

What's God Up To?

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- **Ephesians 1: 3-4 (NKJV)** *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, ⁴ just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,"*
- What a profound thing when we discover we have been chosen by God. That alone makes us **very, very** important.
- God chose you and knew you before you were formed in your mother's womb; that should make you realize how significant you are.
- ***That significance should make you respond by trying to live a life that is pleasing to God and to walk in a manner that is holy before God.***
- We are not perfect. This is not a "works" religion. It is not; do good in order to be good. The fact that Christ saved us means we are already forgiven, we are right with God, our salvation is secure and we are going to Heaven. But we should live a life that is pleasing to God.
- ***If we are living a life contrary to the Word and God's will for our life, we have a lack of understanding of who we are and what our destiny is.***
- For me, to understand the love that God has for me and what Christ has done for me, yet live a life that is worldly and of this flesh, means **"I don't get it yet", because if we got it then we wouldn't be so enamored with this world.**
- **Ephesians 1: 5-6 (NKJV)** *"having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, ⁶ to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved."*
- Predestined means predetermined. God determined ahead of time, the adoption of "us" through Jesus Christ to Himself.
- God designed us and has a destiny and a purpose for us. ***There is a significance that is berthed inside of us because God chose us. But that purpose is according to "His" will and "His" grace.***
- **Ephesians 1: 7-10 (NKJV)** *"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace ⁸ which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, ⁹ having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, ¹⁰ that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him."*
- When all of this is wrapped up and time is no more, time will stop and we will step over into eternity. This is what the "dispensation of the fullness of times" means.
- He will then gather "everything" that is in Christ. And because you were predetermined and predestined means God chose you; He designed you and He has a purpose for you.
- ***But if we stop with simply knowing God has a purpose for us, it will not be enough to lift our vision to the level that God has designed us for. This shows that we still think "it is all about me".***

- ***If we understand Christianity and what Christ did on the cross, we can begin to break that control of “self” living for “me” so we can live for something beyond ourselves.***
- **Our walk is to do what we are supposed to do here on earth, but it is also for a bigger purpose predefined throughout history. Generation after generation, God is working His eternal purpose. Our purpose is to fulfill His eternal purpose. We are part of the bigger plan.**
- When we understand that we are part of God’s eternal universal purpose, it will do three things for us.
 1. **It removes selfishness or self-centeredness from us:**
 - We no longer live with just trying to please ourselves or to gain something for ourselves.
 - If you truly get this, then you don’t live for rewards at the end of the day or even at the end of life. Some of the reward won’t be until you see the face of God.
 2. **It helps us understand the concept of church:**
 - Church is not just individuals worshiping together doing their own thing, cohabiting together.
 - Church is like a marriage. You belong to each other. You participate with each other.
 - We begin to see ourselves as an integral part of what God wants to accomplish through the church.
 3. **It helps us live with a generational mindset:**
 - Normally, when God gives us a vision (i.e. Rick’s for the church in 1979) we normally think it will be filled by us, in our generation and our day. How self centered is that?
 - ***It doesn’t matter if we see the total fulfillment of that vision once we realize we are living to accomplish a greater purpose.***
 - Just like God gave David the vision in the bible. Only it was his son, Solomon that fulfilled it.
 - When we understand this, we are no longer disappointed when we have been walking with God for a long time but not making any headway.
 - An example of understanding this mindset comes from a young Yale student named William Borden during the Student Volunteer Movement in the 1890’s. He, with thousands of other students, signed a piece of paper stating that “When I graduate from College, I will prepare myself for the mission field and will go to serve for the rest of my life, unless the Lord tells me not to”. This young man was heir to the Borden Dairy fortune. But God laid it on his heart to go to this isolated tribe in China and to serve his life for this people. He rejected his inheritance and went to Egypt where he heard there were people who spoke this dialect so he could learn before going to China. While in Egypt he contracted a disease and died at the age of 27. News of his sacrifice spread like wildfire and only a handful of years later, hundreds of students went to this tribe in China and completed the vision that God had given to William Borden. Many people would think God didn’t do what he said he would do for William, but if you had the generational mindset, you would see the power of God.
 - Can we see our life in a generational context where if we don’t get everything we want in our lifetime, we can say, “God knows more than I do and maybe He is even going to use some of my disappointments and failures to accomplish something when I am no longer here.”
 - All we can do is live our lives for God the best we can and at the end of the day, it is in God’s hands what He does in our lives or what He doesn’t do.
- When we get these 3 things, it gets rid of all of the whining, complaining, and grumbling we do about what our purpose and our circumstances are. We understand that we live for a bigger purpose than just our own personal lives.

- This **should not** take away our initiative, our boldness, our confidence, and our drive to accomplish something great for God. We are required to live by faith, to live by vision, as if it is going to happen today, but trust God even if it never happens in our day.
- **...Reading Ephesians 1:9 (NKJV) again** *“having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself,”*
- In the apostles, Paul constantly refers to the “mystery of God” or the “mystery of Christ”. He is talking about the gospel message – what God came to do in Christ. Ultimately, what God came to do in our world and in our lives.
- ***You can learn doctrine, theology or biblical truths and still never get it.***
- Finis Dake published a bible. He also wrote **“God’s Plan for Man”** which is his catchphrase for all that he saw God doing in the bible from cover to cover. He was laying out “what is God up to?” If you understand this, you will never question it, or get mad at God, or get disappointed or JUDGE God when you don’t understand something.
- It is a mistake for us to say that we know what His purpose is and to judge it (i.e. what is happening in Haiti, Hurricane Katrina, etc.).
- ***When you understand the “mystery” that God is up to, then you begin to understand what God is doing in the world in general throughout history, and now you can begin to understand what God expects out of you personally in this life.***
- A mystery is not that difficult. It is simply something behind a curtain. But once the curtain opens, the mystery is revealed.
- ***The gospel is a mystery. When you come to Christ and get into the word of God. When you prayerfully ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you what God wants to reveal to you, gradually the curtain will be pulled back and you will easily understand the mystery.***
- Many Christians learn biblical truth in fragmented ways. They understand one particular truth but still miss the big picture. That is why you see some Christians that look so astute in a certain realm of biblical truth but still not display the fruit.
- You can tell the people who get it by how they react to the tough times. Even when they feel grief and pain, there is still a peace and a sense of inner joy in the mist of the trial. Their faith doesn’t perish through the trial.
- You can also tell them by how they espouse the truths of the bible. They don’t become judgmental or arrogant like those who shake their fingers at others committing sins like homosexuality or adultery. They have compassion for those in sin.
- ***When the curtain is pulled back and the mystery is seen, the Holy Spirit will come and He will teach you everything. You don’t need man to teach you.***