

Cyber Truths By E-mail

7. *God's Will For You* (May 10, 2005)



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Dear Friends,

We hear from many people, young and old, who are seeking God's will for themselves. This is one of the more frequent topics we encounter so we thought we'd share with you the nature of our counsel to them.

1. Have Goals In Life Noble Enough For God To Honored By.

In our book, *Growing Relationships Through Confrontation*, we share that people generally differ in any of four areas: goals, values, methods, or facts. Of these four areas, the first two are the most lethal to people going on together if they haven't been discussed and agreed upon early in a relationship. "Do two walk together unless they have agreed to do so?" (Amos 3:3). On goals and values we really attach our intense convictions and deep emotions.

So few today in Christendom REALLY work through their goals and values for their marriages, or with others in their faith community. Sadly, this often leads to misunderstanding, pain and destruction in their relationships. When people differ strongly in their goals and values, they're really hurt when controversy arises.

Most people in this culture are hindered from thoroughly working through differences in their goals and values because of the pervasive influence of Hellenism, which places great emphasis on the What rather than the Why.

Goals and values answer the question "Why?". Your goals and values emanate out of the motives of your heart. Because of the influence of Hellenism so many Christians talk about "What" they do for God. And, they often respond negatively when you challenge them with a "Why?"

Think about it: When you meet people, you usually ask them, "What do you do for a living?" Seldom do you ask why they are doing what they do.

The Bible repeatedly reveals that in our relationship with our Lord, the why — the motive of your heart — is more important to Him than what you do. David certainly understood this. He was a shepherd boy who knew why he tended the sheep flock and its importance to his family's well-being. Because he clearly understood why he tended the flock, he could risk his life against bear and lion to protect the sheep.

David's heart relationship with God was revealed when he went to bring food to his brothers (1 Samuel 17). Again risking his own life, he approached the giant, Goliath, with a stone in his sling. His words of righteous trust and indignation reveal the young shepherd's devotion to God, "David said to the Philistine, 'You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the LORD will hand you over to me, and I'll strike you down and cut off your head. Today I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the LORD saves; for the battle is the LORD's, and he will give all of you into our hands'" (1 Samuel 17:45-47).

Can you picture our Father in heaven looking down on this young man who is consumed with such devotion to His glory? Like any father, He is going to do something for such a person. We see the same motive of heart in Joseph, Daniel,

Shedrach, Meshach, and Abednego. And, in each case our Father raised up those whose motive, that is, their goals and values, were only for the Lord regardless of personal cost to themselves. Let us assure you: Our Father is still doing the same today for His children.

Years later, the aging King David encouraged his son and successor, Solomon, to have the right motive toward God: "And you, my son Solomon, acknowledge the God of your father, and serve him with wholehearted devotion and with a willing mind, for the LORD searches every heart and understands every motive behind the thoughts. If you seek him, he will be found by you; but if you forsake him, he will reject you forever" (1 Chronicles 28:9).

We strongly encourage you to leave behind you your focus on the what's of your life. Spend time with the Holy Spirit and with those close to you to go over why you are doing what you do. If your goals and values are not high enough to glorify your Father, you will be frustrated in whatever you endeavor to do. And it certainly won't glorify Him!

2. God's Plan For You NEVER Aligns With What You Think It Will Be!

So many well-meaning Christians become disillusioned in their service for God. They ultimately give up — often developing a hardened heart toward our Father. The reason so many become disillusioned is that they began with an illusion. Rather than seeking to follow Jesus, seeking His guidance and growing in increasing trust and dependency on Him, they had in their mind what they were going to do for Him. Their goal was 'what' they were going to do for Him.

This the tragedy of so many ministries and missions today. People are wrapped up more in what they do on God's behalf and in their own plans, rather than exemplifying a living relationship with our Lord that glorifies our Father. This is why over 75% of missionaries today don't make it through their first overseas tour. The whole system is designed to recruit 'warm bodies' to fulfill tasks, not to follow Christ and grow increasingly dependent on Him so His glorious intervention and answers can be displayed.

These people are fulfilling the what's of ministry but are unable to reveal Jesus to others. They lack the goals and values that glorify our Father and bring Him praise. Rather, all they do is try to establish and keep in place a "Christian" religious system. The Pharisees did the same thing and Jesus called them "Hypocrites!" The whole Nicolaitan religious establishment runs on a system of bodies fulfilling functions — people more focused on what than why.

With that said, we want to share a few examples from the Scriptures of God's way to fulfill His plan. Pay careful attention because His way is going to be entirely different than many of you are looking for!

Let's go back to David again. God planned to make David king of Israel. In 1 Samuel 16 He sends the prophet Samuel to anoint him. King Saul takes notice of David when he kills Goliath in Chapter 17. In 1 Samuel 18 King Saul become jealous of the young warrior. In the following chapter Saul fails in his first attempt to kill David. Through the rest of 1 Samuel we see David ducking and dodging the king's attempts to murder him. Finally, in Chapter 5 of 2

Samuel, David is made King of Israel.

When God shows you His plan for you, get ready for a journey that you would never envision. Don't try to picture where it will take you, because you'll only have to be disillusioned later.

Whoever God recruits for His plans will go through intense life and character changes. The Lord's work is first accomplished in the individual soul of each of His children. David needed to learn deference in order to be a king after God's own heart. What better way to teach him humility and deference than to have the current king hunt him down to kill him?

One of our favorite examples of seeing God's plan for a person unfold in the Bible is the Apostle Paul. God planned that one of his own would speak to Caesar on His behalf, so He recruits Paul. In Acts 19 we see wonderful things happening in Ephesus as a result of Paul and his comrades' ministry. Just before a riot breaks out Paul announces, "I must visit Rome also" (v. 21). We know from other passages in the Book of Acts how sensitive Paul was to the Spirit's guidance. And, we know God affirms His plan when He sends an angel to the apostle: "Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you" (Acts 27:24).

Let's examine what happens to Paul on his trip to Rome:

First, he gets driven out of Ephesus by a riot (Acts 19:23-41);

Second, he knows he needs to go to Jerusalem before he journeys to Rome. On the way, he bears the sorrow of saying good-bye to loved ones he will never see again (Acts 20:36,37).

Third, in Acts 21 Paul stops to see

other friends, and the prophet Agabus foretells what will happen to him in Jerusalem. This not only compounds the pain of leaving people, but shows the apostle's resolve for God: "Why are you weeping and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 21:13).

How do you think our Father in heaven responds when He sees such determination in the heart of His children? Does this type of determination represent you? Is your devotion to Him strong enough that it doesn't matter to you what He asks you to do? Many who call themselves "Christian" never become part of God's plans because they lack adequate motivation to complete the journey to fulfill His plan for them.

Back to Paul: In Jerusalem Paul follows some bad advice to go through a purification rite and gets mobbed in the Temple, then arrested by the Romans (Acts 21:27-22:30). In Acts 23-26 he is taken before the Jewish religious establishment — struck in the mouth — faces a plot to kill him — the Roman soldiers take him away in the middle of the night — and he spends two years held prisoner by Felix. He then gets a hearing with Festus and Agrippa, and finally in Chapter 27 starts sailing for Rome.

In Chapters 27 he endures a storm, hunger, sea-sickness, and ultimately ends up shipwrecked on Malta. In Chapter 28:1-10, he gets bitten by a viper, but doesn't die — and heals the father of the chief official of the island. The Book of Acts end with Paul in Rome speaking for two years, "Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 28:31).

But get this: He still hasn't spoken to

or been tried by Caesar. Wouldn't you love to see what would be written in Acts, Part 2?

Friends, our Father has plans to use EACH AND EVERY ONE of His children for purposes that bring Him glory. We can tell by our contact with so many who never recognize His plan for them that you are never going to experience His plan unless you rid yourself of illusions and expectations as to the nature of His plan for you.

- You need to establish through the guidance and empowerment of the Holy Spirit the goals and values that have merit in heaven. As you seek to do this you'll be convicted and cleansed of those things that would hinder your journey to fulfill God's plan. And, your motives will be aligned with your Father's.

- The journey to God's plan is never continually onward and upward, nor is it a straight and smooth path by human standards. It is developmental, with much of the accomplishment of the

journey taking place inside you. Your motives, that is, your goals and values, will be changed into increasing Christ-likeness in order for you to walk in the character of Jesus — bringing glory to our Father.

One last thing:

If you're going to complete God's plans for you, you may not end your journey or mission with the same people you started with! In fact, you may accomplish your assignment all alone, as did Jesus on the cross and Stephen in the stoning pit. If you fear the loss of relationships more than you yearn with devotion to lovingly and faithfully serve our Lord, you'll never be used by Him to fulfill His plans — and, you'll never bring Him the praise and glory He deserves.

Remember, to our God, why is everything; what is nothing....

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