

His Ultimate Goal

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"For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all." (I Corinthians 15:27,29)

If we are going to give ourselves to God's working, the working that will bring us to all the Lord has designed us to be in union with Him, we need to see the purpose of God. God's purpose encompasses many things, but His ultimate goal is to bring us to a perfect oneness with Himself. God is the center of everything and each one that comes to Him must first be brought into a relationship with God, and then brought to know fellowship with Him. God has designed this to be accomplished by His indwelling and union with each member of His family. We need to know the greatness of His power toward us who believe, according the working of His mighty power (Ephesians 1:19). As Paul prayed, we pray *"that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him"* (Ephesians 1:17).

Man was created by God, for God and for His purpose. God has a plan and it is revealed to us by the Spirit. The plan of God is to bring us into His purpose. The purpose of God is God Himself. God is complete within Himself and works in us so that we may be complete in Him, and that He may be all and in all. We have been made for Him, and can only find our completion in Him. What love He has showed forth in His plan of bringing man back to Himself! In this time, the New Covenant is the outworking of God's purpose. By it He is working all things according to His purpose and plan.

Jesus said in His prayer in the 17th chapter of John, *"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou has sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one..."* This is the purpose of God that is being worked out in the lives of those who believe. This believing is not just knowing the truth; it is an active faith which is moving in union with God.

Speaking to the Corinthians, Paul tells them what God's purpose is and how it will all work out. *"For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all"* (I Corinthians 15:27,29). This purpose has been in the heart of God from the very beginning, and is being worked out by God according to His plan and in His order. The plan and order of God are to bring us who believe to the fullness of His purpose in life.

God has made each member of His body alive in every way that He might work all things. We are born again by God--made alive spiritually unto God. He quickens, makes alive our mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in us, so that we are not debtors to the flesh to be controlled by the flesh (Romans 8:12) but that we might live by the Spirit and know His control in each of our lives. God's purpose is to make us a part of His family. He does this by adoption, making us sons by putting His divine nature within us when we receive His promise, the indwelling Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:5).

Everything that God is doing is in union with His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. *"That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him"* (Ephesians 1:10). In Christ, God has made all one, breaking down the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile, making in himself of twain *one new man*, that He might reconcile both unto God in *one body*. Now therefore you are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God. (See Ephesians 2:15-19.) We are built together for a habitation of God through the Spirit.

God made man with a choice; thus we need to choose Him and then go on to move in union with Him so that God's purpose might be realized by us. This cannot be done separate from Christ. We must be one with Him and move as one with the Lord. It is "Christ in you, the hope of glory." God has only *one* plan to bring us to His one purpose. It is the Lord who is working in us the will to do His good pleasure. All working is of God by His Spirit. It is the Lord who has revealed His purpose. He does not have another purpose or another plan. We must know that God is working in and by His Spirit. All areas of the working of God are revealed by the Spirit, and He goes on to work all things by His Spirit.

All that God is doing in His plan to bring us to His purpose is being done in God's nature, *love*. Man is not being forced to do the will of God, but does it by obedience to His leading in love. *"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God"* (I John 3:1). God has revealed His love to us and we move in love in our expression to others. This affects our attitudes and behavior toward the family of God and toward the world around us.

If we are moving in union with the Lord, His purpose is being worked in us and through us. The purpose of God is God Himself being worked in us by Himself. This is the outworking of the New Covenant. But in order to move in the purpose of God, we must see the purpose of God. May we diligently seek God that He might reveal it to us and that we might move on in it.

The Plan Of God

"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." (I Corinthians 12:13)

The plan of God is the way God has designed to bring each one to His end purpose. The working out of God's plan begins with man being brought into a right relationship with God and thus with others who are a part of God's family. A right relationship then brings us into fellowship with God and those who are God's children. In God's plan, relationship and fellowship go together. We cannot know fellowship with God if we do not have the right relationship with Him. A right relationship means that we have been made alive unto God by the Spirit which He has given to those who ask Him. The preparation for receiving the Spirit is the believer's acceptance of the sacrificial death of the Lord Jesus Christ, and repentance--turning away from the old direction and unto God. This opens the way for the promise of the Spirit to be received by faith.

God brings us into His working in the body by the Spirit. (I Corinthians 12:13) *"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."* In God's plan we are one in Spirit and God's design is that we *"all come into the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ...speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ"* (Ephesians 4:13,15).

There is only one plan that God has for us and towards this purpose He has given ministry and grace to function, to bring us to the fullness of His purpose. This working is done in love and by the working of the Spirit that is building us together a habitation for Himself (Ephesians 2:22). If we are going to function and come into God's design, we must commit ourselves to God and to what He is doing. Committing to God means I'm committed to His plan, and what God is doing is working Himself in us--in His body, the church.

Our commitment is not something we do separate from Christ, but *because* we are in union with Him. We must always remember that we can do nothing separate from Christ. Christ *is* our life. We are not living our lives for God; we are living *His* life. This is the secret if we are going to move in faith. We cannot consider ourselves separate from Christ. We are dead separate from Christ. It is never *what we are* but *what He is in us*. This can only be worked out by the Spirit and in the power of God. Always remember, *we are nothing separate from Christ*. This is God's plan to bring us all to that final place where God is all and in all.

God is working all things in Christ. This means we are in union with Christ. Whatever we are doing is because God is doing it; whatever we are speaking, it is because God is speaking. We have been partakers of the Tree of Life and we live from and because of Christ. He said He was the Bread of Life. God's design is Christ. This is God's working, not man's. Separate from God, man cannot be a part of what God is doing. Fellowship with God means walking in the light as He is in the Light.

For us to grow and mature in life, the Lord is going to discipline and train us by our obedience to the Spirit within. This is life in its outworking--a daily growing in grace. This is all being done in the life of God, *love*. We must have eyes to see and ears to hear--being alive unto God who dwells within by the Spirit. All of our life is God, not what we can do or what we think. This is only who God is and what God can do in union with man. It is a great mystery which has been revealed to us by the Spirit in the fullness of time when Christ came and made the way Himself.

God has designed a purpose for the family in His plan, and it is set forth in the Scriptures. All the members have their proper places, as God has designed from the very beginning. This is God's plan, and we as members cannot work out God's plan according to what we think or what seems right to us. The Lord knows best and His plan is perfect in its design and its outworking. God has not changed His plan down through the ages. It is the same and it is perfect. We must move in the Spirit; there is no other way.

There is *no* place for any expression of self in what God is doing. We all must come to this knowledge as God reveals Himself to us and as we submit our wills to God's will. We are here for God, not for ourselves. This is what Calvary is all about, dealing with our sins and with sin itself. This means I am not here for myself but for God. Because He is God, He is able to do what I cannot do by myself or for myself. Redemption is all of God and what He can do for fallen man. It is all a part of God's great plan which is worked by His power and because of who He is.

God has created the church, the body of Christ for a purpose. It was created for God's working and as a place where we can know Him together and function together in this union that He has brought us into. All ministry is given by God and worked by God in the Spirit. There is no work done in the body of Christ separate from the Spirit of God--from the giving of ministry to the receiving of ministry and the direction that the Lord gives to the Body. All working in the body is for God's purpose, not to satisfy man's wants.

God does not force us to move in His plan. He shows us His plan, then gives us Himself so that we can be a part of His plan. We cannot function in the body of Christ, in our families or with others, separate from fellowship with God and moving in the Spirit. Again, we cannot forget that we can do *nothing* separate from Christ. This is why we see the mess around us today--because man is moving to try to do something for himself or for God. *We can do nothing for God.* It is what God can do for us and in us.

The Order Of God

"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence." (Colossians 1:15-18)

What God is doing has order because God is a God of order. Order gives the purpose of God beauty. In the plan of God, order is one of the means that God uses to bring us to His glorious end purpose. The order is God's alone. In God's plan, everyone is not a law unto themselves or doing what they want to do for God. We move willingly in God's order if we are a part of what God is doing.

God has an order for the family, an order for the church, and an order for our lives. God's order is not hidden; it is plainly revealed in the Scriptures. There is an order in creation which is revealed in the family. God's order is brought into His working in the body of Christ. If we don't move in the order God has set forth, we are not going to move in the life of God. If we are moving in the Spirit in reality, we must be moving in God's order. The Spirit is God and *cannot* move apart from God's order.

What the Lord began is right up-to-date; it is never old. We don't need a new order. We are moving in God and He is the same always. Man is always wanting to do something separate from God. He doesn't want to be told, "This is the way; walk in it." Rebellion is moving in your own thing, serving God in your own way--making your own order for the way you want to serve God. Today religious men and women are looking to themselves and what they feel is good for themselves. It's the same old thing: "Eat of this tree and you will be as God."

God made man with a choice: "Choose God or choose yourself." When you choose yourself, you have chosen death, and this is what we are seeing today all around us. Man doesn't want any absolutes. He wants to be free to do what he thinks is right. In reality that is bondage--being entrapped in death while moving to "do something for God." *"O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit"* (Romans 7:24, 8:1). The religious man has entrapped himself again and the answer is still to come back to the order of God, which is Christ is the head of Man and man the head of woman (I Corinthians 11:3). The order of God is God Himself.

In God's order there is safety and real freedom and it is the only thing that will bring us to God's purpose and allow us to move in God's plan. God's ways are perfect. We can never find or think up a better way or plan. What man is doing may look good but it can never bring us to the fullness of God. Man needs a fresh revelation of who Christ is, what He came to do and how God is working it out. God is doing a new thing and it never gets old. He reveals it to those who wait upon Him.

Those who are moving in the Spirit hunger after the things of God and obey Him as He leads them in His purpose. The flesh cannot do the will of God and is always looking to self--to satisfy its own desires in the strength of flesh. We need to realize that the flesh is blind to what it is doing. Flesh thinks

it is doing something lasting, but is always deceived because of the blindness of self. If self could save us, we would not need Christ or God's plan and order. Man is blinded in his own "doing good" in the flesh, rather than moving in faith in the order of God.

When men don't see what the body of Christ is, they go about to establish their own "church," and move in it according to man's thinking rather than by the Spirit. It is like Jesus said, "There are two houses being built--one on the sand and the other on the rock. But when the storms come, it is too late. This is because man has chosen to blind himself to what God is saying. Men are searching the Scriptures, but will not come to Christ that He might open their blinded eyes to see and to be set free.

The limit that God has set before us is Himself and man is not satisfied. He is always striving to do things "his way," which ends up always in death rather than life and peace. The Lord knew this, and this is why in the book of Revelation the Spirit says, "He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches." It is no different today. Those who have an ear will hear. But we must do more than just hear--we must obey. "He has become eternal salvation to those who obey Him." What the Lord has done, He has done openly for all to see. He has promised that the hungry and thirsty shall be filled. The life of God flows from order.

God is a God of order--we can see it in all His creation. We are not going to change God's order. It is given to us to move in, so that we might know the fullness of God and enjoy what He has prepared for us in this union with God. Let us move in God's order. We will if we are sons of God. God's sons are led by the Spirit. Time will come to an end, and those who have moved in His plan, according to His purpose, will enter into fullness and be brought into that complete oneness with God which is His ultimate goal.