

Lesson #9

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.

There are four key parts of Romans 12:1 (Continued from lesson #8)

3. *Acceptable to God:*

This clearly demonstrates that until believers are in fellowship with God by using 1 John 1:9, they are not an acceptable sacrifice to God. Therefore, in this position of carnality, none of the believer's works or service will be regarded or recorded by God as something worthy of reward for either time or eternity - including prayers, financial contributions for God's work, or helping others in need. The apostle Paul writes:

Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones [work done while in fellowship], wood, hay, straw [work done while NOT in fellowship], each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. (1 Corinthians 3:12-15).

The apostle Paul never explained what he meant by a believer being saved as through fire. One thing is certain: The believer who accumulates wood, hay and straw will suffer great loss without a reward.

4. Spiritual Service:

This is similar to what has been discussed in the previous paragraph. However, **all spiritual work** must be accomplished with both the filling of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18b) and the Word of God.

To serve God well, a believer must have Biblical knowledge in his soul. He must approach problems with divine solutions, Bible truth. When the individual is in fellowship with God, the Holy Spirit uses the Bible doctrine stored in the believer's soul and produces divine work that is acceptable to holy God, because the work has been accomplished by God the Holy Spirit.

God is perfect. Therefore, the only work that will reflect perfection is work done by any member of the Trinity. This explains what Paul meant when he said:

For it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure (Philippians 2:13).

The author of Ezra in the Old Testament wrote:

The priests and the Levites arose, even everyone whose spirit God had stirred to go up and rebuild the house of the LORD which is in Jerusalem. (Ezra 1:5).

From this verse, it is clear that God is the One who moves His children to do things that bring honor and glory to Himself. However, we have to give Him the opportunity to fulfill His purpose in and through us.

Therefore, endeavoring to be in fellowship and learning and applying Bible Doctrine should always be the primary goal of everyone who wishes to "present [his body] a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is [his] spiritual service of worship" (Romans 12:1).

Romans 12:2 - Be Transformed by the Renewing of Your Mind

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. (Romans 12:2).

There are four points in this second verse that will be studied. Keep in mind that the apostle Paul did change his tone slightly in verse 2. He was emphatic when he started the sentence with, “And do not.” It is interesting to note that the apostle John began his letter to believers in the same manner:

Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him (1 John 2:15). James also had his own style of declaring the same thing: You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. (James 4:4).

Our Lord Jesus Christ in His prayer said the same thing about the position of believers of this world:

I have given them [believers] Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. “I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one” (John 17:14-15).

1. And do not be conformed to this world:

Being conformed to this world has nothing whatsoever to do with the taboos regarding: The type of car a person drives, the type of clothes he wears and how he dresses, (though it may reflect his thinking), how much wealth the believer has, wearing makeup, and so many other things which some believers have erroneously labeled worldly.

The believers who label these things worldly are truly demonstrating that they are totally ignorant of the Word of God and His plan. The Greek word translated conform is *suschemafizo*. It can also be translated, “being fashioned to.” It has nothing to do with external characteristics. It has everything to do with “inner thought.”

There is a reason why I consider being conformed to this world a matter of inner thought. When I explain the next increment you will see why. How does a believer keep his thoughts conformed to God’s plan for his life? This brings my exposition to the next point.

2. But be transformed by the renewing of your mind:

Every believer has his own mixture of struggles with sin. This mix may include evil thoughts, lies, the tendency to cheat, the desire to enjoy pleasure instead of following God's will, the urge to become wealthy at any cost, and many other sins all of which are completely incompatible with God's plan after salvation.

The only way a believer can renew his mind is to expose himself to the accurate teaching of the Word of God. The Word of God is a mirror that reflects. When a believer sees this reflection, he now has the option to ask God to help him remove those things from his mind which prevent him from glorifying God. In light of this renewing of the mind, James writes:

Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save [deliver] your souls (James 1:21).

3. That you may prove what the will of God is:

The only way a believer can understand the will of God is through His Word. The more he learns His Word, the more he will discover His will. There are no two ways about it.

4. That which is good and acceptable and perfect:

God is perfect. Man is imperfect before and after salvation. This means that whatever work he produces apart from God the Holy Spirit is considered unacceptable before God. Therefore, only what God produces in and through man is considered acceptable and glorifying to Him. He will undoubtedly reward such work both in time and eternity. This is one aspect of explaining the marvelous grace of God.

For it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure (Philippians 2:13).

Ultimately God wants every believer to be truly preoccupied with the things above. Therefore, a believer's "thought" is the issue after salvation; action is merely a result of thought.

This lesson concludes our overview of spiritual detachment from the world (lessons 6-9) including handing new converts with wisdom and being preoccupied with the Kingdom of Heaven.

Please join us next time as we answer the question: After salvation, what next? Until then we pray that you will reflect upon the truths we have studied so far and that you have been blessed by these truths.