

THE PURPOSE OF GOD

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THE PURPOSE OF GOD

LESSON 1: The Purpose of the Father

Romans 11:36 For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen.

Of Him, through Him, and to Him--all ministry begins "of Jesus". He is the source or originator of all things. All ministry is through Him. It is through the Holy Spirit that all things are done. All ministry is to Him. It is in His purpose that all things provide something to God. We need to be able to see the fulness of the purposes of God in this Scripture:

<i>Of (from) Him</i>	seeing the originator, Author, the First;
<i>Through Him</i>	seeing all the parts in a unified whole;
<i>To (unto) Him</i>	seeing the final point of coordination.

Ephesians 1:9-10 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: (10) That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:

God had a goal, a purpose, before the foundation of the world. Before man existed, God already had a plan in His mind. This plan dealt with things that God had purposed in Himself for His good pleasure or enjoyment before He created Man. In Revelation, it says that the Lamb was slain before the foundation of the world. That means the Redemption Plan wasn't an emergency add-on for God. He had already made provision for Redemption so that His purpose would not be thwarted.

It was God's intention that Adam would choose the Tree of Life and become capable of achieving God's plan; but, Adam did not fulfill the purpose of God. The Last Adam made the correct choice by being obedient to the will of the Father. When we partake of Jesus as the Lamb of God, we are cleansed both from sin and the Sin Nature inherited from Adam. We then can partake of Jesus as the Tree of Life and, through Him, become capable of fulfilling God's plan.

We have so concentrated on the plan of redemption that we forget that God's plan was before redemption and God's plan was after. Adam's sin did not change God's purpose. We can only understand that if we have the proper viewpoint of God's purpose. If we place our viewpoint with the fall and start there, all we see is man's need of redemption. While it is wonderful that God provided redemption for us, it is not the end-all of God's purpose. If we start with creation, which is before the fall, and move forward from there, all we see in the Bible is the history of man. God's purposes are greater than the history of man. His purpose

was before man and continues after the end of Revelation. We have to begin in God. What was God's purpose? Ephesians tells us—to gather together all things in Christ, both in heaven and in earth; to sum up all things in Christ; literally to “head it up”.

God created Adam and placed him in a garden with two trees. He was told not to eat of one of the trees. The natural, logical implication then is that he should eat of the other tree. He didn't. Adam's choice was simple. He could *take* of that which God had denied or, he could *receive* that which God had provided. He decided to *take* and that has become the characteristic of fallen man--always taking what he wants. So, after eating of the wrong tree, Adam had to be put out of the garden to keep him from eating of the Tree of Life and living forever in his fallen state.

Even today in the Church we see the Old Nature expressed in *taking*. We are told that the blessings of God belong to us because we are King's kids, that we should *take* our inheritance. We make demands on God and storm Heaven with prayer to *take* what is rightfully ours. The New Nature is not based on demanding and taking but instead on receiving and giving.

The New Testament tells us that the First Adam was made a living soul, but the Last Adam was made a quickening (lively) spirit. While Adam's spirit was in contact with God and Life flowed, he didn't have a “quickened” spirit in the same sense as the Last Adam because he had never eaten of the Tree of Life. He had not fulfilled God's purpose. The redemption plan is to bring us to the place that we can eat of the Tree of Life and realize God's purpose in the New Heaven and the New Earth spoken of in Revelation.

Over the years, I have had a number of people tell me that their primary goal is to make Heaven their home. Our goal is not Heaven! Neither is that God's goal for us! Jesus never said believe in me so that you can go to Heaven when you die. He spoke instead of being a part of His Kingdom and of the work to be done. Any evangelistic message that focuses on Heaven as the goal is missing the purposes of God. If we minister with the wrong goals we are ineffective in accomplishing God's purpose.

The Father had purposed something in Himself. He made man. Man sinned. Man became excluded from the purposes of God. Man could no longer participate in God's purpose of summing up all things in Christ. Not only that, but God had given Title Deed to the earth to man. He was to have dominion over it and all that it contained. Satan came and seduced Eve and Adam traded the Deed for the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil and the supposed opportunity to become as God. Man then became a slave to Satan and Satan became the God of this world, the Prince of the power of the air with full legal right to the earth and all that it contains. With Adam's sin, Satan now held the Title Deed for earth. (That is why the whole creation groans and waits for the revealing of the Sons of God.)

God needed a savior. One who could fulfill the righteousness and justice of God. God by His nature cannot be unjust. He can't be unjust to man; He can't be unjust to Satan. His savior would have to be born of man in order to pay the penalty for man, yet the savior could not be under the dominion of Satan.

Jesus came to do the will of the Father, that is, to fulfill His purpose. He did what Adam was unable to do by resisting the temptation of the devil in the wilderness. Jesus refused to do anything *for Himself* (turn stones to bread); refused to do anything *of Himself* (jump off the pinnacle); refused to do anything *in Himself* (worship the enemy). That is why He could say that the God of this world had come and had nothing in Him. Many believe that the scroll given to Jesus in the book of Revelation is the Title Deed to the earth that was taken back from Satan.

Therefore Jesus redeemed man and restored him to a place that he could participate in the purpose of God. Man is now in a position where he can be summed up in Christ.

Jesus told us that He had to go away but He would send another Comforter (the Holy Spirit). Jesus came to glorify the Father; the Holy Spirit comes to glorify Jesus. The Holy Spirit is now the active agent in summing us up in Christ. It is not by accident that the evidence of being baptized in the Holy Spirit is speaking in tongues. We are brought into the unity of a new language to praise God. This is in direct contrast to the splitting asunder and the confusion of language at the Tower of Babel.

God's purpose then is one new man—the Body of Christ—the Church. Again, this is a word that we use in a way that is not meant by the scriptures. When we say Church, we usually mean a building. The scriptures never mean a building when the word Church is used. It always means people. We are to be people built together into one new body (or temple). From miniature to magnitude—from the physical body of Christ to the mystical body, revealing the mystery of God's will to the heavens. We become a habitation of God through the Spirit. You see, God intends to inhabit His Church which is the temple of God!

1 Corinthians 3:16 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

The “ye” and “you” in this verse are plural. Our problem with English is that “you” can be singular or plural and only the context tells us which is correct. Many people read this verse with “you” as singular, meaning the individual; however, reading it with “you” as plural gives us a corporate picture with us being the temple of God. This is Peter's understanding of what God is doing also.

1 Peter 2:5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

It is not by accident that we are called living stones. In order to fulfill God's purpose we have to find our place, our “fit” in the Body. Stones have to be fitted together. You can't just pick up any old stone and stick it any old place in a building.

In order to be fitted together, there are some secondary purposes that must be accomplished. The stones have to be “dug up”, “cut up”, “shaped up”, etc. before they can become “fitted together”. If we put this into the context of “harvest” instead of “stones” it might be clearer. I grew up on a farm; therefore, the idea of the field being ripe for harvest makes sense to me. When harvest season comes, it has to be done then or much of the harvest will be lost.

Example: harvesting corn. On our farm corn was a staple. We canned a lot of it

for our use. We fed it to the pigs, chickens, cows, and saved the best for seed for the next year. When the corn was ready for general harvest (we pulled “roasting ears” while it was young and tender for canning), we pulled the ears and gathered them into a wagon. Then, they were taken to the barn. In the barn they were prepared for their intended use. The “nubbins” (the ears of corn that didn’t fully develop) were separated into their own “crib” (bin) to be used as pig feed. The largest and fully developed ears were run through the corn sheller. After shelling, the best was saved for future seed—the rest was used to feed the chickens. The average corn ears were usually ground and mixed with other ingredients to become feed for the cattle. All of the corn was used according to its intended purpose.

Can you see how this applies to the Church. Jesus said the world is the field. We (the workers) go to the field (the world) and gather the harvest (the converts, new births, etc.) that is ready and bring it back to the storehouse (barn, Church). There it is separated (placed, fitted, shaped, etc.) for its intended purpose (call, use, etc).

Back to the stone analogy—the stones are found in the field or a stone quarry. They are dug up and taken to a stonemason for cutting and shaping for use. The stones that can’t be shaped go to the scrap heap.

How does this apply to us? Who is God’s stonemason? The Holy Spirit! We are stones that are in the shaping process. The Holy Spirit is working on us. He places us with people and in circumstances that create friction to rub off the rough spots and polish the flat surfaces. But, we don’t like that. We seek to escape the shaping process (or refuse to yield to it to begin with) and because God gave us free will, many times we will escape. One who repeatedly does this, refusing to embrace God’s purposes, ends up on the scrap heap. As a matter of fact, we use the word Gehenna for the Lake of Fire at the end of time because of the valley of Gehenna outside the walls of Jerusalem that people used for a garbage dump. Fires burned there continually to burn the garbage. So, we’ve taken this concept and applied it to the Lake of Fire. The final place for the universes’ scrap heap—those that would not yield to the purposes of God (human and devil).

2 Peter 1:4-8 gives us the shaping process to produce the qualities necessary for us to not be unfruitful, useless, idle in the things of God. If we do these things we will never fall. If we don’t we become useless to the purposes of God.

After shaping, God places us in His Body—in the place where we fit. This brings us into fulfilling the purposes of the Father in our life.

We are called to fulfil God’s purpose. If god’s purpose is to sum up all things in Christ, then what are we called to? Evangelism. This is always the primary focus—to reach others so that they may be summed up in Christ.

What then is the second aspect of our call? First is to reach others; second is body ministry. Service to those who are being summed up—ministry one to another.

God’s goal focuses on producing One—all things summed up in One. If we desire to serve

God, then our goal should be to further God's purposes—to be a help in the summing up of all things. That means that our life, our ministry, is to help bring others into the One and to help the ones who are a part of the One.

To do this will require that we recognize and understand God's purpose. We will then begin to appreciate the sub-purposes or goals which God has established along His timeline.

LESSON 2: Finding the Right Reference Point

Everything requires a reference point. The reference point establishes a place to begin and a place to which you can refer when you get off course. Where we place our reference point in the purposes of God is determined by where we have our viewpoint.

We can use the following illustration of the history of man to help explain the different viewpoints held by many in the Church.

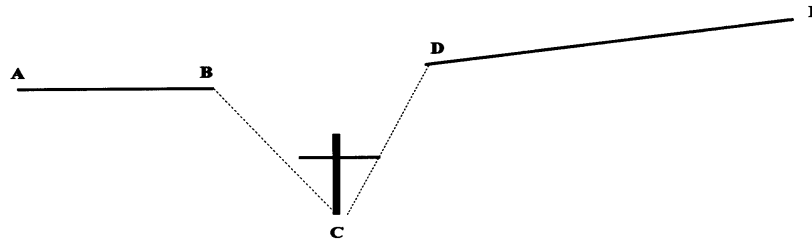


Illustration of the History of Man

Point A = Creation of Adam

Point B = Fall of Adam

Line B to C = the history of man since the fall

Point C = Jesus' Death on the Cross; the Last Adam, the Second Man

Line C to D = the Work of the Cross—a crises application

Point D = Man restored, justified, capable of fulfilling God's Purpose

Line D to E = the Way of the Cross—a continuous application.

Point E = Man fulfilling God's Purpose

Those who begin with the creation of Adam emphasize the “dominion of man” because man was created to “rule over” the rest of creation.

Those who begin with the fall of man emphasize man's sin and depravity.

Those who begin with Jesus' death on the cross emphasize man's need for a savior and His provision by His death.

Wrong viewpoints present ongoing problems. If we start at the wrong place, our progress is off course and it is impossible to correct because we have no proper point of coordination.

Starting at the wrong point results in these three critical problems:

1. Starting from wrong point—develop false point of reference because of wrong beginning point
2. Start taking the part for the whole—we have fatal nearsightedness in the purposes of God
3. Start wrong, procedures become wrong, progress if off course—no correct point of

coordination.

Our starting point can be

1. with creation
2. with man
3. with the fall, or
4. with the Eternal Purpose of God.

To realize God's purpose we must correct our viewpoint problem.

1. By establishing the true point of reference
2. By seeing the whole of God's intended purpose
3. By discovering the lost point of coordination.

We have to start with God's purpose in order to understand His ways. It is God's desire that we understand His ways because He desires for us to cooperate with Him in His work. Some of our problems today are because the Church is more interested in His acts than in His ways. That is the mark of the immature.

Psalms 103:7 He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel.

Our starting point in God determines *all basic concepts* of our understanding of the ways of God. Since the present viewpoint of the Church is centered in Man, his need and God's provision, we produce man-centered basic concepts.

1. Liberal concept—emphasizes work that needs to be done *by man*
2. Fundamentalist concept—understanding what God has done *for man*
3. Holiness concept—emphasis on what God must do *in man*.

Each of these concepts is good and can produce some good things in our lives. However, each is only a part of the whole. We need to get a grasp on the whole.

How do we do that? We must begin in God and His Eternal purpose.

Ephesians 1:9-10 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: (10) That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:

Hebrews 2:10 For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

It is God's intention to bring many sons to glory, summing them up in Christ. Christ is to become the center of all things in Heaven and earth. The many sons become His body, revealing the glory of God to all things.

We have a *paternal theme* presented as the motivating factor for the works of God. This is the revelation of the New Covenant. Under the Old Covenant, the people of God saw Him as God but were so afraid of Him that they would not speak His name in case they would use it incorrectly. However, Jesus came to show us the Father—to reveal the paternal nature of God.

John 14:7-11 If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. (8) Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. (9) Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? (10) Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. (11) Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.

John 16:25-28 These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall show you plainly of the Father. (26) At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: (27) For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God. (28) I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.

Because it was the Father's intention to bring many sons to glory, He made a way for us to become sons of God.

John 1:12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

This is the very meaning of “being born again”--that we are born of the Spirit and thus become children of God.

Romans 8:14-16 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. (15) For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. (16) The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

Galatians 4:6-7 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. (7) Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

And because we are His Sons we must present to the world the same characteristics of the Father that Jesus presented.

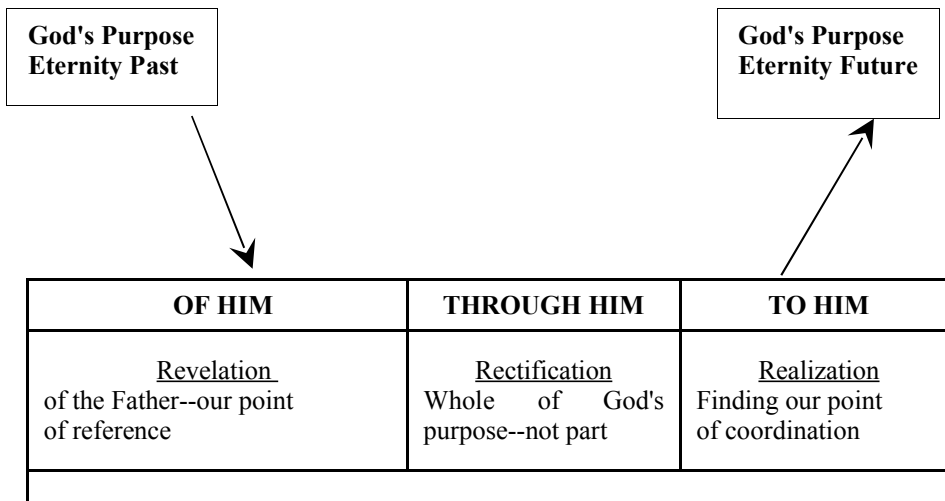
Philippians 2:15 That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;

The love of the Father is revealed to us in that we should be called the sons of God. That love works in us to produce the family characteristics of the Father. We participate in a form of Divine Genetics so that when He appears we will be like Him. In other words, we should be recognized by the Family resemblance.

1 John 3:1-2 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. (2) Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

Therefore, our starting point, our reference point, is with the paternal theme--God as our

Father. Because of that, He has a father's heart toward us.



We must have a *revelation* of the Father to work to bring *rectification* of all things to His purpose for the *realization* of all that God intends.

LESSON 3: Called to His Purpose

2 Timothy 1:9 Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,

Not only have we been called according to grace but we have also been called according to his own purpose. That is, our calling relates to and is integral to God's purpose. He is working everything after the counsel of His own will and plan.

Ephesians 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

The works which God has for us to perform have been prepared ahead of time. The works prepared are directed toward our part of fulfilling God's purpose.

God spends more time preparing us as the worker than He did in preparing the works for us to do! We need to learn how to yield ourselves to His preparation process in order to do the works that He desires.

We have examples of this in Jesus and in Paul. Jesus made two “it is finished” statements. The second one was on the cross and related to the completion of the sacrifice of the Lamb. It was absolutely necessary and had to be completed for our atonement. The first one was just as important and it related to Jesus' purpose of ministry.

John 17:4 I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

When Jesus made this statement, the cross was still in the future. This relates to His ministry, specifically, the development of the Twelve and their preparation to carry on His work after receiving the Holy Spirit.

Paul made a similar statement when it was about time for him to die.

2 Timothy 4:6-7 For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. (7) I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:

He had completed the work given to him to do by the Lord. The works prepared before hand for him were now completed to the furtherance of the Kingdom of God.

God calls us to work. Calling involves His purpose and our role in it. We are born into the family of God but we are called to the work of God. It is important that we see the difference. The work that we accomplish according to His purpose is His inheritance in us. We talk a lot about our inheritance in Him but forget that He has an inheritance in us.

Ephesians 1:18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

2 Thessalonians 1:10-11 (10) When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day. (11) Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God

would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power:

There is a hope associated with our calling that we need to know: when He is glorified in his saints, *He will be admired in all of them that believe*. This is Jesus in His saints as the One New Man to be admired by all of heaven and earth.

This is a heavenly calling and a holy calling. We are called according to his own purpose given before the world began.

Hebrews 3:1 Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;

2 Timothy 1:9 Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,

This is demonstrated by who and how God calls. Those called are truly according to His own pleasure and not according to any aspect of the flesh.

1 Corinthians 1:24-26 But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. (25) Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. (26) For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:

While God doesn't change His mind about our calling, it can appear that way. It is up to us to make our calling sure or steadfast. This requires that we do certain things in order not to fall. We have to yield to the preparaton process.

Romans 11:29 For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.

2 Peter 1:10 Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:

From the viewpoint of God's purpose we need to recognize that some are not only “the called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:28), but some are called to a “high calling”.

Philippians 3:12-14 Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. (13) Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, (14) I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

The “high calling”, in Paul's case, involves completing that for which Christ Jesus called (apprehended) him. He continually pressed toward this high calling which we already know that he achieved because he said that he had completed his course. Can we say the same?

What is the difference between being “called” and the “high calling”? We are all called to be sons of God and to do the work that a son would do for a Father. I submit that the “high calling” involves our participation in the purpose and plans of the Father. That we develop a father's heart and begin to appreciate the Father's perspective.

LESSON 4: Fulfilling the High Call of God

1 Corinthians 3:9-10 For we are laborers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. (10) According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

What could be a higher calling than to participate with God as a “masterbuilder”? He is the architect, the one who understands how it is supposed to go together and gives the specifications for the materials which are to be used. How does one reach the point where God would entrust him to work on His Temple (for that is what is being built)?

To understand this, we need to understand the work of the Father in the earth. Jesus came to reveal the Father to us and in the process He also revealed the Father's work.

When Jesus was twelve years old, He already had understanding of His work. Joseph and Mary took Jesus with them when they went up to Jerusalem for the feast of the passover. When it was over, they left to go home but did not realize that Jesus was not with them. They traveled a full day without knowing that He was absent. When they couldn't find him they returned to Jerusalem where, three days later, they found Him in the Temple talking with the learned ones. When Mary got onto Him about putting them through the ordeal of looking for Him, He answered her with a question.

Luke 2:49 And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?

He felt that it was time for Him to be getting on with His Father's business. Of course, it wasn't time. He went through another eighteen years of preparation before entering His ministry.

After the many years of preparation, you can be sure that when the Father released Him into ministry, He immediately went about the Father's business.

However, before He began His ministry, God sent one to prepare the way for the work of the Lord.

Matthew 3:1-3 In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, (2) And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. (3) For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

John's preparation message was simple: “repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand”. In preparing the way of the Lord, he was laying the foundation for the teaching and acts of Jesus. Therefore, it is not surprising that as Jesus began to enter His ministry, His message began at the same point as John's.

Matthew 4:17 From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Mark 1:14-15 Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee,

preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, (15) And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.

Jesus was about the Father's business. We can see from His first message that the Father's business has to do with the kingdom of God. The Father gave Jesus work to accomplish and that work related to the kingdom.

John 5:36 But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.

John 5:17 But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.

John 4:34 Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.

John 9:4 I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.

We can see from these scriptures that Jesus was fulfilling the commission of the Father by doing the work which the Father had given him to do. We have already seen that part of that work was to prepare others to carry on the work after His death and resurrection.

John 14:12 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

Not only did Jesus say that we would do the works that He did but even greater works. We usually think of His works as miracles and other similar things, but it also includes the works assigned by the Father as it relates to His kingdom.

It is one thing to work miracles in the Name of Jesus, it is quite another to participate in the purpose of the Father and further the work of the kingdom. During these times of restoration, we have seen miracles restored to the Church. Through the gifts of the Spirit, every miracle performed by Jesus has also been done by others. But, God is not doing this just so we can have a good time with His miracles. He has called us to a higher calling. The miracles are to demonstrate the kingdom of God, demonstrate that the King is in residence.

Jesus performed the work of the Father. It was Kingdom work. Jesus also began a work for which He is primarily responsible and that is building His Church.

Matthew 16:15-18 He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? (16) And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. (17) And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. (18) And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Jesus told Peter that upon the revelation of Himself as the Messiah, He would build His Church (assembly of called out ones). That is the business of Jesus. He is building His Church.

So, we have two aspects of Work. One relates to the Kingdom and is primarily the Father's business and one relates to the building of the Church and is primarily Jesus' business. We

need to understand the difference between these two in order to fulfill the purposes of God and find and finish our part of the work.

Paul speaks of the two types in Ephesians:

Ephesians 2:19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

We are all fellow citizens of the Kingdom of God and we are of the household or family of God. We relate to the Kingdom differently than we relate to the family. The type of work that is done in each area is also different.

Through one of His parables, Jesus told us to “occupy till I come” meaning that we are to hold the territory that He gained. We are to dwell on it until He returns. This is Kingdom work.

Luke 19:12-13 He said therefore, A certain noble man went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. (13) And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come.

The Kingdom of God is our spiritual Promised Land. He owns it and has given it to us.

Luke 12:32 Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

But, just like the Promised Land was given to the Children of Israel, they had to walk on it to possess it and there were giants that resisted them in that undertaking.

Joshua 1:3 Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses.

We have received a kingdom, but the powers of darkness still contest with us as we try to possess it. That is why so few seem to live in the fullness of the promises that the Lord has given. In order to dwell in the land of Promises, we have to clear it of anything that offends. That is the meaning of “occupy”.

It took 40 years and a new generation before the Children of Israel were prepared to possess the land. God had to change their mentality, their mind-set, in the wilderness journey. They left Egypt with the mentality of slaves but would need the mentality of warriors by the time they reached Canaan. Their thinking processes needed to change. That is why He did not lead them by the common caravan route between Egypt and Canaan.

Exodus 13:17 And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt:

Though they left Egypt in ranks like an army, their looks were deceiving. They didn't think or act like an army. All of that would have to change and it took 40 years in the wilderness to do it.

We, too, are set free from the slavery of sin and the world system and God has promised us a land, a kingdom, which He has given to us, but we have to develop a spiritual warrior's

mentality. Our mind-set has to change and it takes time for that to happen.

He has given us the scriptures to help us change.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: (17) That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

The Lord speaking through the scriptures reproves us, corrects us, and provides instructions in righteousness and doctrine. This accrues to our benefit because it makes us complete, fully equipped for every good work that God has before ordained that we should do.

Being equipped is a process. It takes time. A person goes to school for years to become a doctor and then must intern under the oversight of an experienced doctor before he can go into practice for himself. Yet, we think that a person can become a proficient minister of the Lord overnight. It requires more than zeal and desire. We must go through a process of change, equipping, and growth in the knowledge and understanding of the Lord Jesus by attending the school of the Holy Spirit.

We have to get serious about the Kingdom of God, about occupying, about spiritual warfare, if we ever want to complete the work assigned to us.

Matthew 11:12 And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

LESSON 5: Developing a Father's Heart

As our life progresses, there are two major phases: we are first sons and later become fathers. So, we reach a point where we are both sons and fathers. We have to learn to be a son before we can become a father.

There are three stages of growth in the Lord:

1. Servant
2. Son
3. Father.

Under the Old Covenant, the people were servants. He was their God and they were His people and they were to obey and serve Him. We have a better Covenant under the New Testament—He is our Father and we are His Children.

Galatians 4:6-7 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. (7) Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

Our problem is that we don't grow up as Sons to become fathers but instead remain at the level of a servant..

Galatians 4:1-2 Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; (2) But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father.

God puts us under teachers to learn how to administrate the father's business as a son. Until that time, the heir is no different than a servant. It is important that we learn to serve but it is more important that we grow up and learn how to take our place as the heir.

We can get a picture of the Father's heart in the parable of the Prodigal Son.

Luke 15:11-32 And he said, A certain man had two sons: (12) And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. (13) And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. (14) And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. . . . (17) And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! (18) I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, (19) And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. (20) And he arose, and came to his father. . . . (21) And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. (22) But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: (23) And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: (24) For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry. (25) Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing. (26) And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. (27) And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound. (28) And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and entreated him. (29)

And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: . . . (31) And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. (32) It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.

The son took his inheritance and wasted it upon himself and his own pleasure. When it was gone, he had nothing and was reduced to the lowest possible job which did not provide enough for him to have food to eat. He decided that servants in his father's house had it better than he did, so he went home with the intention of being a servant if his father would have him. But the father had enough servants, what he wanted was his son and refused to receive him as a servant but instead placed him back into the family as his son.

The oldest son was offended that his father would receive the younger son back and was jealous of his reception. His justification for his offense was the fact that he had *served* his father for all of his years. The essence of the father's answer was you have always been my son, but you didn't act like it, but, instead, have acted as a servant.

This idea is also reflected in Jesus' words toward His disciples.

John 15:15 Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.

The disciples had grown up enough that they could understand the purpose of the work of the Lord. They had reached a point that they could participate in the purposes of God. This had been achieved by Jesus revealing to them all that He had heard from the Father. In other words, He had shown them the full expression of the Father's heart which included His plans and purposes. They had reached a point where they could understand the paternal plan of the Father.

Four phases of the paternal plan of God:

- 1) to be -- creaturehood
- 2) to become -- Sonship -- participation
- 2) to share -- heirship -- appropriation
- 3) to reign -- throneship -- qualification

Phase 1 of the Paternal Plan

When God created Adam, he had the full *potential* to fulfill the purpose of God. However, he never realized that potential because sin *disqualified* him from it. Therefore, in our unregenerate state, we are simply creatures of God, separated from Him and strangers to His plans.

Phase 2 of the Paternal Plan

Through, Jesus, the Son, God has made a way that we might become the Sons of God and as sons participate in the family purpose.

John 1:12-13 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: (13) Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Our participation in becoming sons of God is revealed by our need to be led by the Spirit of God.

Romans 8:14-15 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. (15) For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

If we are not led by the Spirit, we are not acting as sons but are only servants as discussed in the previous lessons.

The purpose of becoming a son is cause us to be able to inherit--to become an heir.

Phase 3 of the Paternal Plan

A son becomes an heir when he has received the father's instructions and obeyed them from his heart. In other words, he has been imbued with the father's heart. Normally, the “black sheep” of a family doesn't receive the inheritance because the father doesn't trust him to take care of it.

Romans 8:17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

Galatians 4:7 Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

As children we become heirs of God and join-heirs with Christ. This is conditional on us suffering with him. We appropriate our inheritance by identifying with the suffering of Jesus so that we can be glorified with Him also.

Phase 4 of the Paternal Plan

Once we share in his heirship then we must be qualified to reign with Him. He is now on His throne in the heavens.

Ephesians 2:6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

However, for us to reign with Him we have to qualify. Reigning with Him is something that He only grants to those who overcome.

Revelation 3:21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

There are some things which we receive from the Lord as gifts: His life, His spirit, His nature. There are other things which must be developed: His character, His mind, His vision. Fulfilling His purpose is a product of training, overcoming, discipline, trials, hardship, and intensive spiritual qualifying.

LESSON 6: Primary and Secondary Goals

Let's recap God's two primary goals (purposes):

1. to sum up all things in Christ

Ephesians 1:10 That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:

2. to have a kingdom with all enemies removed

1 Corinthians 15:24-25 Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. (25) For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.

1 Corinthians 15:28 And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

These two primary goals come together at some point because they both have the result of summing up that God may be all in all.

Whenever, you have a primary goal, there are usually a number of secondary goals along the pathway to the fulfillment of the primary. As one accomplishes the secondary goals, he is moved further toward the completion of the primary purpose.

There are three principles of the Godhead that are reflected in all that God would do in the earth. The development of these in us could be considered some of the secondary goals necessary for the completion of His ultimate intention.

Eternal Principles of the Godhead

1. Fatherhood
2. Headship
3. Fellowship

This is the order in which these develop in us. Fatherhood gives identity and security. Headship gives order and government. Fellowship gives life and service.

The Godhead is not a democracy but a perfect blend of plurality and unity. The ultimate authority in the Church is a plurality patterned after the Godhead. However, it is not egalitarian—not everybody is equal.

Jesus said, “I and my Father are one.” (John 10:30); however, He also said, “...my Father is greater than I.” (John 14:28). Jesus recognized the headship of the Father.

Secondary Goal #1

It is God's intention to have a family. The sons must grow up and reproduce by becoming

fathers. In the natural, you can't have a family without a father. Where the father fails, the family falls apart. This is also true of the spiritual family.

The greatest social problem before the return of the Lord is broken families.

Malachi 4:5-6 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: (6) And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

This problem is so bad that if God doesn't send the Elijah ministry to correct it, He will have to smite the earth with a curse.

It stands to reason that if God wants a family, the enemy will do everything in his power to prevent or pervert it. Why do you think that the family has come under attack by the feminists and the homosexuals. No fathers—no family—no fulfillment of the purposes of God.

Just as Jezebel resisted Elijah, witchcraft is the spiritual force against fatherhood. It seeks to emasculate males and destroy fatherhood.

The Devil fears the man who will rule.

Revelation 12:1-5 And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: (2) And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. (3) And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. (4) And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. (5) And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.

Not only is the concept of fatherhood being destroyed or perverted, the feminists would also like to eliminate the concept of headship. They confuse value and function. Male and female are of equal value but have different functions. Headship is a function and has nothing to do with value. Our success can only come with the right function.

The enemy is mirroring his own rebellious dissatisfaction as he stirs up the feminists agendas.

Isaiah 14:12-14 How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! (13) For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: (14) I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.

Lucifer was not satisfied with who he was, where he was, nor with what he was doing. He wanted to change his place and function apart from the will and purpose of God. He has instilled that same dissatisfaction into modern women.

The enemy does the same thing with men also. Only in men it is called ambition. A striving to climb the ladder; to grab all the gusto you can; you only go around once in life so get all you can. It expresses itself in a disdain for authority; for anyone telling us what we need to do. And if we have people under us, then it becomes a lording over, a tyranny, a desire for absolute control.

Jesus said it was not to be that way with us.

Matthew 20:25-26 But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. (26) But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;

The way of Jesus is different than the way of man. The way of the people of God is different than the way of those who do not belong to God. This difference should be evident to the world.

The people of God operate as a family with love for one another being the motivating force. God expresses his Father's love toward us and we express that same family love toward one another.

Secondary Goal #2

It is God's intention to have mature sons. We have to grow up. As in the natural, this will take time. There is no such thing as instant maturity.

Peter tells us that we are to desire the milk of the word just like newborn babies. The milk will make the baby grow and will eventually grow to the point that more than milk is needed—solid food is required for further growth.

1 Peter 2:1-2 Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, (2) As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

He also gives us the marks of being a newborn babe: malice, guile, hypocrisy, envy, and evil speaking. That is our condition as babes and why we need the milk of the word to grow.

Paul called the condition described by Peter as being carnal.

1 Corinthians 3:1-3 And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. (2) I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. (3) For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

He sums up Peter's words by saying that they are not spiritual but rather carnal and equates that condition with being babes in Christ. He also gives the marks or signs of being carnal as envying, strife and division. They are still acting like men not like sons of God. Because of this, he still has to feed them milk and not meat.

Hebrews gives us further characteristics of a babe in Christ.

Hebrews 5:12-14 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. (13) For every one that useth milk is unskillfull in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. (14) But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

A babe is not skilled in the word. However, as we grow, our spiritual senses are exercised (used, developed) giving us the ability to discern good and evil.

Again, if God wants mature sons, the enemy wants to keep us all as children.

Ephesians 4:14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

The enemy's strategy is revealed in this verse: 1) to keep us children, 2) to keep us unstable, 3) to keep us deceived.

In the natural, a person whose body grows but whose mind stays as a child is called retarded. The same is true in the spiritual. A person whose spiritual senses don't develop but stays as a child is spiritually retarded.

From the condition of the Church, it appears that the enemy has been very successful in his strategy. Why? We need to read the preceding verses since this one starts with a "that" meaning it is a result of the previous verses.

It is the 5-fold ministry which is given so that we would not be children, that we would become stable, and the truth would protect us from crafty, deceitful men. The enemy has been able to accomplish his goals because the Church has neglected, ignored, or misunderstood the 5-fold ministry and their place in God's purpose.

LESSON 7: The Purpose of the 5-Fold Ministry

Ephesians 4:8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

Ephesians 4:11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

The 5-fold ministry is a gift of Jesus. It resulted from His ascension to Heaven. These gifts are gifts of men not things. Each one of these expresses the corresponding aspect of Jesus. That is, the apostle is the expression of Jesus as apostle in that person, the prophet is the expression of Jesus as prophet in that person, etc. The full expression of the ministry of Jesus requires the full 5-fold ministry to be in operation.

It is important that we recognize that these are manifestations (gifts) of Jesus not the manifestations (gifts) of the Spirit. The gifts of the Spirit are given to every man according to His will, whereas, the ministry gifts of Jesus are given to men as a whole but there are only some of each.

1 Corinthians 12:7-11 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. (8) For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; (9) To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; (10) To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: (11) But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

The gifts of the Spirit are tools for body ministry. They are primarily for believers and are to be used for the building up and edifying of the Body. Those who minister outside of the Body to unbelievers operate the gifts as signs following the proclamation of the Kingdom (usually, apostolically or evangelistically).

The 5-fold ministry operates structurally and deals with the Kingdom work of the Father. It is in the 5-fold ministry that the work of the Father (the Kingdom) is joined to the work of Jesus (the Church) to bring a unified whole to the purposes of God. The Church is in the process of becoming the Temple of God (built of living stones) for the Kingdom (rule of God). We have this in a mystical form now. It doesn't find full expression until the New Heavens and the New Earth.

The 5-fold ministries are men who have become tools of Jesus to establish His Kingdom and to build His Church. Because of this, there are certain requirements necessary for those who would enter these ministry areas. Jesus didn't enter His ministry until He understood His work in relation to the Father's purpose; until He could express the Father's heart to the point that He could tell His disciples that when they saw Him, they saw the Father. Do you think that anything less would be required of those who would express various aspects of the ministry work of Jesus?

I believe that anyone who would enter the 5-fold ministry must have developed a father's

heart and an understanding of the work that the Father wishes to accomplish. This would eliminate those who would abuse the positions of authority that is entailed and eliminate those who have incorrect motivations for ministry.

The scriptures show us three levels of maturity: little children, young men and fathers. Each of these categories has its own characteristics. These must be important since John repeats them twice in the same set of scriptures.

1 John 2:12-14 I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake. (13) I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. (14) I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

Let's put what he is saying into a table so that we can see the characteristics of each category. The characteristics column lists each thing said in the verses even if it is repeated.

CATEGORY	CHARACTERISTICS
little children	your sins are forgiven you have known the Father
young men	you have overcome the wicked one you are strong, the word of God abides in you you have overcome the wicked one
fathers	you have known him that is from the beginning you have known him that is from the beginning

As you can see, John says the exact same thing about the fathers twice: “you have known him that is from the beginning.” The fathers have experienced the heart of Father God and understand His purposes. This is their mark, whereas, the mark of the young men is their strength in overcoming and the mark of the little children is that their sins have been forgiven and they know the Father.

One becomes a father when he has children. Paul told the Corinthians that he was their father in the Lord.

1 Corinthians 4:15 For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.

Because he was their father, he dealt with them as a father would deal with his children. By doing this, Paul expressed the father's heart which had been developed in him.

Just as in the natural so it is in the spiritual. A certain amount of growth and development is necessary before one is capable of reproduction in the physical. Having a child does not make one a father. Emotional development is also necessary before one's attitude and mental outlook becomes that of a father.

The Church is in need of spiritual fathers. God recognizes this and is restoring the heart of a father to His sons. This is the doorway into the 5-fold ministry. As men come forth with a father's heart, we will begin to see the fulfillment of the completeness of Jesus' ministry as He

gave it to us in Ephesians.

LESSON 8: Going to Work

Looking at the scriptures, we can begin to see that the Kingdom of God concerns His work and the Church of God concerns His family. It might help if we build a table to look at this from a fresh perspective.

CHURCH	KINGDOM
the household of God	the government of God
the family	the work
born into the family	called to the work
valued as sons	training, qualifying
right of inheritance	rewards earned
family relationships	authority relationships
grow up, mature	become a producer
always family	can be disqualified

It is in the family that we develop our character, our dependability, our work ethic. We learn to work by working with our father and brothers. (I grew up on a farm and learning to work was very clear.) As children, we learn to be faithful in what we have been given to do. As we mature, we are given more things to do until, eventually, we can do the work without supervision and we will do it the way that our father wants it done. These same principles apply to us spiritually.

We learn to grow up in the Church. We learn character, loyalty, faithfulness, discipline, and an appreciation for the Father's heart. It is in the Church that we learn how to operate in the gifts and calling of God. We learn care, concern and discernment. We practice on each other. If mistakes are made, we are family; we love each other anyway.

But, there comes a time when a young man begins to learn a trade, a profession to help him fulfill his life's purpose. With his trade, he will provide for himself and his family. The same is true in the spirit.

Romans 12:4-8 For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: (5) So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. (6) Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; (7) Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching; (8) Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness.

While we may all prophesy one by one (1 Corinthians 14:3), we are not all prophets. It is a maturing process. As one begins to prophesy according to his proportion of faith, that faith grows. Then the person begins to prophesy more consistently, more frequently, more precisely. The nature of his prophecies begin to move from the personal words of comfort, edification, and exhortation to a more corporate type of prophesy which begins to deal with revelation and insight into God's purposes. If the person's heart is also being dealt with and changed by the Word, he is well on his way to becoming a prophet, a gift to the people of

God.

This same process works for those called as teachers, or evangelists, or shepherds. The type of work that each does is different but the process of development is the same for each and it is according to each one's proportion of faith.

The exception to this process is the apostle. The meaning of the word is “one who is sent”, a delegate, an ambassador, a messenger. The apostle is called and sent forth from the other ministries, specifically, prophets and teachers.

First, we need to understand that there are three types of apostles mentioned in the scripture. The first type is the apostle of the Father, Jesus Christ, sent forth to do the work of the Father. There will never be another of this kind. The second type is the apostles of Jesus. He chose twelve and they have a prophetic place in the plans and purposes of the Father (as seen in Revelation). Because of this, there will never be another of this type of apostle. The prophetic allotment has been fulfilled. The third type is the apostles appointed by the Holy Spirit. This type of apostleship will continue until the Lord's return.

The scriptural example and pattern is found in the thirteenth chapter of Acts.

Acts 13:1-4 Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. (2) As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. (3) And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. (4) So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.

This work of the Holy Spirit was in the predominately Gentile church at Antioch not in Jerusalem. The gathering of the prophets and teachers was probably the elders of the church in Antioch. They were ministering to the Lord, fasting and seeking Him when the Holy Spirit spoke (probably through one of the prophets) and called Barnabas and Saul (Paul). After they were sent forth from Antioch, both of them were called apostles.

Acts 14:4 But the multitude of the city was divided: and part held with the Jews, and part with the apostles.

Acts 14:14 Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out,

After Barnabas and Paul left on their journey, it is immediately recorded by the scriptures that they were called apostles. Since neither Barnabas or Paul were a part of the original Twelve, we have in them another category of apostle which was sent forth by the Holy Spirit.

Since this is the only example that we have in the scripture of an apostle being called and sent forth by the Holy Spirit, we have to conclude that this methodology is a pattern for the future appointing of apostles by the Holy Spirit. We need to study this example carefully.

Principles shown by Acts 13:1-4:

- 1 Those called forth as apostles already have a proven 5-fold ministry that utilizes the Word of God, specifically, prophets and teachers.
- 2 Those called forth have already been dealt with personally by the Holy Spirit before the public confirmation.
- 3 Not all prophets and teachers are called to be apostles. There were five in the meeting but only two were called forth by the Holy Spirit.
- 4 The church leadership, the elders, (the other prophets and teachers) recognized them and confirmed the word of the Holy Spirit.
- 5 After recognition by the leadership, the Holy Spirit immediately sent them to do the work that He had called them to do.
- 6 After being sent from Antioch, Barnabas and Paul are each then called apostle not prophet (Barnabas) or teacher (Paul).

If we take these principles to heart, then the Holy Spirit can send forth apostles today from any church assembly just as He did at Antioch. However, it would appear that we need to recognize prophets and teachers as elders from which the Holy Spirit will select and call forth. Could this be the reason that we see so few who fulfill the functions of an apostle today? As God restores prophets and teachers to the church, we will begin to see the Holy Spirit call forth apostles.

LESSON 9: Qualifying for Ministry

Acts 1:20 For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishopric let another take.

While this scripture is speaking of Judas, it has application to us today. To me, one of the saddest things possible is for our calling and purpose to be given to another because we did not fulfill it. Remember that Judas walked with Jesus just as the other disciples. He heard the same teaching as the other disciples. He worked miracles just like the other disciples. He went forth when Jesus sent them two by two just like the others, yet his position was taken by another. What is the difference between Judas and us? To me, that is an important question to answer.

Judas was a zealot. His primary focus was on the overthrow of Rome and the establishment of the kingdom of Israel. He was very sincere in his goals and purpose. When he heard Jesus speak of the Kingdom, he thought, here is one who can accomplish my desire. He fitted Jesus to his political purpose rather than fitting himself to Jesus' purpose. We can see this in the scripture when we look at the way the disciples addressed Jesus as they spent more time with Him.

As the disciples came to Jesus at the beginning they called Him Rabbi, that is, teacher (John 1:38 among others). As you them through the Gospels the way each addressed Jesus moved from Rabbi to Lord. The fullest expression of this is at the last supper.

Matthew 26:22-25 And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I? (23) And he answered and said, He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me. (24) The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born. (25) Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said.

In their relationship with Jesus, each of the disciples had moved from Rabbi (master, teacher) to Lord except for Judas, who still referred to Jesus as Rabbi (master, teacher). Judas never made the transition to the Lordship of Jesus. While one would find it very difficult to betray anyone whom you thought of as Lord, it is not hard to betray someone whom you think of as teacher.

We should learn a clear lesson from this. Judas didn't betray Jesus for the 30 pieces of silver. The money was not his motivation. He was a zealot. He saw Jesus as the one that had the power to establish the kingdom of Israel. He thought that he could manipulate Jesus into proclaiming his kingship. He never dreamed that Jesus would actually allow himself to be put to death. Judas thought his betrayal would cause Jesus to use his power in a political manner. That is why he killed himself when he realized how wrong he was.

We too must transition to the Lordship of Jesus. We cannot manipulate Him for our own agenda or for our own gain. He is Lord and King. We do His will; He doesn't do ours.

Paul was also concerned about this. He disciplined himself for the ministry like an athlete disciplines himself for an athletic contest. His reason for doing this was to ensure that he would not become a castaway himself after ministering to so many others.

1 Corinthians 9:24-27 Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. (25) And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. (26) I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: (27) But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

If this was a concern for the Apostle Paul, where does that put us?

Paul said that we should prove ourselves in all things as ministers of God. The list of areas that approve us is certainly not a seminary curriculum.

2 Corinthians 6:4-10 But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, (5) In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, in fastings; (6) By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, (7) By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, (8) By honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true; (9) As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; (10) As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.

While we can never be worthy of our salvation, we do need to be worthy of the work God has called us to do.

Ephesians 4:1 I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.

It is a constant theme with Paul in his other letters, also.

Colossians 1:10 That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;

1 Thessalonians 2:11-12 (11) As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children, (12) That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.

In each of these cases, walking worthy is always related to God's calling and His work.

Peter gives us clear instruction on the things that need to be added to our lives and continue to increase as we grow in the Lord. [See *The Process of Change lessons for understanding on how these qualities become a part of us.*] The first part of Chapter 1 of Second Peter details these things and then in verse 8, Peter tells us why they are so important.

2 Peter 1:8-11 For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. (9) But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. (10) Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall

never fall: (11) For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The Greek word that is translated here as *barren* means *idle, useless, inactive*, and interestingly, *unemployed*. If we don't have the qualities listed and if they are not increasing in our life, we could find ourselves *unemployed* in the kingdom of God. To be called to work and then be unable to fulfill that work would be most tragic. Peter says that we are to be diligent to calling and selection steadfast, stable. If we practice the things listed, we will never fall or fail.

LESSON 10: What We Minister: the Gospel

The work of the Lord involves reaching others. This is one of God's primary goals. What's the method that we use to do this? Witnessing. Witnessing to what? The Gospel. Paul said that the Gospel is the power of God for salvation.

Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

O.K. then, what is the Gospel? If we eliminate our nice and neat religious answers and try to really answer this question, it is not as easy to answer as it seems that it should be, is it? That's because when we use words often enough, we think we know the meaning when actually we don't. We just know how to use it in the right context.

Why did Jesus come the first time? Isaiah says that our sins have made a separation between us and our God (Isaiah 59:2). Because of that separation, man is disqualified from the purposes of God. He is incapable of being summed up. Jesus came to shed His blood to cover man's sin—to make atonement. He died on the cross to pay the penalty of man's sin and He rose from the dead that he might be Lord or Head of all.

In Roman 14:7-9 we have a summation of the Gospel—Jesus died, rose, revived, and became Lord.

Romans 14:7-9 For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. (8) For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. (9) For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.

In 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 Paul defines this process as the Gospel.

1 Corinthians 15:1-4 Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; (2) By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. (3) For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; (4) And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures;

This was the Gospel that Paul delivered. This is the Gospel that is the power of God. This is how we reach others—by declaring the Gospel.

Paul says that he is delivering the Gospel that he had received. We have to first receive the Gospel before we can minister the Gospel. What did he say was the Gospel.

1. Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures
2. And that He was buried
3. And that He rose again according to the Scriptures.

And, according to Romans 14:7-9, He did this in order to be Lord of both the dead and living.

If we are going to reach others with the power of God, we have to reach them with this declaration of the Gospel for *it is the power of God for salvation*.

We have all heard manipulative, watered-down presentations to get us “saved.” For example: “If you died tomorrow, do you know where you will spend eternity?” Did Jesus ever say anything like that to anyone? I can’t find it if He did!

We use fear tactics—get your fire insurance policy. Sign here and you have a contract with God that will take care of you when you die. We act just like insurance salesmen. We are not addressing the issues of living, instead, we focus on the issues of dying. No wonder the cults do so well.

We are not being effective because we are not proclaiming the Gospel—the power of God! Our sins have made a separation between us and our God. We are strangers, aliens, outcasts from the household of God—lonely, guilty, and in despair. But, Jesus has made a way to deal with these things and bring us back into the household of God. This is the beginning point of the Gospel. And people, deep in their hearts, know its true! We declare the Gospel—the Holy Spirit convicts (John 16:7-9). We have to leave room for the Holy Spirit to do His work.

Instead, we play mind games with them. Try to talk them into the Kingdom. If you can be talked in, you can also be talked out. I learned this in sales, if someone can be talked into buying, he can be talked out. It is called buyer’s remorse. It is true in evangelism also. The enemy is right there with his friends to convince him of buyer’s remorse—it was a bad idea.

What does it take to get them into the Kingdom? Conviction. Repentance. New birth. It takes more than talk—it takes the work of the Holy Spirit. Through the words of the Gospel the Holy Spirit stirs the lost parts of their hearts bringing them to a place receptivity. The only way into the Church is to be born into it. The only way that this can happen is through the Holy Spirit.

A mental assent to the truth of the Gospel is not the new birth. Neither is believing in God. In James we are told that the Devils believe in God and tremble at His name. A mental acknowledgement of the Truth is no more than the Devils do!

We are talking about a work that must be done deep in the heart of a person and can only be done by the Holy Spirit. Our ministry is one of preparing the way. It is the ministry of John the Baptist and of Elijah. We are preparing the way of the Lord through the Holy Spirit.

2 Corinthians 5:16 says that we should know no one after the flesh or by the natural but instead we should know people by the spirit. That includes the heathen, the unbeliever, the backslider, etc. We now must look at people in the light of God’s purpose which can only be done by the Spirit. We must adjust our viewpoint to that of the Father to be effective.

Our God has a paternal nature. He is Father. His desire is for a family. His purpose involves bringing many sons to glory. When we minister from God’s viewpoint, we don’t minister as a Judge bringing judgement on criminals but rather as a father to a prodigal son. We need to

reveal the Father heart of God to the lost.

2 Corinthians 5:15-20 And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again. (16) Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more. (17) Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. (18) And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; (19) To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. (20) Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

In these scriptures in 2 Corinthians Chapter 5:15-20 we have revealed four new things that we need to minister effectively.

1. A new viewpoint—we must appreciate people from the Father's viewpoint.
2. A new relatedness—all things are of God. We frequently quote Romans 8:28 and claim that all things are working together for our good. The problem is that we relate the things of God to MY good. We are maturing when we can see that “all things are of God”. Paul said in Philippians 1:12 that the things that had happened to him (they didn't appear to be good things) had fallen out rather to the furtherance of the Gospel. We need to remember God's primary purpose is not our good but the furtherance of His purpose.
3. A new occupation—Christ's ambassadors. This is the occupation that we must fulfill. An ambassador has the ability to speak on behalf of his government. We speak on behalf of the government of God.
4. A new yardstick—we measure with a new ruler. God has reconciled us and given us a ministry of reconciliation.

The *provision* of reconciliation is the blood of Jesus.

The *method* of reconciliation is the cross of Jesus.

The *results* of reconciliation is the life of Jesus.

We can't get to the life until we have been through the blood and the cross. We can't lead others to life until we take them through the blood and the cross.

LESSON 11: Motivation for Ministry--Part 1

The Lord has provided three things that enable us to be brought back to a place of being summed up in Jesus. It is important that we understand these three things and their place in our ministry of reconciliation.

1. The blood of Jesus
2. The cross of Jesus
3. The life of Jesus

The Blood of Jesus

We use words many times without thinking about their meaning. Words become overused to the point that we don't really know what they mean. We only know how to use them in the right context. That makes it sound like we know the meaning whether we do or not. The blood of Jesus is just such a phrase. It is misused frequently in Pentecostal circles. Have you ever heard the phrase "plead the blood"? Where did we come up with that? It is not in the scriptures. The closest thing to it is in Revelation where the saints overcame the accuser of the brethren by the word of their testimony and the blood of the Lamb. As we shall see in a moment, this is the only true form of "pleading the blood". We testify to what the blood of the Lamb has done for us and this testimony is used specifically to overcome the Accuser.

What is the purpose of the blood? Who is it for—us or God? Most people would say us, but it is actually for God. The blood is an atonement. It is what God sees instead of our sin (Hebrews 9:22). Therefore, its primary purpose is for God—to satisfy His justice and righteousness.

Leviticus 16:30 For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the LORD.

Leviticus 16:30 tells us that the blood cleanses us before God. We are made pure before Him. Its purpose is to provide justification before God.

Does the blood give us a new nature? No, we still have our old nature. It is not cleansed or made righteous. What is God's provision for the old nature? The cross!

God's provision for our justification is the blood of Jesus. His provision for our old nature is the cross of Jesus. The blood and the cross are not interchangeable. We sometimes treat them as if they are, but they are not. The blood takes care of our heavenly needs—righteousness and justification. The cross is God's methodology for our daily walk—the putting to death of the old man.

Romans 6:6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

Galatians 5:24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

We need to understand the use of God's provision for us. If we understand this properly we will take away half the enemy's weapons against us. If we are sick and the Doctor gives us a treatment regimen that is designed for a different disease than the one that we have, it doesn't do us much good. The treatment is true for the proper disease but not for others. It is the same with God's provision—the blood of Christ is for certain things and the cross of Christ is for other things. If we need to treat something with the cross, it doesn't mean that the blood is not true. It just means that we are trying to treat the wrong thing with it—that is not what it was designed for.

While the blood justifies us before God, if we are dealing with a “cross” issue, the blood is not what is effective—we need the cross. It is inappropriate to pray, “O Lord, by your blood don't let me sin tomorrow.” It is appropriate to pray, “My old nature has been crucified with Christ, I will not yield to temptation. Strengthen me, Lord, in the inner man.” Do you see the difference between the two?

The Cross of Christ

The blood deals with our sins—what we have done. The cross deals with the body of sin—who we are—the son of Adam. The only thing that can be done with the old nature is crucify it. You can't clean it up, send it to church, make it good, or do anything else with it except crucify it. That's why we receive a new nature in Christ and we are to live by the new nature.

We need to understand three aspects of the cross:

1. The *word* of the cross
2. The *work* of the cross
3. The *way* of the cross.

The *word* of the cross is the preaching about the cross. The *work* of the cross is what Jesus accomplished when He hung on the cross. The *way* of the cross is the daily application of the cross to our lives. It takes the power of the Spirit to reveal the work of the cross to a person and it takes the power of the Spirit to apply the way of the cross to a person.

The work of the cross is a one-time event—a crises event. From then on we reckon the deed done. Our old man was crucified with Christ—it is done—the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God.

Galatians 2:20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

The way of the cross is the application of the work of the cross on a real-time basis—a daily lifestyle that incorporates the work of the cross. In our lives the old nature is reckoned dead. The work of the cross is for the old man—the way of the cross is for the new man.

Luke 9:23 And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny

himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

Jesus said that we should deny ourselves, take up the cross daily, and follow Him. This is a three-step process. It begins with us denying ourselves. Many people think of this as taking up their cross; but, Jesus said deny ourselves first and then take up the cross. What is the difference between these two?

Denying ourselves does not kill the flesh. A good moral person can deny the urge to steal because he is a good moral person. It doesn't have anything to do with God. Taking up our cross always involves death—the death of the flesh. This always involves God.

The cross is

1. *a principle* in God before the foundation of the world, the Lamb was slain before there was a need for a savior.
2. *a place* where divine loves meets human hate, where the human will crosses the will of God;
3. *a power* for those that believe.

The old man must be delivered to death so that the life of Jesus may be manifested. As long as our old man is alive and active, Jesus is not revealed in us. We must be delivered to death so that the life can be revealed.

2 Corinthians 4:10-11 Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. (11) For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.

The life of Jesus is revealed or made manifest in our mortal flesh, that is, in our natural, earthly bodies. This can only happen when we are delivered unto death for Jesus' sake.

The Life of Jesus

If we are going to evangelize, we must have the life of Christ manifested. They know when they are seeing flesh and when they are seeing real life. Jesus must be revealed through us for ministry to be effective.

We express the life of Jesus in three ways:

1. by thoughts
2. by intentions or motives
3. by actions.

Jesus was moved with compassion and love for those that he came into contact with. If we are manifesting the life of Jesus, we will be moved in the same manner—by the love of God. This is not a mealy-mouthed love like many have today, but a true love. Not a love that excuses but a love that confronts.

Read the story of the Rich Young Ruler in the scriptures. After Jesus had told him what to do from the viewpoint of the Law and the Rich Young Ruler said that he had done that, the scriptures say in Mark 10:21 that Jesus looked at him and *loved* him. Then, He told him to sell all and give it to the poor and follow Him. The Rich Young Ruler couldn't handle that and walked away.

This was *confrontational love*. When Jesus looked into the Rich Young Ruler's heart, He saw something that stood between him and God. Confrontational Love always seeks to remove the things that stand between us and God.

And finally, the life of Jesus is manifested through *actions*. If healing is needed, then pray for the sick. If deliverance is needed, then cast out devils. If food is needed, then multiply what is available. When the life of Jesus is present, miracles occur.

Two Family Trees

In the Garden were two trees—the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil and the Tree of Life. Adam never ate of the Tree of Life, only of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. So, we now have two family trees—one of Adam rooted in the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil and one of Jesus rooted in the Tree of Life.

We all understand from genetics that we inherit characteristics from our ancestors. From Adam's tree we inherit rebelliousness, independence, disobedience. But if the last member of that family dies, the characteristics, the genetics, die too. If I were the last Nelson with no successors and I died, everything from my ancestors dies with me. That is what happened with Jesus as the Last Adam. He was the last of that family. When He died all of Adam died with Him.

Jesus rose as the Second Man, the first born of a new race—the Head of a new family. When we are born again, we are born into that new family and inherit the family traits of righteousness, peace and joy. We have a new family tree and the nature that goes with it.

1 Corinthians 15:47-49 The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. (48) As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. (49) And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

The nature of the Adamic tree is taking or grasping—we grasp for power, pleasure, money. It is characterized by the phrase “for me”. The nature of the family of Adam is selfishness, self-centeredness. Of course, this “grasping” trait can be traced back to Lucifer who grasped at being God and fell. He tempted Eve with the same line—you can be as Gods—as she grasped at that she sided with the Devil.

The nature of the Tree of Life (Jesus) is giving—He gave himself for us. It is characterized by the phrase “for others”. The scripture says that Jesus was equal with God but did not grasp at equality with God but humbled Himself. We are to have the same mind—think the same way that Jesus did.

Philippians 2:5-8 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: (6) Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: (7) But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: (8) And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

When we go to minister, we must operate from the proper family tree. If we minister from

the Adamic tree, we go in pride, use manipulation, get as many “decisions” as possible so that we can add more notches to our gun—“we had 27 saved last night in our street witnessing!” My first reaction to that is “where are they today”. If they were born into the family, where are they when the family gathers?

We need to remember: “If it wasn’t done through the life of Jesus, then there was no life in what was done.”

LESSON 12: Motivation for Ministry—Part 2

There are three aspects of the Cross:

1. a principle in God from Eternity to Eternity
2. an event (place) in history
3. the power of God for us.

We have all heard the scripture preached about the cross being the power of God; in most cases, we have not rightly divided the word of Truth.

1 Corinthians 1:18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

This is not a scripture for the lost. The preaching of the cross is not for the lost—they consider it foolishness. The preaching of the cross is for us *who are saved!* Read this scripture carefully—that’s what it says—the preaching of the cross is the power of God to us who are saved! To those that perish (the lost) it is foolishness—they laugh at it.

Then, what is the power of God to the lost? The Gospel! (See previous lessons.) The lost need to hear that Jesus came, died (shed His blood for atonement), was buried, rose and revived, and is now Lord of all. It is through the Gospel that the lost are wooed by the Holy Spirit.

Why is the Cross the power of God to us who are saved? Because, the power to be transformed into the image of Christ lies in the Cross not in the Blood. Songs and messages about the Cross are not (or shouldn’t be) *salvation messages*—rather they should be *overcoming messages!* We overcome in our daily walk by the Cross not the Blood.

Look at how the Blood is used in Revelation.

Revelation 12:10-11 (10) And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. (11) And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

It is by the Blood that we cast down our Accuser. Who is our accuser? Satan! Where is he? Before God. What is he doing? Accusing us all the time. The Devil is not running around the earth wrecking havoc (this doesn’t happen until he is cast out of Heaven in Revelation)—he is before God accusing us.

While he is accusing us before God, what is happening in our minds? The same accusations are also being whispered to us. That is the link between our minds and the Throne room of God. As the accusations continue we receive condemnation. How do we stop that? By testifying to what the Blood has done for us.

The Blood has covered our sin. We are justified before God by the Blood. We can declare to the enemy that we stand under the Blood. God sees the Blood not my sin, There is no

condemnation because God sees the Blood.

So, you see, the Blood is for God to see and for us to use to overcome the accuser. The Blood is a spiritual weapon to be used against the work of the enemy. The cross is for our daily walk; it is a weapon against the flesh.

The Blood keeps our conscious clear. Our hearts aren't washed by the Blood--Ezekiel says that we get a new heart.

Ezekiel 36:26 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh.

Our hearts represent the aspect of us that we call our conscious.

Hebrews 10:22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

Jeremiah said that the heart is desperately wicked. That is why we have to have a new one. For the same reason that we don't wash and iron clothes that are going to be thrown away, God doesn't wash our heart. We get a new one because the old one is going to be thrown away along with our bodies. The old heart epitomizes the old nature and it is to be done away with. It is the cross that is the instrument for the destruction of our old nature.

The Principle of the Cross

We have revealed in the actions of Jesus a principle which exemplifies the philosophy of God. This divine rule of action is that each lives unto the other. The Father has purposed in Himself that all things are to be centered in His Son. The Son dedicates Himself to reveal, glorify, and satisfy the Father.

An example of this is given with the Kingdom. It is the purpose of the Father that the Son have universal dominion. However, when the Kingdom rule is accomplished, the Son turns the Kingdom over to the Father.

1 Corinthians 15:23-24 But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. (24) Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.

This selfless giving is the principle revealed in the cross. It is laying down our life and will for another's purpose.

Matthew 26:39 And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.

Jesus knew that an agonizing death was before Him, yet he completely yielded Himself to the will of the Father. He laid down His life for the purpose of the Father.

Paul says that this same principle should be seen in our lives--that we should live for His purpose and not for ourselves.

2 Corinthians 5:13-15 For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God: or whether we be sober, it is for your cause. (14) For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: (15) And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

The principle of the cross needs to become a way of life for us. As we lay down our life daily, the resurrection life of Jesus is manifested in us. Our goal is to live unto His purpose. Our old nature died on the cross with Jesus and our new nature is filled with the life of Jesus to empower us to do His will.