

Present Your Body



How To Find God's Plan For Your Life (Part 2)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again today as we look together at one of life's most important questions, "How to Find God's Plan for Your Life."

Yesterday I explained the first essential step toward this goal; that is, to let God deal in a radical way with the consequences of sin in our life and then by a divine creative act to form us into a completely new creation, a completely new kind of person.

The further unfolding of God's plan is only open to those who have first experienced this mighty creative act of God. Today I'm going to explain to you the next step which follows on from this creative act.

I'll turn first to Romans 12:1. This chapter of Romans begins the practical outworking of all the theological truths that Paul has been unfolding in the first 11 chapters of Romans. It takes the theory of the first 11 chapters and applies it in practice to the way that we live. It begins with a "therefore" and I've said many times, "When you find a 'therefore' in the Bible, you need to ask what it's there for." This "therefore" is there because it's the practical application of all the theology that's gone before. Paul says:

> "I urge you therefore, 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." (NAS)

What impresses me about the Bible is that it's so practical, so down-to-earth. It's not super-spiritual. We've been confronted with all this tremendous theology of the preceding chapters. Where does the application start? It starts with our body. The first thing that God asks is that we present this body of ours to Him, a living sacrifice.

You might say, "Well, I thought the body wasn't so important, that it was really the soul that was important. But God is very practical. You see, if there's a glass of water standing on the table and I'd say to you, "Please hand me that glass." What am I getting? I'm getting the vessel and its contents. How could you ever give me the water without the glass? And that's what God is saying to you: He wants the vessel, the body, and its contents. And, as a matter of fact, you really

can't give God the contents unless you give Him the vessel. So God wants you, the vessel, and its contents.

God says it's to be a "living sacrifice." What does that mean? It's contrasted with the sacrifices of the Old Testament, where animals were offered in sacrifice, killed and placed as dead bodies on the altar of God. God says, "I want your body just as much, just as completely, on My altar as that Old Testament sacrifice. But there's one difference. I don't want your body dead. I want it a living sacrifice."

You see how very down-to-earth God is. He says, "It's your body I want. And when I have your body, I have you."

In Matthew 23 Jesus was talking to the Pharisees and He's explaining to them the things that really mattered in their religion because they'd got their values wrong. They were saying that the offering was more important than the altar on which it was offered. Jesus says:

> "You blind men, which is more important, the offering or the altar that sanctifies the offering?" (NAS)

That last phrase is very significant. It's the altar that sanctifies the offering that's placed upon it. What makes that offering holy is its being placed upon God's altar. And that's how it is with your body. When you place your body on God's altar, it becomes holy. It's sanctified. It's set apart to God. But that is an act that you have to make. It must be your decision to make your body totally available to God.

What does that mean in practical terms? It means that you'll go anywhere that God sends you, you'll do anything. It may be a desert, it may be a city, it may be a mountain. You may be washing dishes, you may be preaching, you may have a salary, you may have no salary. You've renounced all those decisions to God. You've simply handed over your body to Him and said, "Here it is, God. I trust You to do what You desire and please with my body." That's presenting your body to God. Then there's a result that follows in the mind. In the next verse of Romans 12, that's verse 2, Paul says this:

> "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove [find out and experience] what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." (NAS)

When you present your body, strange though it may seem, a change takes place in your mind. You begin to think in a different way. God says your mind is renewed. And then, when your mind is renewed, you prove (you find out for yourself) what the will of God is. And Paul uses three words to describe the will of God, all of which are beautiful and exciting. He says it's good, it's acceptable, and it's perfect.

You'll notice there's a progression. As you begin to discover God's will, you discover it's good. God always wants what's good for His children, never what's evil. The further you go, you discover it's acceptable. It's what you really want, too. And then you come into full understanding—it's perfect, it covers every area of your life. It meets every need. There's nothing that isn't provided for, for your good in the perfect will of God. But bear in mind, it's only as your mind is renewed that you can find out the will of God.

You see, typically, religion works from without. It starts trying to change man from outside. But God works from within. He says, "When I can begin to change your mind, then you'll change. Your whole way of life will change, and I'll be able to reveal to you My will which is good, acceptable and perfect."

Now I want to explain to you why God can only reveal His will to our mind after it's been renewed. Before God makes this change in our mind, the mind that we have by our old fleshly nature is not something that can receive the will of God. In Romans 8:7, Paul says this: "...the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God..." (NAS). Or, in the King James Version it says, "...the carnal is enmity against God."

I think it becomes obvious that a mind that's a war with God cannot receive the revelation of the will of God. That warring attitude of our mind which is hostile to God must be changed by the transforming of our mind, by the renewing of our mind. And then that renewed mind, and only that renewed mind, can receive the revelation of the will of God.

Now, the carnal mind is the product of impressions from man's rebellious soul, a soul that has been in rebellion against God. And it covers three main areas: the will, the intellect and the emotions. Essentially, the carnal mind is self-centered. It revolves around that little word "I." It's ego-centered. It's expressed in certain simple verbs. The carnal will says, "I want." The carnal intellect says, "I think." The carnal emotions say, "I feel." And in his unregenerate or carnal condition man is controlled by those three verbs, "I want," "I think," "I feel." His whole life revolves around them and in that condition he is not open to the revelation of the will of God. There has to be a significant and ongoing change. These attitudes that are expressed in the words, "I want," "I think," "I feel," have to be renounced. We have to let something go before we can receive the will of God. Listen to what Jesus says in Matthew 16:25:

> "For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake shall find it." (NAS)

Now in the original Greek, the word that's translated "life" is the word for "soul." So if you wish to save (to keep) your soul-life, you lose it, but if you're willing to let your soul-life go, then you'll find a new life, a life that God has for you.

What does it mean, to lose that old soul-life? It means to renounce self. It means to say to self, "You're no longer going to dictate to me. I'm not going to be ruled any longer by the things that you want and you think and you feel. I'm going to live by different standards. I'm going to get my direction from a different source. I'm going to turn my back on all that selfishness and self-centeredness. I'm not going to be the plaything of my emotions and my own impressions. I'm going to lay down that old soul-life, that ego-centered way of living and thinking, which has dictated to me all these years and I'm going to find a new life, a life that God has planned for me."

You remember what I said yesterday as I quoted Ephesians 2:10. We're God's workmanship when we come to Him in Christ, created for good works that He's prepared for us, a unique and special task that God has for each one of us to fulfill. But as long as we go on thinking along the old lines, as long as we let that old ego-centered life control us, as long as we're motivated in those old ways, we cannot find and walk in those good works which God has prepared for us.

So there's a life to lose and then a life to find. And if you're really going to find the fullness of God's plan for your life, you have to ask yourself, "Am I willing to let that old soul-life go? Am I willing to stop thinking in those old ways, 'I want,' 'I think,' 'I feel'? Am I willing to let God change me from within by renewing my mind?"

That's a decision you have to make.

Our time is up for today but I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. Tomorrow I'll be describing to you more fully the nature of the renewed mind.

Radio Program

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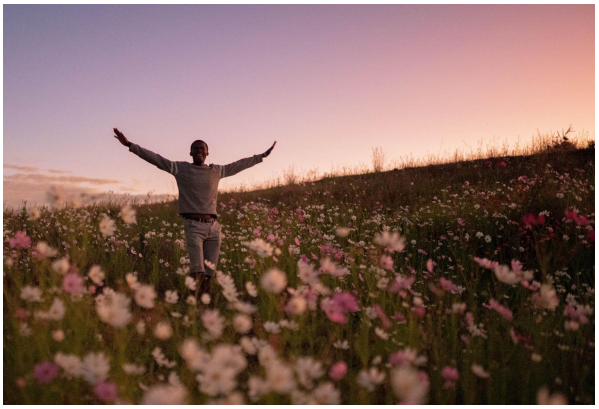

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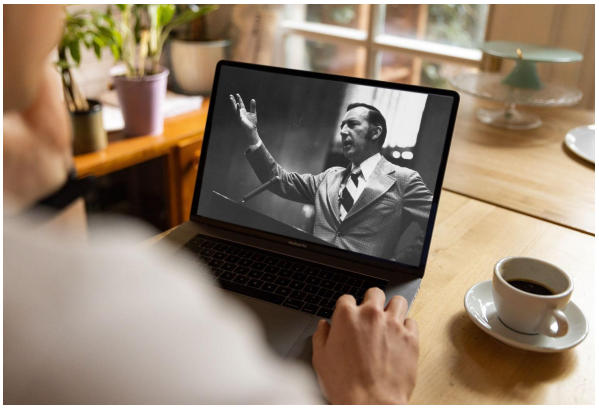

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