

Be Suitably Equipped



How To Find God's Plan For Your Life (Part 5)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again as we draw near to the end of the week, sharing with you precious truths that have made the difference between success and failure in my life and can do the same in yours

First let me say thank you to those who have been writing to me. Before I finish this talk, we'll be giving you a mailing address to which you may write. Feel free to share with us your personal needs, your problems, your prayer requests.

This week I've been sharing with you on how to find God's plan for your life. Up to now, I've explained four steps you need to take. First, let God recreate you, let Him make you a completely new creation. Second, present your body to God as a living sacrifice. Third, let God renew your mind, let Him give you a completely new way of thinking. Fourth, find your place as a member in Christ's corporate body.

Today I'm going to explain to you the fifth and final step in this process of finding God's plan for you. It is to be suitably equipped to fulfill the function in the body for which God has appointed you. So my theme today is being suitably equipped to fill your place in the body.

I'm going back once more, to Romans 12. I'm going to read the three verses that I read yesterday and then I'm going to go on beyond them and show you the next step in Paul's thinking. Beginning then, in Romans 12:3–5:

> "For through the grace given to me I say to every man among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith. For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another." (NAS)

I pointed out yesterday that a renewed mind, like the radar of the airplane, directs us to our appointed place as a member in a corporate body.

Now in what follows Paul begins to speak about equipment. The word he uses here is gifts. So I'm going to read now Romans 12:6–8, the three verses that follow on after those I've just read:

> "We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully." (NIV)

We see therefore, that these gifts of God are our equipment. And they follow logically from our function. We need to get the order right. First function, then equipment. Some people are all stirred up and excited about spiritual gifts but their excitement is often rather out of order because they don't know what member they ought to be and therefore they don't know what gifts they need to function as that member.

Let me give you a simple example: the foot and the hand in the human body. What is the responsibility of the foot? Very simply, it is to bear weight and to maintain balance. What's the responsibility of the hand? To lift weight and to grasp. We find that each of these members is ideally suited to its particular function. But how silly it would be for them to try to trade functions with one another! How silly it is when the hand seeks to bear weight and maintain balance. We know how difficult that is—it takes a gymnast to do it. And how foolish it is when the foot seeks to lift weight and to grasp. You almost have to be a monkey to do that. And yet there are, I'm afraid, a number of believers who are just like that. God ordained them to be a foot and they're trying to be a hand. And they're all out of order. They don't have the needed faith because the proportion of faith God gave them was for the function they were to fulfill and they don't have the needed gifts because the gifts were also related to the function.

Notice how various the gifts can be. Paul here gives us some examples and I think they're just examples, not a complete list. He lists seven different kinds of equipment: first, prophesying; second, serving; third, teaching; fourth, encouraging; fifth, contributing (bear in mind that's a gift); sixth, leadership; and seventh, showing mercy.

A lot of people get all excited about prophesying. It sounds so dramatic and, in a certain sense, it is. But you might be all worked up about prophesying and God might be speaking to you about a ministry of showing mercy. Visiting the sick and the shut-ins, doing something that's rather quiet and unseen to the public eye. And yet, that's your particular place and function in the body. See how important it is that you don't try to be something different from what God has appointed you to be? That you find your right place? You fulfill your right function? You accept the right equipment from God and you operate in the proportion of faith which God has given you? Because that proportion of faith is directly related to your function.

In 1 Corinthians 12:31, Paul says: "But eagerly desire the greater gifts" (NIV). But it's very significant he doesn't tell us which the greater gifts are. I've looked many times through the Bible but I don't find any list that states exactly which are the greatest and which are the least gifts. And I've come to this conclusion: For me, the greater gifts are those which enable me to function to the optimum in the particular place in the body in which God has set me. Therefore, what might be a greater gift for me might not be so great a gift for you. Never divorce gifts, which are equipment, from function, which is what God wants you to be and to do in the body of Christ.

I've been speaking to you about the need of spiritual equipment to function in the body. I want to go on just a little further and show you how much importance the New Testament attaches to being properly equipped. I want to turn to the words with which Jesus directed His disciples as to how they were to go out into their ministry. Just before He left them He said in effect, "Don't go out now and start to minister because you don't have the equipment. Wait in Jerusalem. When you receive the equipment, then you can begin to minister." Now, if that was true for the apostles who had been together with Jesus for 3 1/2 years, heard all His teaching, witnessed all His miracles; don't you think it's at least equally true for you and me? That we are not fit to go out and minister until we've received the appointed equipment. Listen to what Jesus says in Luke 24:46–49:

> "and He said to them, 'Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. 'You are witnesses of these things. [How important to be His witnesses. But listen to what He says next:] 'And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.'"" (NAS)

That's the equipment—the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit. The same is said in Acts 1:8, just before He was taken up to heaven and they saw Him no longer with their natural eyes there on the Mount of Olives. His last words to them were:

> "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth." (NAS)

Notice, they were not to go out even though they had the story to tell. They were not to go out and tell it until they also had the equipment that was needed to go with their ministry. In Hebrews 2:3–4, the writer of this epistle again speaks about the equipment that God has provided for His people:

> "How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will." (NAS)

Notice it's the will of God that the testimony of Jesus and the message of the gospel be accompanied by the gifts of the Holy Spirit. This is God's will. We are not to think of spiritual gifts as toys but rather as tools. And, without the tools, we're not equipped to do our job, to fulfill our function.

Another point, and this is my last, in order to be equipped we need the help of God-given ministries. Paul makes this clear in Ephesians 4:11–12:

> "And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service..." (NAS)

Notice again, it's God's will that His people be equipped for the job that they have to do but has put in the body certain main ministries whose responsibility it is to equip God's people. That's another reason why it's so important to be in the body because only in the body can you receive the benefit of these ministries which are to equip you for your work of service. So we need equipment.

Now, at the close of my message I'm just going to recapitulate the five steps that you need to take to find God's plan for your life.

First, you need to become a new creation in Jesus Christ.

Second, you need to present your body as a living sacrifice on God's altar.

Third, you have to be renewed in your mind, you have to think differently—different values, standards, purposes, objectives. The old, unrenewed mind is at war with God and can never find the will of God.

Fourth, your renewed mind will lead you to your place in the body, just like radar brings the airplane down on the runway.

And fifth, when you find your place in the body, you have to be suitably equipped with the supernatural equipment that the Holy Spirit makes available to us. And this equipment also comes to us through the ministries that God has set in His body.

All right. Our time is just about up for today but I'll be back with you again next week at this time, Monday through Friday. Next week, I'll be dealing with a new and exciting topic.

Radio Program

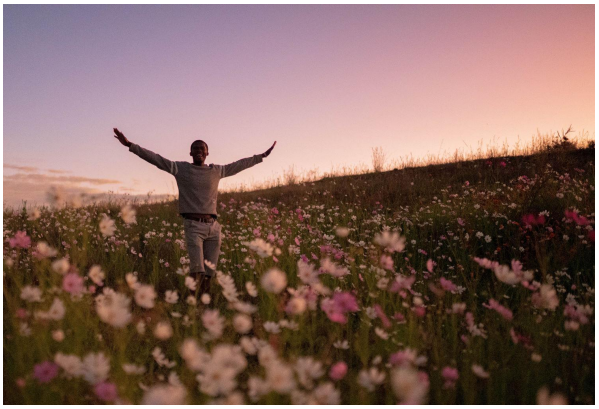
Transcript: TS-R014-105-ENG
Last Updated: 12 Apr 2023
Website: derekprince.com

Bible Teaching Resources



Books

Illuminate and expand your understanding of the Bible with the Derek Prince collection of Christian books.



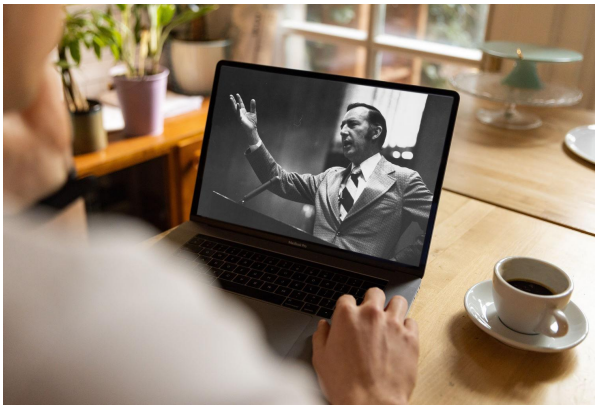
Daily Devotionals

Browse free biblically inspired daily devotionals by Derek Prince for practical teachings to uplift your Christian faith.



Legacy Radio

Listen to inspiring 10-minute messages and connect faith to life with the Derek Prince Legacy Radio podcast.



Sermons

Watch original and digitally remastered sermons by Derek Prince. Includes full message transcripts (free download).



Official App

Available free, download the official Derek Prince Ministries app and equip your faith, anywhere, anytime.



Proclamations

Declare life and experience the transformative power of God's Word with our bible-based Proclamations.

Copyright © Derek Prince Ministries