

INTRODUCTION

In 1993, God began to stir up a passion within me—a passion to get every believer to see that God has a plan, a purpose, a dream and destiny for their lives. Over the years, I have continued preaching and teaching this simple message, “God has a purpose for your life.” Through personal study, observation and listening to other ministers of God, I began to gain more understanding on how to recognise God’s plan and how God takes us through life to unfold and fulfil His plan. This study manual is simply a compilation of that insight.

It is indeed such a joy to see God’s people get a hold of this truth in their hearts and live for a heavenly purpose. We repeatedly state to our congregation, “At All Peoples Church, every believer is a minister.” Our passion is to equip and release believers into their God-appointed ministry. Your ministry may include things you do in the church and out in the world—in business, in sports, in academics, in arts and so on. God’s purpose for you is not confined to the church.

Go on and catch God’s dream for your life! There is no higher or better purpose to live for, than living out God’s purpose for your life! There is nothing that can bring as much satisfaction as pursuing and fulfilling His heavenly call. There is no greater adventure than walking with God and fulfilling the things He has designed for you.

It is not always going to be easy. There may be some mountains to get out of the way, some devils to conquer and even people who may hinder you! But stick with it and you will see God’s dream for you become a reality.

Enjoy your journey as you pursue God’s dream for your life!

1

UNDERSTANDING THAT GOD HAS A PURPOSE FOR YOUR LIFE

1.1. God Is a God of Plan, of Purpose, of Design, of Objectives

Psalm 33:11

The counsel of the LORD stands forever, the plans of His heart to all generations.

God is a God of plan, of purpose, of design and of objectives. God does not work at random or arbitrarily.

Acts 15:18

Known to God from eternity are all His works.

Isaiah 46:10

Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure.'

God knows the end from the beginning. He knows the destination at the beginning of the journey and how to get there.

1.2. God has His Purpose—The 'General Purpose' or 'The Master Plan' Which He Is Carrying Out on the Earth Today

Ephesians 1:9–12

⁹ Having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, ¹⁰ that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him. ¹¹ In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, ¹² that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

Ephesians 3:11

According to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.

There is an eternal purpose which God is unfolding and executing on the earth. We refer to this as God's 'master plan' which He is carrying out on the earth today.

God's master plan is to have people saved, to come to the knowledge of the truth and to be conformed to the image of His Son Jesus Christ.

1 Timothy 2:3,4

³ For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴ who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

1.3. God has a Purpose for You—‘A Specific Plan’

Psalms 139:16

Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them.

Psalms 139:16, Message Bible

Like an open book, you watched me grow from conception to birth; all the stages of my life were spread out before you, the days of my life all prepared before I'd even lived one day.

God has a blueprint for your life. God has a dream for your life.

He created you for a purpose. He designed you to be able to fulfill the purpose which He had in mind for you.

Philippians 3:12

Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.

There is a “that for which” for which Jesus laid a hold of you. He has a plan and purpose for you!

Ephesians 2:10

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

There are “good works” which God preplanned for you to accomplish on the earth.

There are places that God wants you to go to; people He wants you to touch; lives He wants you to impact; things He wants you to accomplish; cities to transform, nations to shake!

Living life is simple—find out what God has planned for your life and walk in it!

2 Timothy 1:9

Who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began.

God has called you “according to His own purpose.” You have been called to partner with God in fulfilling His purpose. This is an awesome truth. We are living not for our own purpose—but for a higher purpose—“His own purpose!”

Along with His purpose, comes His grace to fulfil that purpose. His divine empowerment always accompanies His divine calling. His purpose and grace have been given to us “in Christ Jesus.” Only when we come to Christ are we in a position to partner with God in carrying out His purposes.

God's specific plan for us is a piece of His master plan. As you go about fulfilling God's specific purpose for your life, you will help carry out God's general purpose on the earth.

1.4. God's Plan for Us Is Always Good!

Jeremiah 29:11

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace (Heb. 'shalom') and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.

Romans 8:28

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

Have this unshakeable confidence within you. God's plan for you is good!

God is for you, not against you. His plans for you are always for your good—for your '*shalom*' (well-being, health, prosperity, success, peace). There is nothing better than God's plan for you!

1.5. We Must Cooperate with God to Fulfil His Plan

1 Corinthians 3:9

For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building.

The fulfilment of God's plan for our lives is not automatic. We have to cooperate with God to carry out His plan for our lives. The fulfilment of God's plan and purpose for our lives is dependent on us. Some may never begin to do God's plan. Some may do just a small percent of His plan. The Bible says that Apostle Paul "finished His course."

God expresses His will in heaven. But He looks to His people on earth to execute it.

1.6. We Must Discover and Pursue God's Plan for Our Lives

God's plan and purpose for our lives need not be a mystery!

Some people are of the opinion that God's will is so mysterious that we cannot know it! This is absolutely untrue!

God is more than willing to reveal His will—His plan and purpose for our lives—if we are willing to seek Him for it.

We are going to learn about nine 'guideposts' that will help us discern God's leading and direction for our lives.

- Recognise the general teaching and instruction of God's Word.
- Recognise the 'seeds' in your life.
- Recognise the stirring within.
- Recognise the grace of God given to you.
- Recognise the circumstances.
- Recognise the leading of God's Spirit.
- Recognise godly counsel and wisdom.
- Recognise times and seasons.
- Recognise God's pattern of working in your life.

1.7. God Will Prepare You to Fulfil His Plan and Purpose

The more thorough your preparation, the more likely you are to succeed.

Preparation time is never wasted time.

The greater the call, the greater the preparation needed.

1.8. We May Make Mistakes—But God Can Help Us Overcome Our Failures and Help Us Complete His Call

Any weakness that you do not conquer will be used by satan against you.

God is greater than time. God is greater than our mistakes.

2 Timothy 4:6–8

⁶ For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. ⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸ Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

Paul, the apostle, came to the Lord Jesus Christ at about 35 years of age, and yet he said that he had finished his course. Age is not a hindrance to fulfil the call of God.

2 Timothy 1:9

Who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began.

God is not looking for perfect vessels. He is looking for yielded vessels.

2 Corinthians 4:7

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.

It is the power of God working through us. We are earthen vessels.

1.9. Satan Will Do his Best to Stop Us from Fulfilling God's Purpose

A God-given dream will always face demonic opposition.

Delays are not always from God (Daniel 10: 2–14). Satan attempts to delay your miracle and thus weaken your desire to keep reaching out for God's highest and best.

1.10. We Must Remain Focused on God's Call

Distractions—broken focus will result in wasted time and energy. God said, “Do not turn to the right or the left” (Proverbs 4:27).

1.11. We Must Have Endurance

The taste of victory outlasts the memory of your struggle (Mike Murdock).

Your endurance is demoralising to satan (Mike Murdock).

2

RECOGNISING GOD'S PURPOSE FOR YOUR LIFE

Ephesians 5:15–17

¹⁵ See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, ¹⁶ redeeming the time, because the days are evil. ¹⁷ Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

The Scripture tells us to understand (put together, mentally comprehend) the will (purpose) of the Lord.

We can understand what the will of the Lord is!

Colossians 1:9–11

⁹ For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; ¹⁰ that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; ¹¹ strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy.

It is possible to be filled with the knowledge of His will. None of us need to “be in the dark” concerning the will of God for our lives!

It requires wisdom and spiritual understanding to know His will.

Once we know His will we can then:

- (a) Walk worthy of Him.
- (b) Be well pleasing to Him.
- (c) Be fruitful in every good work.
- (d) Increase in the knowledge of Him.

1 Corinthians 2:9,10

⁹ But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him."

¹⁰ But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.

There are things that God has planned for us as His people and as individuals. The Holy Spirit reveals them to us!

1 Corinthians 2:16

For "who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

We have the mind of Christ because of the revealing work of the Spirit. We know the thoughts, plan and purpose of Christ.

You can know the plan and purpose of God for your life accurately, completely and clearly.

You do not need to grope through life like a blind man, totally unfamiliar with the plan and purpose of God. You can understand the will of the Lord. You can be filled with the knowledge of His will. You can know the things He has prepared for you. You can walk in the "mind of Christ."

Proverbs 4:18

But the path of the just is like the shining sun, that shines ever brighter unto the perfect day.

In most cases, God's revelation of His plan and purpose for our lives is progressive.

Hebrews 11: 8

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.

Once you obey God in the step He wants you to take, then at the right time He will reveal the next step.

Genesis 24:27

And he said, "Blessed be the LORD God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken His mercy and His truth toward my master. As for me, being on the way, the LORD led me to the house of my master's brethren."

When we are on the way—moving in the direction God wants us to go—the Lord leads us on further into His plan and purpose.

How do we recognise God's plan and purpose for our lives? We will discuss nine 'guide posts' that will help us.

God will, at different times, use a combination of one or more of these guide posts to show you the way in which He wants you to go.

1. Recognise the general teaching and instruction of God's Word.
2. Recognise the 'seeds' in your life.
3. Recognise the stirring within.
4. Recognise the grace of God given to you.
5. Recognise the leading of God's Spirit.
6. Recognise the circumstances.
7. Recognise godly counsel and wisdom.
8. Recognise times and seasons.
9. Recognise God's pattern of working in your life.

2.1. Recognise the General Teaching and Instruction of God's Word

2 Timothy 3:16,17

¹⁶ **All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,**¹⁷ **that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.**

God's leading and direction for our lives will ALWAYS be in agreement with the written Word of God.

Romans 12:2

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

'Prove' *dokimazo* (Gr.) = to test.

The word 'dokimazo' is commonly applied to metals, to the operation of testing, or trying them by the severity of fire and so on. Hence, it also means to explore, investigate, ascertain. This is its meaning here. The sense is, that a renewed mind is essential to a successful inquiry after the will of God (Barnes).

The renewing of my mind is necessary for me to prove (i.e., test) what is good, acceptable and perfect before God.

This verse does NOT teach that God has three different categories of His will. Something is either His will or not His will.

The will of God is always that which is good, acceptable and perfect.

Good = excellent, upright, honourable.

Acceptable = fully agreeable, that which will be pleasing to God or which He will approve.

Perfect = complete, that which is without flaw or defect.

The thing which is good, acceptable and perfect is the thing that is His will.

A renewed mind is able to quickly test (analyse, prove, discern) if something is good, acceptable and perfect and thereby determine if it is the will of God.

Ephesians 5:10

Finding out what is acceptable to the Lord.

'Finding out' *dokimazo* (Gr.) = to test.

One of the main 'tests' we use to see if something is pleasing to God—see if it agrees with the Word of God.

Hebrews 5:14

But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Through constant use of the Word, you can train your senses (organs of perception) to readily discern and distinguish between good and evil.

This is why it is so important to be constantly in the Word of God and to allow the Word of God to become an important part of our lives.

Practical Examples:

Marriage

Genesis 2:24

Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

2 Corinthians 6:14,15

¹⁴ Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? ¹⁵ And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?

Amos 3:3

Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?

God's will is that you marry a believer.

Divorce

Malachi 2:16

"For the LORD God of Israel says that He hates divorce, for it covers one's garment with violence," says the LORD of hosts. "Therefore take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously."

God does not approve of divorce.

Unrighteous acts

Ephesians 4:28

Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need.

Psalms 23:3

He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.

God will never lead you to commit sin for a 'good cause.'

2.2. Recognise the 'Seeds' in Your Life

Mark 4:26–32

²⁶ And He said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, ²⁷ and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how. ²⁸ For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head. ²⁹ But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come." ³⁰ Then He said, "To what shall we liken the kingdom of God? Or with what parable shall we picture it? ³¹ It is like a mustard seed which, when it is sown on the ground, is smaller than all the seeds on earth; ³² but when it is sown, it grows up and becomes greater than all herbs, and shoots out large branches, so that the birds of the air may nest under its shade."

God works in accordance with the 'seed principle.'

We use the term 'seeds' to refer to things put into your life at an early age—which then began to influence many of the decisions and choices that you made.

'Seeds' could be an early recognition of special talents or interests. They could be special opportunities that came your way at an early stage in life. Other 'seeds' could include special contacts (people whom God brought into your life), dreams, a prophetic word and so on.

Examples:

Joseph—Joseph had dreams at an early age indicative of what his future would hold (Genesis 37).

Moses—God supernaturally arranged for Moses to be taught and trained in Pharaoh's palace. This was God's 'seed of spiritual destiny' in Moses' life (Acts 7:22).

David—David was anointed while still a young boy, by the prophet Samuel (1 Samuel 16:13). Even as a young boy, David was recognised to be a skilful musician, a strong warrior, wise in his ways and good looking (1 Samuel 16:18). These 'seeds' shaped what David became and what he fulfilled in life.

Esther—Esther's beauty was her 'seed' that enabled her to become queen. This positioned her to become a woman of influence for the sake of her Jewish people.

Recognise the 'seeds of spiritual destiny' in your life.

The seeds in your life are conveying a message to you concerning God's plan, purpose and direction for your life.

2.3. Recognise the Stirring Within

Nehemiah 1:1–4

¹ The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah. It came to pass in the month of Chislev, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the citadel, ² that Hanani one of my brethren came with men from Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews who had escaped, who had survived the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem. ³ And they said to me, "The survivors who are left from the captivity in the province are there in great distress and reproach. The wall of Jerusalem is also broken down, and its gates are burned with fire." ⁴ So it was, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned for many days; I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven.

Nehemiah 2:12

Then I arose in the night, I and a few men with me; I told no one what my God had put in my heart to do at Jerusalem; nor was there any animal with me, except the one on which I rode.

Like Nehemiah, there were probably many others in captivity who had heard about the condition of Jerusalem. However, something stirred in Nehemiah when he heard about the destruction of the city walls. Something stirred in him that made him want to rebuild the city walls.

Nehemiah recognised this as something God had put in his heart.

Often, God's direction for our lives comes through an unusual, persistent and deep stirring in our hearts.

It is more than getting stirred up 'emotionally' about something. An emotional stirring is like the weather—it changes and fades away. However, a stirring from heaven is deep. It is lasting, it keeps coming back and it demands action!

Acts 17:16,17

¹⁶ Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him when he saw that the city was given over to idols. ¹⁷ Therefore he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and with the Gentile worshipers, and in the marketplace daily with those who happened to be there.

Acts 18:5

When Silas and Timothy had come from Macedonia, Paul was compelled by the Spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus is the Christ.

Notice the different 'inner heart feelings' of being stirred, provoked and compelled. Such inner heart feelings can originate in the heart of God—when you feel what He feels, when you feel the pulse of heaven and are moved into action.

2.4. Recognise the Grace of God Given to You

2.4.1. The word 'Grace' in the New Testament signifies

2.4.1.1. *Divine favour*

Ephesians 2:8

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.

2.4.1.2. *Divine character*

2 Peter 3:18

But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.

2.4.1.3. *Divine enablement*

Ephesians 4:7

But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.

There can be different measures of the same gift.

Romans 12:4–6

⁴For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, ⁵so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. ⁶Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith.

- The gifts in your life are indicative of the grace given to you.
- The gifts given to you are in line with the function God has designed for you to perform in the Body.
- The 'gifts and callings' of God go together (Romans 11:29). You know you are called to a particular function, when you have the gifts to help you fulfil that function.
- Not all gifts are 'spiritual' in nature.

Ephesians 3:1,7,8

¹ For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles—⁷of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power. ⁸ To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.

- The grace of God is always given to you for something—to accomplish a specific purpose. For example, to minister to the sick, the elderly or to children.
- The areas in which God has given you grace are also the areas in which you will find God's power working effectively in your life.

Ephesians 4:7–11

⁷ But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. ⁸ Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men." ⁹ (Now this, "He ascended"—what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? ¹⁰ He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.) ¹¹ And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers.

Some have been called into specific offices/ministries.

Recognise the grace of God given to you.

Your gifts of grace reveal God's potential and His purpose for your life.

The way you are designed reveals what you were designed for.

God's gifts of grace need to be nurtured, developed and used to fulfil His purposes.

2.4.2. Grace plus work

1 Corinthians 15:10

But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

2.5. Recognise the Leading of God's Spirit

Romans 8:14–16

¹⁴ For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. ¹⁵ For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." ¹⁶ The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.

John 16:13–15

¹³ However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. ¹⁴ He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. ¹⁵ All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you.

1 Corinthians 2:9,10

⁹ But as it is written: " Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love Him." ¹⁰ But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.

John 3:8

The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

2.5.1. How does the Holy Spirit speak to us?

- Bears witness with our spirits.
- Quickening of the written Word/spoken Word.
- Ideas, impressions and pictures.
- Dreams and visions.
- Prophetic words.

2.5.2. How do we know it is the Holy Spirit speaking?

When the Holy Spirit speaks, He will always glorify Jesus. This is a good test to see if what you are hearing is truly from the Holy Spirit or from your feelings.

2.6. Recognise the Circumstances

2 Chronicles 16:9

For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him. In this you have done foolishly; therefore from now on you shall have wars."

Psalms 37:23,24

²³ The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and He delights in his way. ²⁴ Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; For the Lord upholds him with His hand.

- God orchestrates the circumstances but you and I must respond.
- God orders circumstances and events in our lives that are in line with His plan and purpose for us.
- God is positioning people, places and things to help you walk in His way.
- Discern the circumstances and respond.
- Not every circumstance that God orders in your life is (sweet to taste) easy or pleasant, but it always has lasting value. For example, circumstances that remove laziness; circumstances that teach how to handle money wisely; circumstances that develop patience and so on.

Hebrews 12:5–11

⁵ And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: "My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; ⁶ For whom the LORD loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives." ⁷ If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? ⁸ But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. ⁹ Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? ¹⁰ For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. ¹¹ Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the

present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

Deuteronomy 8:1–10

¹ "Every commandment which I command you today you must be careful to observe, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land of which the LORD swore to your fathers. ² And you shall remember that the LORD your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. ³ So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD. ⁴ Your garments did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years. ⁵ You should know in your heart that as a man chastens his son, so the LORD your God chastens you. ⁶ "Therefore you shall keep the commandments of the LORD your God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him. ⁷ For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, that flow out of valleys and hills; ⁸ a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey; ⁹ a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity, in which you will lack nothing; a land whose stones are iron and out of whose hills you can dig copper. ¹⁰ When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land which He has given you.

- Not every circumstance that you face has been designed by God. Some are the consequences of your own actions, some are the results of other people's actions and some are arranged by the devil. You need to discern the circumstances.
- No matter what evil circumstance you may face, God is able to rearrange it to help you move further in His purpose for your life. For example, Joseph (Genesis 37; 50:15).
- Recognise or discern the circumstances and take appropriate action.

Proverbs 4:26 says, "Ponder the path of your feet, and let all your ways be established."

2.7. Recognise Godly Counsel and Wisdom

- Counsel is advice, instruction, sharing of knowledge—given to you.
- Counsel is not a command.
- Godly counsel is counsel given to you by a man or woman—who has a deep, strong, firm, tested relationship with God—based on their knowledge and experience.

Example:

1 Corinthians 7:10–14; 25–28 (Notice verses 10, 12 and 25)

¹⁰ **Now to the married I command, yet not I but the Lord: A wife is not to depart from her husband. ¹¹ But even if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband. And a husband is not to divorce his wife. ¹² But to the rest I, not the Lord, say: If any brother has a wife who does not believe, and she is willing to live with him, let him not divorce her. ¹³ And a woman who has a husband who does not believe, if he is willing to live with her, let her not divorce him. ¹⁴ For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy. ²⁵ Now concerning virgins: I have no commandment from the Lord; yet I give judgment as one whom the Lord in His mercy has made trustworthy. ²⁶ I suppose therefore that this is good because of the present distress—that it is good for a man to remain as he is: ²⁷ Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be loosed. Are you loosed from a wife? Do not seek a wife. ²⁸ But even if you do marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. Nevertheless such will have trouble in the flesh, but I would spare you.**

- The value of receiving counsel

Proverbs 5:23

He shall die for lack of instruction, and in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray.

Proverbs 10:17

He who keeps instruction is in the way of life, but he who refuses correction goes astray.

Proverbs 11: 14

Where there is no counsel, the people fall; but in the multitude of counselors there is safety.

Proverbs 15:22

Without counsel, plans go awry, but in the multitude of counselors they are established.

Proverbs 20:18

Plans are established by counsel; by wise counsel wage war.

Proverbs 24:6

For by wise counsel you will wage your own war, and in a multitude of counselors there is safety.

- God may use the counsel of godly people whom He has placed in your life to help direct you into His plan and purpose for your life.
- Be humble enough to receive counsel.

Example: Moses and Jethro (Exodus 18:13–27).

The three kinds of counsel:

2.7.1. Counsel based on a person's own knowledge and experience

- Be careful about whom you receive counsel from.

Psalms 1:1

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful.

2.7.2. Counsel based on the written Word of God

2.7.3. Counsel based on prophetic inspiration

- The first and the third need to be tested, verified and explained.
- Not everything a prophet says is prophetic.

1 Chronicles 17:1–5

¹ Now it came to pass, when David was dwelling in his house, that David said to Nathan the prophet, "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of the covenant of the LORD is under tent curtains." ² Then Nathan said to David, "Do all that is in your heart, for God is with you." ³ But it happened that night that the word of God came to Nathan, saying, ⁴ "Go and tell My servant David, 'Thus says the LORD: "You shall not build Me a house to dwell in." ⁵ For I have not dwelt in a house since the time that I brought up Israel, even to this day, but have gone from tent to tent, and from one tabernacle to another.

2.8. Recognise Times and Seasons

- God has a calendar. He has a timetable. God works according to His calendar.
- God has His appointed times and seasons for the things He does.

Genesis 3:15—**“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel”** → 4000 years → Galatians 4:4— **“But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law.”**

- God has His times and seasons for your life.

Psalms 31:15

My times are in Your hand; Deliver me from the hand of my enemies, and from those who persecute me.

Ecclesiastes 3:1,11

**¹ To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven:
¹¹ He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end.**

Ecclesiastes 8:5,6

⁵ He who keeps his command will experience nothing harmful; and a wise man's heart discerns both time and judgment, ⁶ Because for every matter there is a time and judgment, though the misery of man increases greatly.

- Every season has its appointed reason.
- When we recognise the season of life we are in, it becomes easy to recognise the purposes of God.

1 Chronicles 12:32

Of the sons of Issachar who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do, their chiefs were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their command.

- Fulfil God's appointed purpose for the season you are presently in. He will then take you on into the next season of life.

Examples:

- Foundation-laying season

Involves:

- o Digging down, not building up.
- o No glamour, just hard work.
- o No applause, just spectators.

Objectives:

- o A strong foundation.
 - o A deep foundation.
 - o A foundation that will allow you to expand.
- Tunnel season

When you are going through a tunnel, there is only one way—forward. No left, no right, no going back. It is dark. The only light you have is the 'eye faith.' There are no mountains to move. The only way out is to go through it. Stay faithful!

- Just-enough season versus abundance, harvest.
- Season of grief and sorrow.
- Season of trials and challenges.
- Season of motherhood.

We must learn to respect the season of life the other person is in.

2.9. Recognise God's Pattern of Working

God is in the 'habit' of setting up examples, patterns and models for us to follow.

I believe that God sets a pattern of working in our lives.

1 Timothy 1:15,16

¹⁵ This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. ¹⁶ However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life.

We walk in the steps of the faith of Abraham.

Romans 4:11,12

¹¹ And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while still uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also, ¹² and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of the faith which our father Abraham had while still uncircumcised.

Other people's lives are set up as examples for us.

James 5:10,11

¹⁰ My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience. ¹¹ Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord—that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.

1 Corinthians 10:5,11

⁵ But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. ¹¹ Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

3

UNDERSTANDING GOD'S PREPARATION PROCESS

God progressively prepares those whom He uses.

3.1. What Does God Want to Accomplish Through the Preparation Process?

2 Timothy 2:19–21

¹⁹ Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity." ²⁰ But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. ²¹ Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.

- God wants to make you a vessel (Gr. = implement, equipment) of honour (Gr. = value, esteem, dignity).
- God wants you to be sanctified, (Gr. = purified, made holy) set apart for Him.
- God wants you to become fit (Gr. = useful, profitable, suitable) for the Master's use.
- God wants you to become prepared (Gr. = made ready) for every good work.

God's preparation process is continual. In each phase of life, He is preparing you for the next.

We must learn to cooperate and work with God through the preparation process.

Examples from Scripture:

Moses (Acts 7:20–34)

- God supernaturally arranged for Moses to be taught and trained in Pharaoh's palace. This was God's 'seed of spiritual destiny' in Moses' life (Acts 7:22). These were Moses' initial preparation and positioning for his heavenly purpose.
- At the age of 40, Moses began to understand his divine purpose. However, he made the mistake of trying to accomplish it through his own methods.
- Every time we attempt to do something in our own ability—we further delay the unfolding of God's plan. Moses attempted to go at it all by himself and it only delayed things by 40 years!
- Moses had to spend 40 long years in the wilderness (Acts 7:29,30; Exodus 2:15,23), simply because he had to wait for the king whom he had angered, to die.
- At the age of 80, Moses resumed his divine mission.
- For the next 40 years, he went about carrying out his life's purpose.

David

- David was anointed to be king while a teenage boy. Let us say he was 17 years of age at this time.
- He had his initial training taking care of his father's sheep. It must have been during this time that he developed his skill in music, killed the lion and bear, and gained a good reputation among the people of Israel.

- He had initial success when he killed Goliath and became a national hero.
- The tide turned and David had to run for his life when King Saul decided to kill him.
- The next 5-6 years, David lived like a vagabond (1 Samuel 22:1,2). The man who was anointed to be king spent some time in caves!
- However, it was during this time that God sent men who joined David and later became important captains in his mighty army!
- When David was about 23 years old, he became king of Judah (2 Samuel 2:1–4).
- David was 30 years old when he was finally made king over all Israel and Judah (2 Samuel 5:4,5). He then reigned for 33 years as king.
- About 13 years of preparation—from the time of his ‘calling’ by the prophet Samuel to when he was ‘commissioned’ to step in to his call.

Paul

- Paul must have been about 33 years of age when he had his encounter on the Damascus road with the Lord Jesus. It took that many years to be trained.
- At the time of his encounter, the Lord Jesus revealed his calling to be a light to the Gentiles, an apostle of the faith.
- Paul initially spent 3 years in Damascus and Arabia (Galatians 1:16,17; Acts 9:19–25). People tried to kill him in Damascus and so he fled into Arabia and then returned later. It must

have been during this time that he received much of the revelation of the Gospel which he preached.

- After this, he visited Jerusalem for 15 days (Galatians 1:18; Acts 9:26–30) during which time he preached boldly. But once again people tried to kill him and he left for Tarsus.
- He then spent about 13 years in the regions of Tarsus, Syria and Cilicia (Galatians 1:21–24; 2:1).
- Toward the end of these 13 years, Barnabas comes to Tarsus and brought Saul to Antioch (Acts 11:25,26).
- Paul then spent a whole year teaching in the church at Antioch.
- At the end of this year, Paul makes his second trip to Jerusalem along with Barnabas to carry relief to those in the middle of a famine (Acts 11:29,30). So he goes to Jerusalem after a gap of 14 years (Galatians 2:1).
- At this point, about 17 years had elapsed since his meeting with the Lord on the road to Damascus. Paul must have been about 50 years old at this time.
- Nothing much is recorded about the first 17 years of Paul's Christian life and walk with God. Of course we know that Paul preached and taught during this time. We know that he received revelation and understanding of the mysteries of God. However, nothing much is recorded of what he did and preached. These are referred to as the 'silent years' of Paul's life. These, in addition to His prior training under Judaism formed part of his training.
- Finally in Acts 13, after 17 years, Paul is called into his first missionary journey with Barnabas (Acts 13:1–4).

- In Acts 14:14, Paul along with Barnabas is referred to as an apostle for the first time.

It was about 17 years after his encounter with the Lord, that Paul actually stepped into his apostolic ministry. Seventeen years of preparation and training even for Apostle Paul! God is not in a hurry!!

As you go through God's preparation process, you will discover the hidden talents, gifts and callings in your life.

Matthew 10:26,27

²⁶ Therefore do not fear them. For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known. ²⁷ "Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops.

Luke 6:40

A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher.

The preparation that God takes you through will bring about:

- Godly character.
- Maturity in all areas.

3.1.1. Godly character

² Timothy 2:19–21

¹⁹ Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity." ²⁰ But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. ²¹ Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.

Matthew 9:17

Nor do they put new wine into old wineskins, or else the wineskins break, the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined. But they put new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved.

- God is more interested in our character, than in our gifts.
- Your gift can take you where your character cannot keep you.
- Your character is the foundation upon which your life is built.
- Gifts and anointing are given from heaven, but character is built on earth.

Psalm 51:6

Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom.

- There is more to Christian life than saying the right things and going through the right motions. God is looking for godly character.

3.1.2. Maturity in all areas

Ephesians 4:11–16

¹¹ And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, ¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, ¹³ till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; ¹⁴ that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, ¹⁵ but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

- Maturity in our personal walk with God. Obedience in all areas.
- Maturity in our relationships with people.
- Maturity in our gifts and callings.

Matthew 10:16,17

¹⁶ Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. ¹⁷ But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues.

- Your growth in godly character and maturity is progressive.
- Each time you step into a new level of obedience—a new level of godliness, a new level of maturity—you will find a new level of God's anointing on your life.
- The things you learn today will prepare you for tomorrow. God will prepare you to fulfil His purposes.

3.2. How Does God Prepare Us?

3.2.1. The Word

2 Timothy 3:16,17

¹⁶ All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

3.2.2. The Holy Spirit

2 Corinthians 3:18

But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

3.2.3. Other people

Proverbs 27:17

As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.

- Associate with people who are doing the kind of things you want to be doing.

3.2.4. Life's experiences

- There are lessons to learn both in the good times and in the bad times of life.

Romans 5:3,4

³ And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; ⁴ and perseverance, character; and character, hope.

James 1:2-4

² My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. ⁴ But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

Hebrews 5:8,9

⁸ Though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. ⁹ And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him.

- Life's experiences will teach you lessons you cannot learn elsewhere.
- You cannot deny a man with experience.

3.3. Things to Keep in Mind as You Go Through God's Preparation Process

3.3.1. We must learn to cooperate and work with God through the preparation process

1 Corinthians 3:9

For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building.

3.3.2. Your attitude matters

3.3.3. Consistency is where the power is

1 Timothy 4:15

Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all.

3.3.4. As you are faithful in the little things, God will promote you to the next

Matthew 25:23

His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'

3.3.5. Beware of complacency. Allow God to stretch you

Philippians 3:12

Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.

3.3.6. Preparation time is never wasted time. The greater the calling, the greater the preparation

3.3.7. Do not be hasty. Let each preparation season run its full course

Proverbs 21: 5

The plans of the diligent lead surely to plenty, but those of everyone who is hasty, surely to poverty.

Examples: Moses, David and Paul.

3.3.8. Stay within your area of calling and gifting

Do not try to become something God did not design.

4

POSITIONING YOURSELF TO FULFIL HIS PURPOSES

Part of the process of fulfilling God's will for our lives is to position ourselves, so that we can be at the right place at the right time.

'Positioning' is simply being sensitive to God and learning to be in the right place at the right time, doing the right thing.

4.1. Positioned to Fulfil His Purposes

Esther 4:12–14

¹² So they told Mordecai Esther's words. ¹³ And Mordecai told them to answer Esther: "Do not think in your heart that you will escape in the king's palace any more than all the other Jews. ¹⁴ For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

We must be in the right place at the right time, to do what God wants us to do.

4.2. Positioned to Receive His Provision

1 Kings 17:1–9

¹ And Elijah the Tishbite, of the inhabitants of Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the LORD God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word." ² Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, ³ "Get away from here and turn eastward, and hide by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan. ⁴ And it will be that you shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there." ⁵ So he went and did according to the word of the LORD, for he went and stayed by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan. ⁶ The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening; and he drank

from the brook. ⁷ And it happened after a while that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land. ⁸ Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, ⁹ "Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. See, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you."

We must be in the right place at the right time to receive God's provision for our lives.

We cannot blame God, if we fail to position ourselves and miss out on God's provision.

4.3. Positioned to Be Protected

Psalm 91

¹He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. ²I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust." ³Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the perilous pestilence. ⁴He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you shall take refuge; His truth shall be your shield and buckler. ⁵You shall not be afraid of the terror by night, nor of the arrow that flies by day, ⁶nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness, nor of the destruction that lays waste at noonday. ⁷A thousand may fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand; But it shall not come near you. ⁸Only with your eyes shall you look, and see the reward of the wicked. ⁹Because you have made the LORD, who is my refuge, Even the Most High, your dwelling place, ¹⁰No evil shall befall you, Nor shall any plague come near your dwelling; ¹¹For He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways. ¹²In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone. ¹³You shall tread upon the lion and the cobra, the young lion and the serpent you shall trample underfoot. ¹⁴"Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him on high, because he has known My name. ¹⁵He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him. ¹⁶With long life I will satisfy him, and show him My salvation."

The safest place to be is in the centre of God's will, doing what God wants you to do, in the place where He wants you to do it and at the time He wants you to do it.

4.4. Positioned to Be Promoted

2 Samuel 2:1–4

¹ It happened after this that David inquired of the LORD, saying, “Shall I go up to any of the cities of Judah?” And the LORD said to him, “Go up.” David said, “Where shall I go up?” And He said, “To Hebron.” ² So David went up there, and his two wives also, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite. ³ And David brought up the men who were with him, every man with his household. So they dwelt in the cities of Hebron. ⁴ Then the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah. And they told David, saying, “The men of Jabesh Gilead were the ones who buried Saul.”

We must position ourselves to receive the promotion, growth and advancement that God intends for us.

4.5. Positioned to Be in the Current Move of God

Examples:

Brazen serpent

Numbers 21:5–9

⁵ And the people spoke against God and against Moses: “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread.” ⁶ So the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died. ⁷ Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, “We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD that He take away the serpents from us.” So Moses prayed for the people. ⁸ Then the LORD said to Moses, “Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live.” ⁹ So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.

2 Kings 18:4

He removed the high places and broke the sacred pillars, cut down the wooden image and broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made; for until those days the children of Israel burned incense to it, and called it Nehushtan.

Moses

Exodus 17:1–6

¹ Then all the congregation of the children of Israel set out on their journey from the Wilderness of Sin, according to the commandment of the LORD, and camped in Rephidim; but there was no water for the people to drink. ² Therefore the people contended with Moses, and said, "Give us water, that we may drink." So Moses said to them, "Why do you contend with me? Why do you tempt the LORD?" ³ And the people thirsted there for water, and the people complained against Moses, and said, "Why is it you have brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?" ⁴ So Moses cried out to the LORD, saying, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me!" ⁵ And the LORD said to Moses, "Go on before the people, and take with you some of the elders of Israel. Also take in your hand your rod with which you struck the river, and go. ⁶ Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock in Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink." And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.

Numbers 20:6–12

⁶ So Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and they fell on their faces. And the glory of the LORD appeared to them. ⁷ Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ⁸ "Take the rod; you and your brother Aaron gather the congregation together. Speak to the rock before their eyes, and it will yield its water; thus you shall bring water for them out of the rock, and give drink to the congregation and their animals." ⁹ So Moses took the rod from before the LORD as He commanded him. ¹⁰ And Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock; and he said to them, "Hear now, you rebels! Must we bring water for you out of this rock?" ¹¹ Then Moses lifted his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod; and water came out abundantly, and the congregation and their animals drank. ¹² Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not believe Me, to hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them."

John's disciples

John 1:36,37

³⁶And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God!"

³⁷ The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

- Positioning can be geographical, social, vocational or relational.
- Positioning applies to every area of our lives.

4.6. Things to Keep in Mind as You Position Yourself

- Be willing to let go.
Example: Lot's wife.
- Be willing to step out into the unknown.

Hebrews 11:8

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.

- Be careful how you enter and leave.
- Be open to change.
- Before you make a move, prepare for it.
- God will, at times, use the actions of others to position you.

Example: Joseph.

- Be strategic. Do not wander aimlessly.
- God is greater than your mistakes. He can reposition you to do His will.

Example: Moses and Jonah.

5

THE PRICE OF THE HIGH CALL OF GOD

The fulfilling of God's purpose for your life will cost you something.

Luke 14:27

And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.

Galatians 6:14

But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

The Cross is:

- A place of suffering.
- A place of separation.
- A place of sacrifice.

Sacrifice—giving up something that you have a right to.

Philippians 3:7

But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ.

John 12:24–26

²⁴ **Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.** ²⁵ **He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.** ²⁶ **If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor.**

Each sacrifice you make will lead you into greater fruitfulness for God's Kingdom.

5.1. Daily Sacrifices

1 Corinthians 15:30–33

³⁰ **And why do we stand in jeopardy every hour? ³¹ I affirm, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. ³² If, in the manner of men, I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage is it to me? If the dead do not rise, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!" ³³ Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits."**

Daily sacrifices could be things such as separating yourself from unnecessary things, choosing not to do things that others (your peers) may be doing and so on.

1 Corinthians 9:24–27

²⁴ **Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. ²⁵ And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. ²⁶ Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. ²⁷ But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.**

Romans 12:1, 2

¹ **I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.**

5.2. Life Sacrifices

Example: Abraham (Genesis 12:1), Moses (Hebrews 11:24–26).

Life sacrifices are major sacrifices that you make for the Kingdom of God,

E.g., relocating geographically, relinquishing a job and so on.

5.3. Spirit-Led Sacrifices Versus Fleshly Sacrifices

John 3:6

That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

1 Corinthians 3:12–15

¹² **Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,** ¹³ **each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is.** ¹⁴ **If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward.** ¹⁵ **If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.**

- The price that God wants you to pay may not be the same as the price God is calling someone else to pay.
- Pay your price with joy.

6

FINISHING YOUR COURSE

Luke 14:27–35

²⁷ And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. ²⁸ For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it— ²⁹ lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, ³⁰ saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish’? ³¹ Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? ³² Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. ³³ So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple. ³⁴ “Salt is good; but if the salt has lost its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? ³⁵ It is neither fit for the land nor for the dunghill, but men throw it out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”

It is not enough to begin well—we must have the endurance to finish the race.

6.1. Planning

We must count the cost. Part of this process is ‘planning.’ Planning is having foresight. It is anticipating upcoming events and then deciding on a course of action.

Proverbs 4:26

Ponder the path of your feet, and let all your ways be established.

Proverbs 6:6–8

⁶ Go to the ant, you sluggard! Consider her ways and be wise, ⁷ which, having no captain, overseer or ruler, ⁸ Provides her supplies in the summer, and gathers her food in the harvest.

Proverbs 14:8,15

⁸ The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way, but the folly of fools is deceit. ¹⁵ The simple believes every word, but the prudent considers well his steps.

Proverbs 22:3

A prudent man foresees evil and hides himself, but the simple pass on and are punished.

We plan in accordance to what we know is God's will for our lives. We submit ourselves and our plans to His will.

2 Corinthians 1:15–17

¹⁵ And in this confidence I intended to come to you before, that you might have a second benefit— ¹⁶ to pass by way of you to Macedonia, to come again from Macedonia to you, and be helped by you on my way to Judea. ¹⁷ Therefore, when I was planning this, did I do it lightly? Or the things I plan, do I plan according to the flesh, that with me there should be Yes, Yes, and No, No?

We plan not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

We need to develop and implement Spirit-inspired plans that will help us progress to the finish line. God does not always work independent of our mind, reasoning and thinking (although He does at times). God is the One who gave us our mind/reasoning/thinking and when we place our mental faculties at His disposal, He is able to inspire ideas/plans/thoughts/strategies which take us further into what He has planned. The problem is that sometimes we tend to get so 'into the Spirit' that we isolate the very vehicle that He created, through which He uses us, i.e., our mind/mental faculties. Or on the other extreme, we get so 'into the flesh' with our latest methods/tools/techniques that we fail to hear what the Spirit is saying.

Comments on ‘Spirit-Inspired Planning’ by Ps. Jack Hayford:

Whenever he prompts us to expect greater income, we pray accordingly. Whenever we sense a need to cut back, we do so without feeling guilty. Since the “goal” is not something we set, we don’t have to defend it. It is rather a case of God’s purpose being clarified as time goes by.

People and institutions begin to corrode when fleshly zeal is tied to spiritual goals.

In God’s order, there is never a situation so desperate that it must grind people to powder or press a financial appeal at the cost of integrity, exploitative tactics, or world-styled salesmanship.

But our desire is to “birth a plan” rather than “plan a birth.” The conception of vision, gestation of plans, and carrying to delivery are all pursued in an unabashed spirit of prayer and absolute dependence upon the Holy Spirit to lead—to correct, to time, to inspire faith, to release resources, to stir response.

- *We will not undertake anything without a clear sense of the Holy Spirit’s direction, confirmed by eldership.*
- *We will not utilize any means of promotion or fund-raising that depends on human genius or style to be effective.*
- *We will not pursue anything that overlooks the priorities of worship, relationship, discipleship and ministry.*
- *We will pray much, often, and always.*
- *We will think—trusting God’s Spirit to give clarity, coherence, and conviction to us all.*
- *We will believe, knowing that “without faith it is impossible to please God.” As we do so, He will grow His purpose in us.*

6.2. Running Till the Finish Line

Hebrews 12:1,2

¹ Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

What will it take to finish our course?

What can I do now that will ensure that I run my race to the finish?

- Lay aside every weight.
- Lay aside the sin that easily ensnares.
- Run with endurance.
- Look unto Jesus.

The Apostle Paul

Acts 20:22–24

²² And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, ²³ except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me. ²⁴ But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

Acts 21:13

Then Paul answered, "What do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."

Paul did not hold his life dear to himself, so that he could finish his course and the ministry entrusted to him.

2 Timothy 4:6–8

⁶ For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. ⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸ Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

Enjoy your journey as you pursue God's dream for your life!

Notes

Notes

Do You Know the GOD Who Loves You?

About 2000 years ago, God came into this world as a man. His name is Jesus. He lived a perfectly sinless life. Since Jesus was God in flesh, everything He said and did revealed God to us. The words He spoke were the very words of God. The things He did were the actions of God. Jesus performed many miracles on the earth. He healed the sick and suffering. He opened blind eyes, unstopped deaf ears, made the lame walk and healed every kind of sickness and disease. He fed the hungry by miraculously multiplying a few loaves of bread, calmed the storm and did many other wonderful things.

All of these actions reveal to us that God is a good God who wants people to be well, whole, healthy and happy. God wants to meet the needs of people.

So, why would God decide to become a man and step into our world? Why did Jesus come?

All of us have sinned and done things that are unacceptable before the God who created us. Sin has its consequences. Sin is like a great unsurpassable wall between God and us. Sin separates us from God. It prevents us from knowing and having a meaningful relationship with the One who created us. Therefore, many of us try to fill this void with other things.

Another consequence of our sins is eternal separation from God. In God's court, the penalty for sin is death. Death is eternal separation from God in hell.

But, the good news is that we can be free from sin and be restored to God. The Bible says, "For the wages [payment] of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23). Jesus paid for the sins of the whole world, when He died on the cross. Then three days later He rose again, showed Himself alive to many and then went back into heaven.

God is a God of love and mercy. He does not wish that any person be lost in hell. And so He came, to provide a way for the entire human race to be free from sin and its lasting consequences. He came to save sinners—to rescue people like you and me from sin and eternal death.

To receive this free forgiveness of sins, the Bible tells us that we have to do just one thing—accept what the Lord Jesus Christ did on the cross and believe in Him wholeheartedly.

"Through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive forgiveness of sins" (Acts 10:43).

"That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10:9).

You too can receive forgiveness and cleansing for your sins if you will believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The following is a simple prayer to help you make a decision to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and what He has done for you on the cross. This prayer will help you express your acceptance of what Jesus has done for you and receive forgiveness and cleansing for your sins. This prayer is only a guideline. You can also pray in your own words.

Dear Lord Jesus, today, I have understood what You did for me on the cross. You died for me: You shed Your precious blood and paid the penalty for my sins, so that I could be forgiven. The Bible tells me that whoever believes in You will receive forgiveness for their sins.

Today, I make a decision to believe in You and to accept what You did for me, by dying for me on the cross and rising again from the dead. I know I cannot save myself by my own good works, neither can any other human save me. I cannot earn forgiveness for my sins.

Today, I believe in my heart and say with my mouth that You died for me, You paid the penalty for my sins, You rose again from the dead, and by faith in You, I receive forgiveness and cleansing for my sins.

Thank You Jesus. Help me to love You, to know You more and to be faithful to You. Amen.

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All Peoples Church & World Outreach, Bangalore, India, has extended its ministry by launching its Bible College & Ministry Training Center (APC-BC&MTC) in August 2005. APC-BC&MTC equips, trains and releases faithful men and women to impact villages, towns and cities in India and other nations, for Jesus Christ.

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God has a plan and purpose for each one of us. We must cooperate with God to fulfil His purpose for our lives. This study will teach you how to recognise God's purpose for your life and what you need to do, to successfully complete all that He has planned for you.

Catch God's dream for your life! There is no higher or better purpose to live for, than living for God's purpose for your life! There is nothing that can bring as much satisfaction as pursuing and fulfilling His heavenly call. There is no greater adventure than walking with God fulfilling the things He has designed for you.

Enjoy your journey as you pursue God's dream for your life!

Ashish Raichur

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