today in this present hour I am limited! I am limited in what I can do **RIGHT NOW!** I am limited in what I know and understand. There is so much that I do not see and that I do not hear and that I do not understand, but the God who stands next to me is not limited at all!

In the last chapter we learned that God has a long range view. God sees very well! But, my eyesight is very limited. If I had two eyes on the back of my head, would this help me to see many more things? If I had a pair of eyes that I could place in every room in my school, would these extra eyes help me to be able to see what is going on in my school? Where are God's eyes (2 Chronicles 16:9)? _____

My hearing is very limited also. I can only hear certain sounds. There are many sounds that I miss all the time. Have you ever seen a dog whistle? The dog can hear the sound of this whistle, but you can't! Try this experiment: Rub your fingers together silently. Now hold your fingers close to your ear and rub them the same way. Do you hear a noise? There are many noises that we never hear. Almost every day there is an explosion somewhere in the world, but it is too far away for us to hear it. Does God ever miss a movement? Does God ever miss hearing and knowing every sound?

My mind is very limited also. I only know so much. I can find a book that knows much more than I know, but does this book know everything? Is God's MIND limited (see Romans 11:33-36)? _____

4. The World of Me (My World)

We learned in the last chapter that God is the only One who can save a soul and give a person spiritual life. I might be able to help someone physically. I could possibly remove a splinter or help the person get something out of his eye. A doctor could do even more to help people physically. But how could I fix a soul? How much can I really help the person who lives in the physical body? Can I really solve problems such as GUILT, FEAR, DOUBT, INSECURITY, LONELINESS, etc.? Can I solve these problems apart from God?

Even doctors cannot fix a soul. Often they try to help the person that lives inside the body, and sometimes they are able to help in many ways, but they can never get to the real source of the problem. (Suppose you had a small hole at the bottom of your rowboat. If you keep emptying out the water with a bucket or with a pump, is this really getting at the source of the problem?) Only the Great Physician (the Lord Jesus) can get at the real problem and fix a person's soul.

Man is like a candle that must be lit (Proverbs 20:27--"the spirit of man is the _____ [lamp] of the LORD"). Can I light this candle? Spiritual life and light can only come from God. It is not something that I can buy or earn. Is there any store that I can go to that will sell me eternal life? Where can I go to purchase forgiveness of sins or peace with God? Is there any bank that can give me ETERNAL SECURITY and TREASURES IN HEAVEN? There are spiritual blessings, and only God has them to give!

We also learned in the last chapter that God has a wonderful plan and purpose. Think about your local cemetery. This cemetery is full of people who once purposed and had great plans and

hopes. Some wanted to be rich. Some wanted to be famous. Some wanted to be successful. What happened to all of their plans and purposes? They all came to an end! All of man's purposes must cease and come to an end. Man tries to become different things, but he is counting on things which do not last and do not stay and do not remain.

I might have plans for the future. I might even be thinking about a future occupation, but can I really count on reaching age 20? Can I really count on graduating from high school? Am I sure that these things are going to come to pass?

How can I store up treasures in heaven (Matthew 6:20)? How can I store up that which will last and remain forever? Is there something that I can count on all the days of my life and then forever?

Can you think of certain things that you are looking for and counting on? What are you planning on and counting on for your life? Can you be sure of these things? *Why can* you count on these things, or *why can't* you count on these things?

5. Succeeding In The World

How can I get God's grace and God's favor? How can I gain God's smile? Apart from God, what do I need to do and who do I need to meet in order to get God's favor? Who can get me the grace of God? Can I take a trip to the shopping mall and buy a package of God's grace? Who is the only One who can make GRACE abound towards me (2 Corinthians 9:8)?

Can I *enlighten* myself? The smartest man in the world is only so smart. Also, I find that the more I study the more I discover how much I do not know! My little cup contains so little compared to the vast ocean of knowledge.

Do I really want to understand? If so, how much can I really understand? Here's an example. Do you really want to understand Zechariah chapter 4? This chapter is part of God's Word. Do you really want to understand this chapter? Now look at the chapter. How much do you understand, and how much can you understand?

Can I *encourage* myself? Do I get discouraged? How good am I at encouraging myself? And how long do I stay encouraged?

Can I *enable* myself? I may want to do many things, but even though I want to do them, does my desire mean that I am able to do them? Does desire always mean ability? Does dreaming make it happen? I may dream of being an athletic superstar. Do I really have the ability to become a superstar? (Even superstars do not have the ability to remain as champions forever! The boxing champ of 20 years ago is not the boxing champ of today!)

Can I *enlarge* myself? I may want to help people and be responsible and be involved and carry the load that I should, but I cannot bring it to pass. I can't give myself bigger shoulders!

Can I make myself *endure*? I may want to do right, but how do I know I'll make it to the end? Peter wanted to do right, but he denied His Lord! Apart from God, how can I hang in there and do right? What will keep me from making the wrong decision, marrying the wrong person, getting the wrong job, going to the wrong church, living in the wrong place, etc. Apart from God, what can keep me from losing out? ***God must carry me down the road! God is able to carry me down the road!*** See Philippians 1:6 and Philippians 2:12-13.