

Life Management 1

Discovering Destiny

Teacher's Manual

Life Management 1 Discovering Destiny

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Lesson 1

Introduction to Life Management

A. The purpose of this course

The purpose for a course in life management is:

1. To gain greater understanding of God's will or expectations for mankind.
2. To discover how we fit into God's overall plan.
3. To get a personal vision for our life.
4. To learn how to manage the vision revealed to us by God.
5. To become a better steward of the resources that God has placed in our hands.
6. To be challenged in areas of Christian character that affect vision fulfillment.
7. To assist the student in achieving destiny.

B. Some key verses that speak to the area of "life management"

1. John 15:16

You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.

Observations:

- God chose us with a purpose in mind that we would bear fruit.
- God has appointed us to accomplish a certain work.
- God's intention is that our work will live on after us (significance).
- God is going to help us fulfill the work because it will be bigger than we are.

2. Acts 20:22-24

And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me. 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.

Observations:

- We have a personal race to run.
- There are obstacles and challenges to completing our race.
- We must maintain focus, avoid distractions and be willing to pay the price of success.

3. Romans 12:1-8

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. ²And 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.

For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. 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; ⁷or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; ⁸he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

Observations:

- God does not override our will; we must present ourselves.
- We must present ourselves back to Him as a living sacrifice.
- This will require a certain denial of self and humility before God.
- To fulfill God's destiny we cannot think like the world thinks.
- God will enable us beyond our own abilities with a divine impartation of grace, faith and spiritual gifts.
- Whatever we do, we want to do it cheerfully, diligently, liberally and with excellence.

4. I Corinthians 9:24-27

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. ²⁵And 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. ²⁶Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. ²⁷But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

Observations:

- We are to run our race to win.
- We are running against God's plan for us not other believers.
- We need to know God's will so that we can run with certainty.
- Obtaining victory will require self-control and personal discipline.
- There is an eternal reward for success.

5. Philippians 3:12-15

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. ¹³Brethren, I do not count

myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, ¹⁴ I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵ Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you.

Observations:

- When Christ laid hold of us, He did it for a reason.
- Our responsibility is to lay hold of the task for which Christ laid hold of us.
- To lay hold of our future we must forget about the past and reach forward to what lies ahead.
- Laying hold of our destiny involves focus and exertion toward the mark that God has established for us.
- Achieving destiny will involve mature thinking.

6. II Timothy 2:15-16

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness.

Observations:

- Diligence will be required if we are to become approved by God.
- Attention to detail will produce the best possible result.
- There will be a lot of distractions that must be avoided to achieve God's highest and best.

7. II Timothy 4:6-8

For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 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.

Observations:

- Success involves a whole lifetime of consistent running.
- God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (Heb. 11:6).

8. II Peter 1:5-11

But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, ⁶ to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, ⁷ to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. ⁸ For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to

blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. ¹⁰ Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; ¹¹ for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Observations:

- Statements of faith alone will not produce victory.
- God will do His part, but we must do our part.
- We cannot be shortsighted but we must have long term vision to reap the harvest desired.
- As we cooperate with God we can be secure about our destiny.

C. Three parts are involved in any attempt at “life management”

There are three parts to fulfilling destiny:

1. Getting a Vision from God (Acts 26:19)

Paul said, *“I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision...”*

Getting a vision involves:

- a. Understanding God’s eternal purpose.
- b. Understanding God’s will for my life.
- c. Understanding my function or place in the Body of Christ.

This vision comes as I spend time in prayer, seeking the Lord, reading the Bible, exposing myself to the preached word and fellowshiping with other people who have similar passions.

2. Managing the Vision

Managing a vision involves:

- a. Setting goals relative to the vision.
- b. Managing your resources (your physical body, your time, your money, your mental capacities and your natural and spiritual gifts).
- c. Adding diligence to the vision.

3. Accomplishing the Vision

Accomplishing a vision involves:

- a. Fighting a good fight.
- b. Pressing toward the mark.
- c. Finishing the race.

Lesson 2-3 The Dominion Mandate

A. The Dominion Mandate Defined

1. When God created man He created him good and gave him a charge that is summarized in Genesis 1:26-28.

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness, let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

2. This charge faithfully reflects God's father's heart and His eternal purpose.

There were six desires in the heart of God when we moved to create mankind.

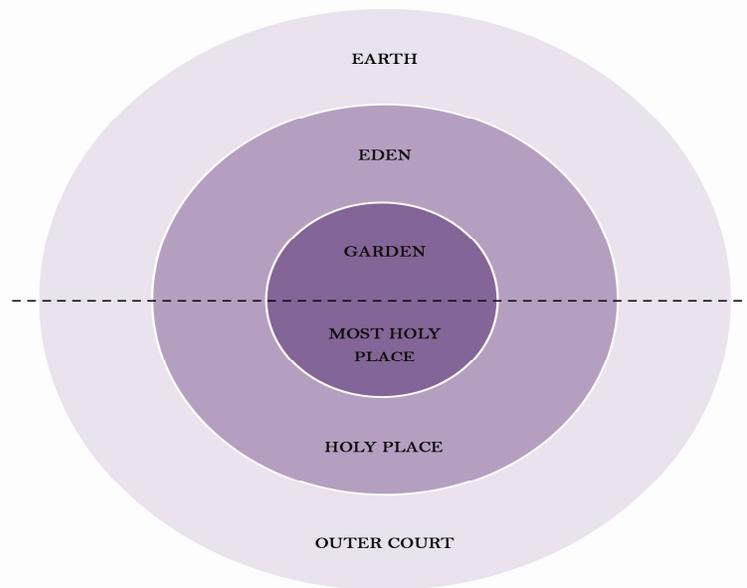
- a. God desired offspring—a man/woman in His image.
 - b. God desired His offspring to reproduce to fill up the earth.
 - c. God desired that His offspring would reach a place of maturity to reflect His character and nature.
 - d. God desired to have an intimate relationship with His offspring.
 - e. God desired that His offspring would enter into a God-like function.
 - f. God desired that His offspring would eventually qualify as a bride for the Eternal Son of God.
3. This charge involved man entering into god-like function and a partnership with God in His business.

The Father's business involves ruling and reigning. It involves bringing divine order and establishing dominion over all of the created world.

4. This charge involved a challenge for Adam to "subdue the earth."
 - a. The word "subdue" means "to tread down, conquer, subjugate, and bring into subjection." It is the root word that serves as a basis for the word "footstool."

- b. God was implying that there was an enemy out there who was going to challenge man's right to bear rule and who will seek to overcome him. Man was given the challenge to bring him under and tread him down.
- c. God planted man in a garden in Eden upon the earth, but he wanted man through his faithfulness to the commission to bring all of the earth under his rule.

THE FIRST TABERNACLE



- d. God's plan was for the whole earth to become a garden of the Lord.
 - e. In order for Adam to accomplish this, he would have to become aggressive to bring both the earth and the enemy who would try to resist him under subjection.
5. This charge to Adam has never been revoked.
- a. Even though Adam sinned and became a slave to sin, God's plan is that through Christ, dominion would be restored. In Christ man would again be equipped to carry on and fulfill this original commandment given to Adam.

- b. God wants a godly offspring who will be fruitful and multiply bringing divine rule and order to every area of life on this planet earth. This includes the world of nature, science, education, law, government and business. All is to be brought into submission under the divine will of God's eternal purpose.

B. The Three Main Challenges to Mankind relative to the Dominion Mandate

God's charge to Adam involved three main concepts. Adam was to be fruitful, he was to subdue and he was to exercise dominion.

1. The charge to Adam to be fruitful.

- a. When God used the word "fruitful" He was not speaking of character development or maturity, He was talking numbers.
- b. He wanted Adam, with the help of his wife, to "fill up" the earth with godly offspring all reflecting the same image and likeness in which Adam had been created.
- c. He wanted the earth to be populated with a godly people living under the government of God all bearing the stamp of God's image upon them.
- d. When He gave the promise of plenteous offspring to the Father of the Faith in Genesis 22:17-18, He was communicating His Father's heart to this earthly father Abraham.

"...blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice." Genesis 22:17-18

2. The charge to Adam to subdue the earth.

- a. God was essentially saying to Adam, "I want you to conquer this earth. I want you to bring it into subjection so that all of this earth is corresponding to My will and purpose. I want you to make this earth your footstool."
- b. God was implying to Adam that this subjection would not be automatic. An enemy is out there. There are forces that must be acknowledged and overcome. Your leadership on this planet will be challenged. There is a wicked one who will contest your right to bear rule and will seek to overcome you. But, Adam, you must subdue him, conquer him and put him under your feet.
- c. God's desire was that, as Adam was faithful to dress and keep this garden that He had placed in his hands, Adam would be able to extend the borders of the garden, with the help of his faithful offspring, so the whole earth would become a garden of the Lord.

- d. This desire of God has not changed. His desire is still to see the earth filled as widely with the knowledge of the Lord's glory as waters cover the sea (Is. 11:9; 45:6; Hab. 2:14).

For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea. Habakkuk 2:14

3. The charge to Adam to take dominion.

Note: We will look at this charge to "take dominion" in a moment.

C. What it means to "Subdue the Earth"?

A subduing ministry involves five things:

1. Making your enemies your footstool.

We know the enemies that must be dealt with are essentially spiritual in nature. This was true with Adam and its true for us, his descendents. Adam failed to subdue his real enemy and was, in fact, subdued himself. But Christ who is the last Adam restored man's ability to conquer by dealing a mortal wound to the head of the serpent (Gen. 3:15; Col. 2:15). Now as the head of the church He is seated waiting until the church, which is His body, walks out this victory in their experience (Ps. 110:1-2; Heb. 10:12-13; Eph. 1:19-23).

"The LORD said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool. 'The LORD shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion. Rule in the midst of Your enemies!'" Psalm 110:1-2

2. Putting your feet on the necks of kings.

Many spiritual kings are to be defeated by the church. The gates of hell will not prevail against God's victorious army (Mt. 16:18). God's promises to His people have always included the "necks" of their enemies.

Joseph prophesied over his son Judah...

"Your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies." Genesis 49:8

When kings were conquered by an army, before they were beheaded the conquering people would put their feet on the necks of these kings symbolizing their absolute victory (Josh. 10:24; II Sam. 22:38-41).

*“I have pursued my enemies and destroyed them; neither did I turn back again till they were destroyed. And I have destroyed them and wounded them, so that they could not rise; they have fallen under my feet. For You have armed me with strength for the battle; You have subdued under me those who rose against me. **You have also given me the necks of my enemies, so that I destroyed those who hated me.**”* II Samuel 22:38-41

God wants the church to put its feet on the neck of kings of darkness.

“And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly.” Romans 16:20

3. Bringing an enemy into servitude.

Subduing an enemy is to force that enemy to serve you rather than you becoming its servant (II Chr. 28:10; Jer. 34:11, 16). There was a time, due to Adam’s fall, that we were the servants of sin, but now God has, through the work of the last Adam, made us to rule over sin (Rom. 6:8-23).

4. Driving out all enemies and possessing our full inheritance.

God has given us a rich inheritance. In fact He has given all things for the pleasure of his people (Eph. 1:9-11; Rev. 21:7). He gave Abraham the entire earth but he had to walk through it and subdue it (Gen. 13:14-17).

“And the LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him: “Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are— northward, southward, eastward, and westward; for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever. And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, then your descendants also could be numbered. Arise, walk in the land through its length and its width, for I give it to you.” Genesis 13:14-17

He gave Israel the whole land of Palestine but they had to go through it and possess it (Num. 32:20-22, 29; Josh. 18:1). This involved driving out all the enemies dwelling in the land. Israel failed to drive out all their enemies. They tolerated some because of their strength. They compromised with others because of their own love of ease. But God raised up David to drive all these well-noted enemies out and he extended the borders of the kingdom further than they had ever been extended before (II Sam. 8:11). David drove out the stubborn ones.

Many Christians have begun a good battle against sin in their life, but they have never really reached the dominion stage because they have grown weary in battle and have settled for an incomplete victory. But, praise God! Just because you have lived with an enemy for a long time does not mean that you have to put up with him forever.

God is returning the spirit of David to His people, which is not tolerant of long-time enemies. God is building in His people a fresh intolerance of sin and its inroads into the lives of people. God is sharpening the instruments of war among the people of God so

they can effectively wage war with previously unmolested enemies. The giants are beginning to fall.

5. Treading down enemies.

God clearly told His people that the whole land was theirs (Gen. 13:14-17), but they had to walk through it (Deut. 11:22-25). God told them every place the sole of their foot tread upon would be theirs (Josh. 1:13).

“For if you carefully keep all these commandments which I command you to do—to love the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways, and to hold fast to Him—²³ then the LORD will drive out all these nations from before you, and you will dispossess greater and mightier nations than yourselves. ²⁴Every place on which the sole of your foot treads shall be yours: from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the River Euphrates, even to the 9Western Sea, shall be your territory. ²⁵No man shall be able to stand against you; the LORD your God will put the dread of you and the fear of you upon all the land where you tread, just as He has said to you. ²⁶ “Behold, I set before you today a blessing and a curse: ²⁷ the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you today; ²⁸ and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside from the way which I command you today, to go after other gods which you have not known. Deuteronomy 11:22-28

God said through His power we would be able to tread down all our enemies (Ps. 60:12; 108:13; 91:13).

“You shall tread upon the lion and the cobra, the young lion and the serpent you shall trample underfoot.” Psalm 91:13

Jesus specifically gave this power to His disciples (Luke 10:19-20).

The problem with most Christians is they have not realized that all of the land belongs to them. The land of politics is their land. The land of business and enterprise is their land. The land of medical science, technology, space exploration is part and parcel of the land given to them by God. But Christians have been unwilling to place the sole of their foot on this land for fear they might become soiled or contaminated. They have run from the lion and the cobra rather than picking them up by the tail (Ps. 91:13; Ex. 4:4).

The LORD will open to you His good treasure, the heavens, to give the rain to your land in its season, and to bless all the work of your hand. You shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow. ¹³ And the LORD will make you the head and not the tail; you shall be above only, and not be beneath, if you heed the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you today, and are careful to observe them. ¹⁴So you shall not turn aside from any of the words which I command you this day, to the right or the left, to go after other gods to serve them. Deuteronomy 28:12-14

God wants the church to take this mandate to subdue seriously. He wants the church to be ready to bring the forces of this world into subjection to the will and purpose of God (I Cor. 15:27-28).

*For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. ²⁶The last enemy that will be destroyed is death. ²⁷For “He has put all things under His feet.” But when He says “all things are put under Him,” it is evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted. ²⁸Now **when all things are made subject to Him**, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.*

The workings of Christ and the power of Christ in our life are designed for this very purpose (Phil. 3:21).

*For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to **subdue all things** to Himself.*

D. What God means when He says “Take Dominion”?

The third aspect of the dominion mandate is the logical outworking of the second. God ultimately wants His people to reign in this life. We are to exercise dominion, not merely over our Sunday School programs and “church ministries” but also over “the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” That is pretty inclusive.

1. The word “dominion” means “to take possession of and rule over”.
2. God created Adam to be a king in relation to the rest of creation.
3. Even as Christ came to “shatter the forehead of Moab” so He made us to have dominion over the works of His hands (Psalm 8:6).

You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet, ⁷ All sheep and oxen—even the beasts of the field, ⁸ the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea that pass through the paths of the seas.

4. The promise to God’s obedient people is they would reign over many nations but those nations would not reign over them (Deuteronomy 15:6b).

“You shall reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over you.”

5. God’s people are to be the kings and the priests that reign **on the earth** (Revelations 5:10).

And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,¹⁰ and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth."

God wants to use His people in this day as a David company to extend His dominion to the ends of the earth. God wants His people to see themselves as kingdom builders concerned about all of life and every area of life. God wants a kingdom that extends from sea to sea (Psalms 72:8) all the while using our place as a means of extending the Gospel to all mankind. Each believer has a mandate to do his or her part. The command given to Adam has never been revoked. It is indeed the Greater Commission.

E. How the Dominion Mandate relates to "Life Management"

1. We will never be able to accomplish the dominion mandate without life management.
2. Taking dominion begins with taking dominion over ourselves and the issues of our own life.
3. Taking dominion extends to those over whom we bear responsibility (our family, our business, etc.).

Lesson 4-6

Discovering Life Purpose

Introduction

We have looked at God's eternal purpose and have discussed the fact that God has given a "dominion mandate" to mankind. As the course progresses we will be discussing things like establishing priorities for your life, setting goals, and managing your time, money and personal affairs to reach those goals.

However, before any of these things can have meaning...before these things can really produce what we want...before we start strategizing for the future, we must settle something once and for all.

"God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life!"

Acts 13:36

Now this is not a reference to David, for after David had served his generation according to the will of God, he died and was buried, and his body decayed.

A. Discovering life purpose begins with God.

What we need to know about God:

1. There is a God.

Ask Class: What are some of God's attributes or characteristics?

2. God is a personal God.

Ask Class: How do we know? What are some of the things that make Him personal?

Being a personal God means that He has feelings, mind, will and emotions.

3. God can be communicated with.

Ask Class: Has God ever communicated with you? If so, how?

4. God actively involves Himself in our lives.

Ask Class: Can anyone testify here to God's active involvement in your life, when something happened you knew was God?

5. God cares about every aspect of our lives.

Ask Class: Has God ever helped you in a small area?

God cares about every area of your life from the smallest to the greatest.
But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Matthew 10:30

You number my wanderings; Put my tears into Your bottle; Are they not in Your book?
Psalm 56:8

And the LORD said: "I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows."
Exodus 3:7

O LORD, You have searched me and known me. You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off. 3 You comprehend my path and my lying down, And are acquainted with all my ways. 4 For there is not a word on my tongue, But behold, O LORD, You know it altogether. 5 You have hedged me behind and before, And laid Your hand upon me. 6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is high, I cannot attain it.

7 Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? 8 If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. 9 If I take the wings of the morning, And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, 10 Even there Your hand shall lead me, And Your right hand shall hold me. 11 If I say, "Surely the darkness shall fall on me," Even the night shall be light about me; 12 Indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You, But the night shines as the day the darkness and the light are both alike to You.

13 For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. 14 I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well. 15 My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. 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.

17 How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them! 18 If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand; When I awake, I am still with You. Psalm 139:1-18

6. God has a plan for our lives—the will of God.

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God... Colossians 1:1

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; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God... Colossians 1:9-11

You cannot walk worthy of the Lord unless you know His will.

*Epaphras, who is one of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the **will of God**.* Colossians 4:12

7. God wants to reveal that plan to us.

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye.
Psalm 32:8

*Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the **will of the Lord** is.* Ephesians 5:17

8. God's plan for us forms the basis for our purpose in life.

B. Discovering life purpose requires acknowledging God is love.

God is a **good** God who thinks **good** thoughts toward us and has **good** things in store for us.

God's love for us ensures that:

1. His plan is good (Jer. 29:11-14).

Don't think that if you totally submit your life to God that He is going to take the fun out of your life.

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Jeremiah 29:11

2. His plan is perfectly suited to us.

Actually we were all created with God's divine purpose. This creation includes such things as our temperament, talents, abilities, intelligence and appearance. Everything about us is consistent with His purpose for our lives.

3. His plan is designed to bring us abundant life.

Walking in God's plan for our lives will never be grievous.

God's will or plan for us involves three aspects all at the same time:

- a. SELF-WARD ASPECT—Gratification of all inner longings of our heart (Ps. 23:5; 63:5-6; 107:9; John 4:13-14; 7:37-38; 14:27).

Oh, that men would give thanks to the LORD for His goodness, And for His wonderful works to the children of men! For He satisfies the longing soul, and fills the hungry soul with goodness. Psalm 107:8-9

God is interested in us finding a great deal of fulfillment and satisfaction in doing what we were made to do.

- b. GOD-WARD ASPECT—Glorification of God (John 15:8; Matt. 5:16; I Cor. 6:20; Eph. 1:6).

By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples. John 15:8

God is interested in our lives bringing glory to His name as our creator when we fully do what we were made to do.

- c. MAN-WARD ASPECT—Salvation, edification and blessing of other people (Acts 4:13; 9:15; I Cor. 4:9-11; Gal. 1:16; 6:10; Eph. 2:10; Phil. 1:20; Luke 24:47-48).

When we live in the center of God's purpose, our lives become a blessing to all of mankind. All ministry involves receiving God's abundance and lavishing it on others.

But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles... Galatians 1:15-16

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. Ephesians 2:10

The more we submit to God's will, the more these things will be realized.

C. Discovering life purpose involves a struggle.

There is a struggle for the will of God in our lives. Paul writes in Colossians 4:12 concerning Epaphras...

“who is one of you, a servant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all of the will of God.”

The NIV says, *“He is always wrestling for you in prayer.”*

The Knox translation says, “*that you will stand firm in the perfect achievement of all that is God’s will for you.*”

The fact that Paul and others prayed as such seems to indicate that there is a struggle for the will of God and that it is not automatic in our lives. Actually our life is a struggle because we are confronted with **a choice of four wills.**

1. My Will

Jesus said, “not **My will** but Thine be done” (Mt. 26:39-42 KJV). Or as it says in the Williams translation, “Yet, I pray, not what I want, but what You want.”

“My Will” is the will of the flesh or the lusts (desires) of the flesh (I Tim. 6:9). We follow this will when all we want to do is satisfy the cravings of the flesh. Individuals who only follow the will of the flesh have no plan for their lives, they simply run on emotion and let circumstances and the philosophies of the world push them around.

So then, since Christ suffered physical pain, you must arm yourselves with the same attitude he had, and be ready to suffer, too. For if you are willing to suffer for Christ, you have decided to stop sinning. 2 And you won't spend the rest of your life chasing after evil desires, but you will be anxious to do the will of God. 3 You have had enough in the past of the evil things that godless people enjoy — their immorality and lust, their feasting and drunkenness and wild parties, and their terrible worship of idols. 4 Of course, your former friends are very surprised when you no longer join them in the wicked things they do, and they say evil things about you. 5 But just remember that they will have to face God, who will judge everyone, both the living and the dead. I Peter 4:1-5

2. Their Will

Their will is the will that others have for you, the **will of man** (parents, friends, boyfriend/girlfriend, teachers and pastors). Everybody seems to have a will or an agenda for your life. They all seem to know what you should do.

It is funny how confident other people can be of God’s will for your life when they themselves may or may not be practicing God’s will for their life (I Pet. 4:1-5, Msg).

Since Jesus went through everything you’re going through and more, learn to think like him. Think of your sufferings as a weaning from that old sinful habit of always expecting to get your own way. Then you’ll be able to live out your days free to pursue what God wants instead of being tyrannized by what you want. You’ve already put in your time in that God-ignorant way of life, partying night after night, a drunken and profligate life. Now it’s time to be done with it for good. Of course, your old friends don’t understand why you don’t join in with the old gang anymore. But you don’t have to give an account to them. They’re the ones who will be called on the carpet—and before God himself.

I Peter 4:1-5, Msg

3. Satan's Will

The Bible speaks of those who are taken captive by the **will of Satan** (II Tim. 2:26).

*And that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the **devil**, having been taken captive by him to do **his will**. II Timothy 2:26*

This does not necessarily refer to who live a terribly sinful existence, but to anyone who is going in **the opposite direction to the will of God** and as a result is working against the purposes of God.

The Pharisees were living on this level. Even though they looked good on the outside they were “anti-Christ”. If Satan cannot destroy you or lead you into a life of open sin, he will divert you and lead you into a humanitarian path outside of the will of God.

4. God's Will

God's will is the ultimate goal or path that we all must seek (Mt. 7:21; 12:50; John 4:34; Eph. 1:5, 9, 11). In the Lord's Prayer we pray, “Thy will be done **in** earth as it is in heaven.” There is no problem in heaven. The struggle is here. God is looking for those who will know (Acts 22:14) and do (Acts 13:22) His will.

Not everyone who says to Me, “Lord, Lord,” shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.” Matthew 7:21

But He answered and said to the one who told Him, “Who is My mother and who are My brothers?” And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, “Here are My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother.” Matthew 12:48-13:1

Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.” John 4:34

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, 4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, 5 having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved. 7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace 8 which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, 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 1:3-12

Then a certain Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good testimony with all the Jews who dwelt there, 13 came to me; and he stood and said to me, "Brother Saul, receive your sight." And at that same hour I looked up at him. 14 Then he said, "The God of our fathers has chosen you that you should know His will, and see the Just One, and hear the voice of His mouth. 15 For you will be His witness to all men of what you have seen and heard. 16 And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Acts 22:12-16

And when He had removed him, He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, "I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will." Acts 13:22-23

D. Discovering life purpose involves a choice.

God's plan requires certain things on our part. If we are going to have a wonderful life, we must:

1. Desire It.

No one can make you do the will of God. If we are going to enter into God's will we must want it. Often the major difficulty is that deep down inside we don't really want to know God's will. We want God to put His stamp of approval on what we have already made up our minds to do. If we want God's will we must do four things:

- a. We must make the choice to come after Him (Mt. 16:24; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23).

Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.

Matthew 16:24-27

- b. We must not grasp at our own will (Mt. 16:25; Mark 8:35; Luke 9:24).

In order to grab hold of God's will, we must be willing to let go of our own will. You cannot have both.

- c. We must present ourselves totally to God (Rom. 12:1-2; II Cor. 8:5).

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. 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.

Romans 12:1-2

And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice — the kind he will accept. When you think of what he has done for you, is this too much to ask? Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will know what God wants you to do, and you will know how good and pleasing and perfect his will really is. –NLT

For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing, imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. And not only as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God.

II Corinthians 8:3-5

- d. We must begin with a willing heart (II Cor. 8:10-12).

And in this I give advice: It is to your advantage not only to be doing what you began and were desiring to do a year ago; but now you also must complete the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to desire it, so there also may be a completion out of what you have. For if there is first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what one has, and not according to what he does not have.

The question is, “Do we want this man (Jesus) to reign over us?” (Luke 19:14). If a person truly wants God’s will, God will help him because God’s plan depends upon it. He has a vested interest in you succeeding.

2. Discover It.

Do you want God’s will enough to seek His will (Ps. 143:8; John 5:30)? The most important thing that I can ever do is to find God’s will and fit into it.

Cause me to hear Your loving kindness in the morning, For in You do I trust; Cause me to know the way in which I should walk, For I lift up my soul to You. Psalm 143:8

I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me. John 5:30

And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. I will be found by you, says the LORD. Jeremiah 29:13

There are various things that God has given us to help us in this quest.

- a. The inner voice of the Holy Spirit.
- b. The Word of God.
- c. The circumstances of life (providence).
- d. The counsel of leadership (parents/pastors).
- e. The way God created us.

For any of these things to be of assistance, we must bring a heart of surrender to God, a separation from the world and a spiritual-mindedness. The Christian life is fundamentally a relationship with God. So the closer we get to God the more likely we are to know His will.

3. Do It.

Just saying you will do it or even knowing what to do is not enough, we must actually follow through and do it (Mt. 21:29-31; Luke 9:57, 61; 12:47; Ps. 143:10; John 6:38). We can't just talk the talk, we must walk the walk.

But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, "Son, go, work today in my vineyard." He answered and said, "I will not," but afterward he regretted it and went. Then he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, "I go, sir," but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father? They said to Him, "The first." Matthew 21:28-31

Now it happened as they journeyed on the road, that someone said to Him, "Lord, I will follow You wherever You go." And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head." Then He said to another, "Follow Me." But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God." And another also said, "Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house." But Jesus said to him, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." Luke 9:57-62

And that servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more. Luke 12:47-48

- a. To do it we must be willing to press through opposition (Rom. 7:18; II Tim. 3:12; I Pet. 3:17; 4:19).

For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will to do,

I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. 20 Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. Romans 7:18-20

Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

II Timothy 3:11-13

For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.

I Peter 3:17

Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator. I Peter 4:19

- b. To do God's will means to disregard criticism, overcome obstacles, get radically involved, and fulfill the dream whatever the cost.
- c. To do God's will we must be willing to start where we are at. Whether you have done so or not you should forget about the past and determine that the rest of your life will be lived for Him according to His will.

4. Delight in It.

We can serve the Lord out of duty, privilege or delight. David said, "I delight to do your will, O God" (Ps. 40:8). Jesus said, "My meat is to do the will of Him who sent Me" (John 4:34).

God's will is going to be a delight. It will be very rewarding and fulfilling.

E. Entering into life purpose leads to a wonderful life.

Entering into God's plan will do eight things for you. It will:

1. Give purpose, meaning and challenge to your life.
2. Bring a realization of self-worth to your life.
3. Turn routine tasks into enjoyable experiences.
4. Cause you to use all of your resources to their greatest efficiency.
5. Cause you to devote all of your energies to a definite goal.
6. Allow new areas of interest to surface.
7. Strengthen the many-membered body of Christ.
8. Cause you to be a fruitful servant who receives a full reward from Christ.

F. Paul is an example of someone who found the will of God.

1. He desired it from early in his experience (Acts 9:6; Phil 3:13-14).

So he, trembling and astonished, said, "Lord, what do You want me to do?" Acts 9:6

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. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Philippians 3:12-14

2. He discovered it (Acts 9:15-16; 26:16-18).

And He said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you. I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me." Acts 26:15-18

3. He did it (I Cor. 9:24-27).

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. I Corinthians 9:24-27

4. He delighted in it (Acts 20:24).

And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me. 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 20:21-24

5. He fulfilled it (II Tim. 4:6-8)

For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 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.

Conclusion

We have a responsibility to those who have gone before to complete our leg of the relay and to effectively pass the baton on to the next generation.

Hebrews 12:1-2

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.

NLT

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily hinders our progress. And let us run with endurance the race that God has set before us. 2 We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, on whom our faith depends from start to finish. He was willing to die a shameful death on the cross because of the joy he knew would be his afterward. Now he is seated in the place of highest honor beside God's throne in heaven. 3 Think about all he endured when sinful people did such terrible things to him, so that you don't become weary and give up. 4 After all, you have not yet given your lives in your struggle against sin.

Lesson 7-11

Finding My Place

Finding my place is all about “Laying hold of that for which Christ laid hold of me” (See: Philippians 3:12-16)

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. Philippians 3:12

It is important before we talk about finding our place in the Body of Christ that we deal with a few misconceptions about this word “ministry.” This word has been over spiritualized to the point that people think ministry is limited to a few. Ministry is something that all of us have if we are Christians. We all have a call of God on our lives that is based upon how God designed us. We are all called to the “full time ministry.” This does not mean that we will work on the staff of a local church (although we may). Because ministry is not something that only occurs behind a microphone in a corporate gathering of God’s people. It is something that should be an integral part of our lives whether we are inside of a church building or not.

I. Introduction

The walk of the Christian is likened to the experience of a child as it grows and develops.

A. The Newborn Babe - The focus is on **eating and feeding.**

New Christians go through the early stages of their walk with the Lord focusing on receiving ministry. They need the ministry of the word and the ministry of those who have been Christians for a longer time.

B. The Spiritual Toddler - The focus is on **walking and stability.**

Just like a child, a new convert cannot begin to function in ministry until they first learn to walk without falling. The focus needs to be developing personal maturity and stability in their walk with the Lord.

C. The Older Stages - The focus is on **responsibility and function.**

However, the goal of feeding and learning how to walk is to prepare for function and responsibility. All Christians should move beyond the stage of babes in Christ and on to full adulthood where they become contributing members of the Body of Christ.

II. The foundation for understanding our place is an understanding of the Church as the Body of Christ.

- A. When Christ ascended He ascended to become the Head of the Church which is His body (Col. 1:15-20; 2:9).

*He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶For 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. ¹⁷And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. ¹⁸And **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. ¹⁹For it pleased the Father **that in Him all the fullness should dwell**, ²⁰and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross. Colossians 1:15-20*

- B. When He ascended He dispensed the fullness that was in Him to the individual members of the Church (John 1:14, 16; 3:34-35; Rom. 12:3; Eph. 4:11ff.).

*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, **full of grace and truth**... ¹⁶And **of His fullness** we have all received, and grace for grace. John 1:14, 16*

*For he is sent by God. He speaks God's words, for God's Spirit is upon him **without measure or limit**. The Father loves his Son, and he has given him authority over everything. John 3:34-35—NLT*

*For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one **a measure of faith**. Romans 12:3*

*And He Himself gave **some** to be apostles, **some** prophets, **some** evangelists, and **some** pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. Ephesians 4:11-12*

- C. Now Christ functions through the Church which is His body. We are the only hands that Jesus has.

- D. When we rightly relate to the Body of Christ we can experience the fullness that is in Christ (Eph. 1:22-23; 4:13; I Cor. 10:17).

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... Ephesians 4:13

For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread. I Corinthians 10:17

And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. Ephesians 1:22-23

E. The Body of Christ is composed of unity in diversity.

1. There is one body, but many members.
2. There is one vine, but many branches.
3. There is one army, but many soldiers.
4. There is one temple, but many living stones.
5. There is one family, but many children (sons).
6. There is one sheepfold, but many sheep.

F. Each member of the body has a place in that body, a place to function (Rom. 12:4-5).

For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.

III. How do I find my place in the Body?

Romans 12:1-8—New Living Translation

And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will accept. When you think of what he has done for you, is this too much to ask? ² Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will know what God wants you to do, and you will know how good and pleasing and perfect his will really is.

³ As God's messenger, I give each of you this warning: Be honest in your estimate of yourselves, measuring your value by how much faith God has given you. ⁴ Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, ⁵ so it is with Christ's body. We are all parts of his one body, and each of us has different work to do. And since we are all one body in Christ, we belong to each other, and each of us needs all the others. ⁶ God has given each of us the ability to do certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out when you have faith that God is speaking through you. ⁷ If your gift is that of serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, do a good job of teaching. ⁸ If your gift is to encourage others, do it! If you have money, share it generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly.

Read I Corinthians 12:12-31

The following are ten steps to finding my destiny and place of purpose in the center of God's will.

A. Recognize that you do have a place of function and responsibility before the Lord.

1. Every single member has a function (I Cor. 12:7, 11, 18). There is no such thing as a non-functioning member. Regardless what some may think and regardless of our natural understanding, everything was made with purpose and design (example of appendix and tonsils).

*But the manifestation of the Spirit is given **to each one** for the profit of all.*

I Corinthians 12:7

*But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing **to each one** individually as He wills. I Corinthians 12:11*

*But now God has set the members, **each one** of them, in the body just as He pleased. I Corinthians 12:18*

2. God has set the members in the Body, not man (I Cor. 12:18). No one got to see a list of options before they were born to decide what they wanted to be when they came into the world.
3. God has assigned ministries to people as it has pleased Him (I Cor 12:11). We must believe that God knows exactly what He is doing and that He does all things well. God is happy with you and with His plan for your life.

B. Recognize that God has made you perfectly suited to the ministry to which He has called you (Eph. 2:8-10).

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

1. The natural body serves as an example.

Each member of the natural body was made with a specific function in mind.

- a. The hand = grasping
- b. The foot = walking
- c. The heart = pumping blood
- d. The liver = cleansing purifying
- e. The ear = collecting (wax) sound

2. When God made you, He made you with purpose in mind.

He had purpose in mind when He designed your:

- a. Emotions
- b. Abilities and Aptitudes
- c. Intellectual Abilities (IQ)
- d. Stature and Appearance
- e. Heritage and Genealogy

Any unchangeable attribute that we possess must be seen as part of God's positioning us and equipping us for fulfilling the good work that He has in mind for us to do.

3. Every person is totally unique before God.

There are no two people alike because there are no two ministries completely alike.

4. Every person is fearfully and wonderfully made (Ps. 139:14).

If God could have made you any better suited for that to which you were called, He would have done it.

You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—and how well I know it. You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb. You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed. How precious are your thoughts about me, O God! They are innumerable! I can't even count them; they outnumber the grains of sand! Psalm 139:13-18a—NLT

C. Recognize that it is God who equips you with the gifts necessary to fulfill your unique ministry.

1. God gives the measure of faith (Rom. 12:3).
2. God gives us grace or divine enablement (Rom. 12:3).
3. God gives gifts differing (Rom. 12:6; I Pet. 4:10).

As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. I Peter 4:10

*God has given gifts to each of you from his great variety of spiritual gifts. **Manage them well** so that God's generosity can flow through you. —NLT*

D. Recognize the headship of Christ and be subject to him in all things (Eph. 1:21-23; 4:15; 5:23-24).

*And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be **head over all things** to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. Ephesians 1:22-23*

*For the husband is head of the wife, as also **Christ is head of the church**; and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands **in everything**. Ephesians 5:23-24*

1. Many people are waiting for God to tell them what to do ministry-wise, but they are not doing what God is already telling them to do in life. Our obedience in life prepares us to hear God's voice in those areas relating to ministry.
2. Do not expect further direction until you are flowing in the direction and under the headship of Christ in that which God is already speaking and leading.
3. The foundation of our walk with God is the simple principle of **hearing and doing**. If we are not hearers and doers of the Word, God simply cannot use us (Jam. 1:21-25). You cannot build on a house that has no foundation.

But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.
James 1:25

E. Recognize that all ministry equals service or serving.

1. The word "ministry" literally means "service".
2. Don't ask, "What is my ministry?" Ask, "What service am I able to render to others and to the Body of Christ that will make them more of a success?"
3. When we stand before the judgment seat of Christ, there will only be one ministry that will receive commendation (Mt. 25:21-23).
 - a. The commendation is not, "Well done! Thou good and faithful apostle!"
 - b. The commendation is, "Well done! Thou good and faithful **servant!**"

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." Matthew 25:23

4. We will not be judged for what ministry we had, but we will be judged on the basis of how faithful we were to do what God asked us to do (I Cor. 3:11-15).
5. All believers are in the “ministry”. All Believers are “ministers” or “servants.” All believers are to be “full time ministers”, because all of us are full time servants of the Lord. As such, we are to:

- a. Take heed to that ministry (Col. 4:17).

And say to Archippus, “Take heed to the ministry [area of service] which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it.”

- b. Be addicted to the ministry (I Cor. 16:15).

*I urge you, brethren—you know the household of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they **have devoted themselves** to the ministry of the saints...*

The King James Version says, “that they have **addicted themselves** to the ministry of the saints.”

6. A servant may be defined in a number of ways:
 - a. A worker who belongs to a master (Deut. 23:15).
 - b. A worker in the service of a king (I Kgs. 1:9).
 - c. A person at the disposal of another (Gen. 24:2-66).
 - d. A person who attends to the interests of another.
 - e. A person who has a supreme regard for the happiness of God and others.
 - f. A person who gets excited about making someone else successful.

7. Ministry is serving.

It is using the talents, gifts and abilities that God has placed in your hands and using them to serve God and others.

8. The principle governing all ministry or areas of service the principle of abundance.

That is, God gives each of us something in abundance. He gives us more than we need in a certain area or areas. This provides the basis of our ministry. We are to take from that abundance and minister (serve) it to others.

This is how the Body of Christ works. We all have lacks and we all have areas of abundance. We are to look to the body of Christ to help supply what we lack and we are to look to supply that which is lacking in others out of our abundance (II Cor. 8:13-14).

For I do not mean that others should be eased and you burdened; but by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may supply their lack, that their abundance also may supply your lack—that there may be equality.

- a. The example in Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3).

God blessed him with more than he personally needed so that he could become a channel of God's blessing to all of the other nations in the world. *I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.*" Genesis 12:2-3

- b. The example of comfort (II Cor. 1:3-4).

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

In order to minister, we receive something from the Lord so that we can give of that something to others. In this case it was the comfort of the Holy Spirit.

- c. Practical examples:

- Money
- Teaching
- Prayer
- Musical Talent

F. Recognize that no ministry is more important than another.

1. Man judges one's ministry on the basis of external vision (I Sam. 16:7), or that which is seen (II Cor. 4:18).

Even in relation to the natural body, the head and the hands get most of the attention. Our tendency is to think that those members that get the most attention are the most valuable. That is not true in our physical body and that is not true in God's spiritual body—the Church.

Man's scale of importance operates on the basis of "What ministry you have".

- Apostle
- Prophet
- Evangelist
- Pastor
- Teacher
- Intercessor
- Administrator
- Helper
- Singer
- Craftsman
- Etc.

Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment."

John 7:24

Righteous judgment is seeing things the way God does and having His value system.

2. God judges ministry on the basis of how faithful you were with what God asked you to do.

- Very Good and Very Faithful
- Good and Faithful
- Sort of Good and Sort of Faithful
- Not so Good and Not so Faithful
- Unjust and Unfaithful

G. Recognize the area of ministry to which the Lord is calling you (Rom. 12:3-5).

For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. ⁴ For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, ⁵ so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. ⁶ Having 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; ⁷ or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; ⁸ he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

Romans 12:1-8

We think of ourselves more highly than we ought to when we consider ministry outside of our gifting, our measure of faith and our grace levels. We are to use sober evaluation in regard to our calling.

1. This involves some self evaluation:
 - a. What am I qualified to do?
 - b. What talents and abilities do I possess?
 - c. Do I have the needed aptitudes?
 - d. What do I enjoy doing?
 - e. In what areas is it most natural for me to serve?
 - f. Do I get any fulfillment out of doing this?
2. Usually the will of the Lord is in absolute harmony with the way He has made us and what He wants us to do is exactly what we enjoy doing.
3. The list of ministries in the Body in Christ is endless. In addition, almost anything that can be done can be turned into a ministry when it is done to reach out to others and serve them.
 - Sewing Blankets
 - Baking
 - Auto Mechanics
 - Building Skills
 - Fishing

H. Recognize that all ministry develops over a period of time.

1. The Example of Stephen (Acts 6:3,8)

Stephen was chosen by the Apostles to help with the daily distribution of provisions for the widows (vs. 1-6).

*Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this **business**; ⁴ but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.”*

As Stephen was faithful we eventually read of him going well beyond his job description (vs. 8).

And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people.

2. Begin serving in obvious areas and God will give you further direction, recognition and promotion.
3. God will promote you in due season if you will continue to operate some basic principles in the Word of God:

- a. Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all of your might (Eccl. 9:10).

Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for in the grave, where you are going, there is neither working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom. –NIV

- b. Promotion comes from the Lord (Ps. 75:6-7).

For exaltation [KJV, promotion] comes neither from the east nor from the west nor from the south. ⁷ But God is the Judge: He puts down one, and exalts another.

- c. A man's gift makes room for him (Pro. 18:16).

A man's gift makes room for him, and brings him before great men.

I. Recognize that we will only be as successful as we are willing to sacrificially apply ourselves.

1. There are two parts to the development of any ministry.
 - a. There is God's part. God will always do His part. Not one of us will be able to stand before God on Judgment Day and accuse Him of not doing His part.
 - b. There is man's part. God will not do man's part. Many times in our prayers, we ask God to do our part (e.g. "stir us up," "get me out of bed in the morning," etc.).
2. God part includes:
 - a. The kind of ministry that we will have (Gal.1:1).
 - b. The sphere of our ministry (Acts 9:15).
 - c. The duration of our ministry (Acts 12:1-2, 11).
 - d. Supplying the natural and spiritual gifts we need for our ministry (Rom. 12:1-8; I Pet. 4:10).

- e. The ultimate impact or the fruit (I Cor. 3:5-7). God gives the increase.
3. Man's part includes adding diligence to that which we feel God has revealed to us.
- a. Paul gave many admonitions to Timothy regarding his calling.

- Fight a good fight (I Tim. 1:18).

This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare...

- Give yourself entirely to it (I Tim. 4:11-16). Prophecy is not magic. We do not automatically fulfill them.

Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership. ¹⁵Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. ¹⁶Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.

- Care for it as a stewardship (I Tim. 6:20a).

O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust...

- Fan the flame; stir the gift (II Tim. 1:6).

Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.

- Present yourself to God an approved workman who does not need to be ashamed (II Tim. 2:15).

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

- b. Proverbs give many admonitions concerning diligence:

- Proverbs 10:4-5

He who has a slack hand becomes poor, but the hand of the diligent makes rich. He who gathers in summer is a wise son; he who sleeps in harvest is a son who causes shame.

- Proverbs 12:24

The hand of the diligent will rule, but the lazy man will be put to forced labor.

- Proverbs 13:4

The soul of a lazy man desires, and has nothing; but the soul of the diligent shall be made rich.

Lazy people want much but get little, but those who work hard will prosper and be satisfied. –NLT

- c. Jeremiah says it this way, “A curse on him who is slack concerning the Lord’s work” (48:10). Other translations say, “Cursed is the one who does the work of the Lord...

- deceitfully
- negligently
- half-heartedly
- grudgingly

God wants us to have a spirit of excellence in all we do, because our work is reflective of Him.

- d. Other admonitions include:

- We must be diligent to make our calling and election sure (II Pet. 1:10).
- We are to press toward the mark the high calling in Christ Jesus (Philippians 3:13-14).
- We are to press into the kingdom (Luke 16:16).
- We are to take the kingdom by force (Matthew 11:12).

- e. The example of Apollos (Acts 18:24-28)

*Now a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man and **mighty in the Scriptures**, came to Ephesus. ²⁵This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being **fervent in spirit**, he spoke and **taught accurately** the things of the Lord, though he knew only the baptism of John. ²⁶So he began to **speak boldly** in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately. ²⁷And when he desired to cross to Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him; and when he arrived, **he greatly helped***

*those who had believed through grace; ²⁸for he **vigorously refuted** the Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ.*

4. God will do His part, we can be sure of that. But God will not do our part. We must draw from the grace of God so that we can do our part.

J. Recognize that God is going to give you Holy Spirit anointing to do His will (Phil. 2:13).

1. Paul experienced the grace of God to function in his ministry of apostleship (I Cor. 3:10; Gal. 2:9; Rom. 13:3; 15:15-16; Eph. 3:2-8).
2. The anointing of the Holy Spirit takes us beyond human ability.
3. When does God's anointing come to us?
 - a. When we step out in faith and obedience, God honors our faith by backing us up (Heb. 11).
 - b. The waters of the Jordan going into Canaan opened only after the toes of the priests touched the water.
 - c. As we step out in faith, God's grace and anointing hits us and we are able to do things that we cannot do in our own strength.