

Lesson #7

God's Plan After Salvation



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Preparation for study

The only thing that prevents the Holy Spirit from teaching us is our personal sin(s). King David of the Old Testament clearly put it this way:

If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear; (Psalms 66:18).

Therefore, if the Lord cannot hear a believer's prayer due to unconfessed sin in his soul, it follows doctrinally that the Holy Spirit will not teach the individual.

Here is the solution:

If we confess [acknowledge] our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness [sins, known or forgotten] (1 John 1:9).

At this point, you may want to pause and acknowledge directly to God any sin that may hinder you from being fully blessed through the Word of God.

Handling New Converts with Wisdom

Wisdom is the ability to discern and apply the appropriate knowledge to a given circumstance. Knowledge is acquired from a believer's constant exposure to accurate teaching of the infallible Word of God. Undoubtedly, wisdom cannot exist apart from knowledge. One can have knowledge without possessing wisdom. But no one can have wisdom without having accumulated knowledge. The ability to apply knowledge comes from God.

But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him (James 1:5).

God gave Solomon wisdom because he asked for it (1 Kings 3:9). When Solomon applied this wisdom it had quite an impact in his courtroom (1 Kings 3:16-28).

What many believers seem to be lacking is wisdom. An accumulation of Bible doctrine is the first step. The proper application of this Bible doctrine is wisdom.

A baby is a baby. For this very reason, the Word of God commands that mature believers should make room for the spiritual growth of these new babies, or converts, in the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, we are to assist, guide, and tolerate them with an attitude of grace.

In as much as it is part of God's plan after salvation for every believer to detach himself spiritually from this world, the new converts are not to be yoked (Acts 15:10) or burdened with legalistic rules. Spiritual growth should not be made difficult for new converts, Peter said:

Now therefore why do you put God to the test by placing upon the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? (Acts 15:10).

Legalism (relying on our own power for "good works") and taboos (man-made lists of "don'ts" that rely on tradition rather than truth) are not part of God's plan after salvation for these new converts. In fact they are not meant for any believer. Their spiritual growth will be parallel to the spiritual food that they are receiving.

No one grows overnight. Growth is a gradual process. A baby's healthy growth is a result of pure and undiluted spiritual milk of the Word of God and not solid food. Solid food is for adult believers (1 Corinthians 3:2). Therefore, mature believers should allow them room to grow. They should never be subjected to legalism!

Being Preoccupied with the Kingdom of Heaven

Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth (Colossians 3:1-2).

Believers are total strangers in this world (Philippians 3:20, John 15:19). The apostle Paul had this to say:

For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For indeed in this house we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven, inasmuch as we, having

put it on, will not be found naked. For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened ... (2 Corinthians 5:1-4a).

Therefore, we are to stay away from those things that do not glorify God. In fact, until a believer understands that he does not belong here in this world, it will be very difficult for him to submit to God's plan.

In God's plan after salvation, the believer is called to constantly renew his mind or thinking through Bible doctrine. The apostle Paul put it this way: Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship (Romans 12:1).

The question is how? The apostle has provided us with the answer:

... by the renewing of your mind [through Bible doctrine] (Romans 12:2b).

The more Bible doctrine a believer learns and applies, the more he advances in the plan of God. The more he advances in the plan of God, the more he is thoroughly equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:17).

This is the believer's only opportunity to glorify God, which is the only reason why God left the believer behind after his salvation. Only Bible doctrine, through the grace of God, can prepare the believer to stand strong and immovable when his faith in the Lord is tested like Job in the Old Testament (See *Comfort in Suffering*, by Moses C. Onwubiko).

It is unlikely that a believer will be used to glorify God if he does not have a reservoir of Bible truth in his soul from continually learning and applying Bible doctrine. Rather, he will be an object of divine discipline (Hebrews 12:5-11; Revelation 3:19-20).

God uses prepared vessels. There is no question about it. Therefore, God will not and cannot use believers to glorify Himself to the maximum until they are ready. God's plan after salvation demands that believers in the Lord Jesus Christ seek sound Bible teaching and grow to spiritual maturity. True change takes place in the soul and only God's Word can make that happen.

Therefore, believers are not to run around doing the so called "great things for God." They are not to participate in Christian activism of any kind. Rather, they are to learn, apply, learn more, and apply more Biblical truth to their lives. God will use the believers who are growing in grace at the appropriate time. He knows when and how to perfectly use each believer.

Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware ... if anyone cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work (2 Timothy 2:20-21).

Always keep in mind that the ultimate plan of God following salvation is that the believer may glorify Him. The apostle Paul poses this question:

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

The apostle Paul was trying to get the believers in Corinth to think practically. Worshipping, serving, and glorifying God are the outcome of possessing surpassing knowledge about God. These come as a result of accumulation of sound Bible teaching in one's soul.

Think about the moment when a believer understands, through God's Word, what it cost our Lord Jesus Christ to set aside His glory and be judged by God the Father. Also think about when that believer understands that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit dwell inside of him.

He now understands these things and that the King of kings and Lord of lords is preparing a place for him in heaven with a great reward if he serves Him well. He then reaches spiritual maturity and becomes preoccupied with our Lord Jesus Christ. He crosses a line in which his whole perception concerning the things of this life will be radically altered forever. He can truly echo the apostle Paul:

For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain [profit or advantage] (Philippians 1:21).

To get to this stage in a believer's spiritual life requires a great amount of self-discipline and persistence to expose himself to the pure and undiluted Word of God.

Our forefather, Abraham, crossed this line to maturity. As a result, he earned the title, "friend of God" (James 2:23). The one who wrote Chronicles put it this way:

Did You not, O our God, drive out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel and give it to the descendants of Abraham Your friend forever? (2 Chronicles 20:7).

Moses of the Old Testament crossed that line, and in doing so abandoned his right to become Pharaoh of Egypt, probably the greatest Pharaoh in all of Egyptian history (Hebrews 11:24-26).

Please join us for our next lesson (#8) as we continue our study on being preoccupied with the Kingdom of Heaven. We pray that you will be like the Bereans and search the Scripture and meditate on the things we have learned thus far.