

God's Program for the New Self



The Old Self and the New Self (Part 5)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again as another week draws to its close. Today we'll continue and complete our study of the two natures that are so close to each other and yet so totally opposite: the old self and the new self.

Yesterday I shared with you how to cultivate the new self, how to bring this new person within us to maturity and the fulfillment of God's purposes. This process begins by letting the Holy Spirit show us in the mirror of God's Word the truth about the two natures, both what we were by nature (the old self) and what we can become by grace (the new self). Thereafter we must systematically and progressively deny the demands of the old self and yield instead to the influence of the Holy Spirit. The result will be expressed in one word in our conduct: obedience.

Today I'm going to share with you God's program for the new man, the purpose for which God has created the new man. In order to understand this, we need to go back to God's original purpose for man. We have to understand that when God forms a purpose, He never abandons it! Sin and Satan may delay the outworking of God's purpose, but they can never ultimately frustrate it. Paul says this very clearly in Ephesians 1:11, speaking about our place and relationship to God in Christ, he says:

> "In him [Christ] we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will..." (NIV)

That's good news, isn't it? That we are in line with the plan of a God who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of His will. In the last resort, everything is going to fall in line with God's purpose and God's will. This applies to God's original purpose in creating man. Sin and Satan have delayed it, but they will never ultimately prevent it! God isn't so concerned about time. God is patient. He'll take many years, many centuries, even maybe many ages, but He'll always ultimately work out His purpose and His plan! So let's look at God's original purpose for man. It's stated there at the

beginning of the Bible in Genesis 1:26:

> "Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.'" (NAS)

We notice that God speaks about man first in the singular and then in the plural. He says, "Let Us make man" and then He says, "let them rule." In other words, He's talking about His purpose for the whole human race, not for just one individual man. There are two main purposes clearly revealed in this statement of God. The first is that man is to show forth God's likeness. He's made in God's image and God's likeness. In the record of creation given in the opening chapters of Genesis, God created man on the sixth day and then He rested. He had His Sabbath on the seventh day. I believe this brings out something in the mind of God. God would not rest until He brought forth His own likeness. Everything else in creation was building up to that one supreme objective: that God should reproduce His own likeness. And that, I believe, is equally true in the new creation. God will not rest until He has reproduced His own likeness! So that's the first purpose of God for man, to show forth God's likeness.

The second purpose is to exercise God's authority on His behalf. He said of man, "let them rule," and He said, "over all the earth." Man was intended to be God's designated ruler, exercising God's authority on His behalf over all the earth. Now man's sin frustrated both these purposes of God. In the first place, God's image in man was marred by sin. Secondly, man who was destined to be a ruler, became a slave, the slave of sin and Satan. He fell from his position of rulership to a position of slavery because of his sin.

But in 1 Corinthians 15:45, Jesus is called "the last Adam." This directly relates the purpose of His coming to the original purpose of the creation of Adam. Jesus came as "the last Adam" to seal up and to terminate the evil inheritance of sin and corruption in the original Adamic race and then to fulfill the two purposes of God which had been frustrated by Adam's disobedience. Those two purposes are: to show forth God's likeness and to exercise God's authority. Concerning the showing forth of God's likeness, Jesus says of Himself in John 14:9:

> "He who has seen Me has seen the Father..." (NAS)

In other words, He perfectly showed forth the likeness of God. Concerning the exercise of God's authority, Jesus said in John 14:10:

> "The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works." (NAS)

That is, both the words of works of Jesus received their authority from the Father, speaking and acting through Jesus. Jesus perfectly demonstrated the Father's likeness. He perfectly exercised the Father's authority on His behalf, thus fulfilling the two purposes for which Adam had originally been created, but which he failed to fulfill because of his sin.

After His death and resurrection, Jesus commissioned His disciples to do the same for Him as He had done for the Father. In John 20:21, on the resurrection Sunday evening when He appeared to the disciples in a group, He said this:

> "Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you." (NAS)

Those are words of tremendous import. "As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." In just the same way as the Father sent Jesus, Jesus in turn sends His disciples.

For what purpose did the Father send Jesus? To fulfill purposes frustrated by Adam through his fall, to show forth God's likeness, to exercise God's authority. Jesus did that and now He commissions His disciples to do the same for Him in turn, to reproduce His likeness, to exercise His authority. That is the God's purpose for the new man, to fulfill the purpose which was frustrated by Adam through his disobedience.

Let's look at our responsibility to reproduce Christ's likeness. In Romans 8:29, Paul says this:

> "For whom He [that is, God] foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren..." (NAS)

There's a statement of God's purpose, God's destiny for the new man. To become conformed to the image of His Son that He, the Son, Jesus, might be the first-born among many brethren. God's purpose was to bring forth many children. All children of God. But, all children reproducing the likeness of God's oldest Son, His firstborn, His only begotten Jesus. So that's our first responsibility in the new creation, in the new self: it's to reproduce the image of God's Son, to reproduce God's likeness.

Our second responsibility is to exercise Christ's authority on His behalf. In Matthew 28:18-20, again after His resurrection, Jesus said to His disciples:

> "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 'Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations…'" (NAS)

We need to see the point of the "therefore." Jesus says "the authority has been given to Me, but I'm sending you to exercise that authority on My behalf as My delegated representative." So our responsibility is to exercise Christ's authority on His behalf by making disciples out of all the nations. And this is expressed in two things that Jesus tells us to do: "baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit." In other words, when we use the name of the triune God, it indicates that the authority of the triune God is behind all that we do. And then, "teaching them to observe all that I've commanded you." Our teaching is the expression of the delegated authority of Jesus Christ. We are not commissioned to teach anything that we please, but we're commissioned to teach the same that Jesus taught His first disciples, and this process is to go on to the end of the age where Jesus then says, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

There's one more important fact that I need to bring to your notice as I close and that is that these two purposes for the new self cannot be fulfilled completely by any individual believer but require the collective new man. In Ephesians 2:14-15, Paul says:

> "For he himself [Jesus] is our peace, who has made the two one [that's Jew and Gentile] and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two…" (NIV)

So the "new man" is one, collective new man, comprising all the people of God and this new man operates through a collective, corporate body.

Speaking about our relationship to Jesus as believers, Paul says in Ephesians 4:16:

> "From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work." (NIV)

So we are to be one complete corporate body expressing one new corporate man. This new man reenacts Christ's earthly ministry and in this way fulfills God's two purposes: he shows God to the world and he exercises God's authority on His behalf.

Our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again next week at this same time, Monday through Friday. Next week I'll be moving on to a new and exciting theme and I'll look forward to having you with me once more.

Stay tuned now for some important announcements. In particular, how you may obtain my Self Study Bible Course. This is a complete course of Bible study that you can work through entirely on your own. It includes explanatory notes, correct answers and coordinated memory work. The announcement that follows will tell you how you may obtain this Self Study Bible Course.

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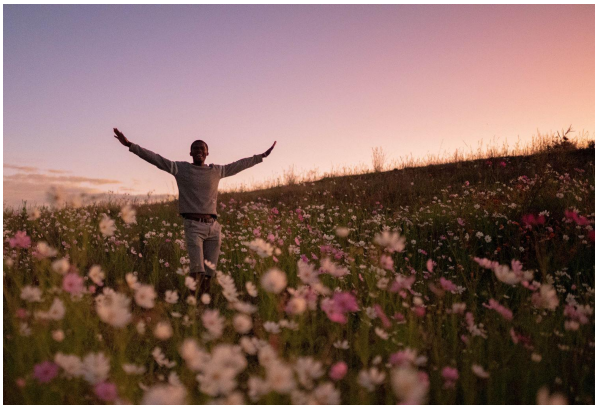

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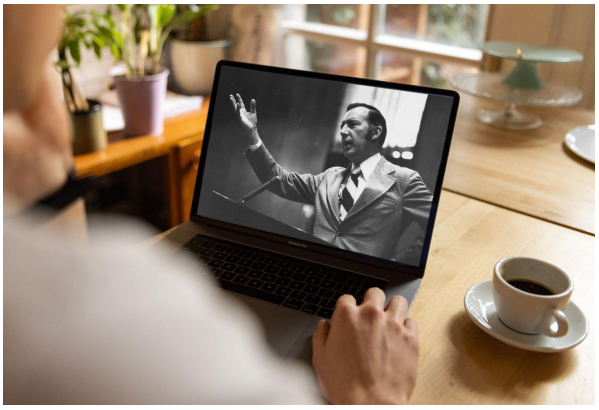

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