

FOLLOWING GOD'S PLAN FOR OUR LIFE



- When we were formed in our mother's womb God had a unique plan and destiny for our life

King David wrote,

"For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvellous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well.

My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth **(that is your mother's womb)**. Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them."

(Psalm 139:13-16)

- It is only when we come to Christ that we begin to enter into God's plan for our life

The Apostle Paul wrote,

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." **(Ephesians 2:10)**

- God has the best plan for our life but we must continually choose to follow His plan for our life
- If we do not continually choose to follow God's plan for our life we will invariably be distracted and sidetracked from becoming all that God has planned for our life

- The simple fact is that we are all in a spiritual contest in which the enemy of our soul, the Devil, will continually try and prevent people from coming to Christ as well as distract believers from flowing in God's plan for their life

The Apostle Peter wrote,

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.” (1 Peter 5:8-9)

- It is so important that we faithfully use our gifts and talents for the cause of Christ. If we do so, in the long run our life will make a great eternal difference in the lives of many

The Apostle Paul wrote,

“And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.” (Galatians 6:9)

- Today I will be looking at four people (simple unlearned fishermen) who Jesus called to follow Him who chose to wholeheartedly respond to His call to be His disciples
- We can see an account of this in verses 1-11 in Chapter five of the gospel of Luke.

Four fishermen called as disciples:

5 So it was, as the multitude pressed about Him to hear the word of God, that He stood by the Lake of Gennesaret, ²and saw two boats standing by the lake; but the fishermen had gone from them and were washing *their* nets.

³ Then He got into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little from the land. And He sat down and taught the multitudes from the boat.

⁴ When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." ⁵ But Simon answered and said to Him, "Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net." ⁶ And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking.

⁷ So they signalled to *their* partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. ⁸ When Simon Peter saw *it*, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" ⁹ For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish which they had taken; ¹⁰ and so also *were* James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men." ¹¹ So when they had brought their boats to land, they ^[a]forsook all and followed Him.

- In this relatively short passage of Scripture we can learn a lot and gain much insight and encouragement that can help us to live for the Lord;

1) We need to simply commit to fully doing what God calls us to do in life

God knows the beginning from the end and what He has planned for our life. God's ways are higher than our ways. Jesus knew that a large catch of fish was on the way before Peter let down his net. Our lives will be most fruitful doing things God's way.

Jesus Himself said, “You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.” (**John 15:16**)

2) That there is life in the Word. It is so important that we are always ready to preach the word of God, in season and out of season

A multitude of people pressed about Jesus as He ministered the word of God. Ministering the word of God in a life giving way helps to bring freedom and liberty to those that we minister to

Jesus Himself said, “If you abide in My word you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (**John 8:31-32**)

As preachers and leaders it is so important that we preach the word of God in our messages and sermons

The Apostle Paul said to the young pastor Timothy,

“I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His Kingdom: *Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.” (**2 Timothy 4:1-2**)

In the book of Hebrews we read,

“For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” (**Hebrews 4:12**)

3) *Partial* obedience will complicate our lives and stop us from experiencing **all** that God has planned for our life

(Peter only let down one net and not nets as instructed by Jesus) Jesus knew that one net would be insufficient for them to bring in all the fish that they would catch. The one net began to break

In the book of Proverbs we read,

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.” (Proverbs 3:5-6)

Simple obedience to all that God puts on our heart to do is a great key to making our life less complicated

Jesus Himself said, “Come to Me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” (Matthew 11:28-30)

4) We need to respond to the Lord's directions to us in life by faith

We need to just do what God directs us to do knowing that He has our best interests at heart

We must not try and reason why He is telling us to do things, but simply just do what Jesus tells us to do

In the book of Hebrews we read,

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” (Hebrews 11:1)

In the book of Hebrews we also read, “But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.” **(Hebrews 11:6)**

5) What God calls us to do in life will not always be logical in the natural

In the natural it was not the best time to go fishing in the morning

We must simply learn to trust and obey for there is no other way

God knows how best to do things so that we can experience the fullness of what He has planned for our life

In the book of Isaiah we read, “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,” says the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.” **(Isaiah 55:8-9)**

6) God at times will direct us to do things when it is not convenient for us to do so

Peter was tired after fishing all night

However at Jesus’ request he responded by saying, “Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net.” (Luke 5:5)

It is so often when we are prepared to go out of our way or to step out of our comfort zone that we see the greatest miracles in our life

7) When we do things God's way (Jesus said to Peter launch out into the deep) and in His timing (He asked Peter to fish again in the morning) we see the miracles and the breakthroughs in our life

God's ways are higher than ours

God's timing is always perfect

For this reason we need to be always committed to allowing the Holy Spirit to guide and direct our steps in life

Jesus Himself said,

“However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.” (**John 16:13**)

As we allow the LORD to direct our steps in life, we will invariably always be at the right place at the right time

King David wrote,

“The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD and He delights in his way.” (**Psalms 37:23**)

8) We will need the *help of others* to appropriate all that God has for our life and to fulfil God's plan for our life

Peter (and most likely his brother Andrew – See Mark 1:16) signalled to their partners to give them help in bringing in the catch of fish

We all need one another in the Body of Christ. God will connect us with people who will help us to fulfil our God given destiny for our life

As Christians we need to partner together with other believers to help see the lost come to Christ

Jesus Himself said, “The harvest truly is plentiful, but the labourers are few.” **(Matthew 9:37)**

9) God does not choose perfect people to serve him

This is a great encouragement for *all of us*

Peter felt unworthy before Jesus. Simon Peter “...fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!” **(Luke 5:8)**

All that God looks for is our availability and willingness to live for Him. Peter was simply prepared to respond to the call of God upon his life

The Apostle Paul wrote, “For you see your calling brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence.” **(1 Corinthians 1:26-29)**

When we respond to God’s call upon our life and make ourselves available to be used by Him, He will anoint and empower us to fulfil all that He has planned for our life
WE JUST NEED TO MAKE OURSELVES AVAILABLE

10) Peter and the other three disciples were *immediately* prepared to follow Christ and His plan for their lives

It is so important that we simply allow the Lord to take the reins of our life and allow Him to direct our steps in life

We need to simply learn to just do what Jesus tells us to do in life and to be continually guided by the Holy Spirit

This is a key to seeing all that God has planned for our life coming to pass

The Apostle Paul who achieved so much for God's Kingdom during his time here on earth wrote,

“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” **(Galatians 2:20)**

11) Sometimes God may ask us to change direction in life

Here the four fishermen were prepared to leave their fishing occupation to pursue God's plan for their life

At times God may cause us to change direction in our lives by opening up new doors of opportunity that He has planned for our life. *We need to be always open to and willing to change direction in our lives as the Lord leads*

There will be different seasons in our life. God will continually stretch our faith by getting us to do new things

We must simply allow the LORD to direct our steps in life

In the book of Isaiah we read,

“Do not remember the former things, Nor consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing, Now it shall spring forth; Shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.” (Isaiah 43:18-19)

God will bless us when respond in faith to do the new things that He has planned for our life

- 12) Sometimes when God calls us to do new things He does not reveal too much about what He has planned for our future; just the first step

We must simply learn to take one step at a time and to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit in our life

God will not reveal the second step that we need to take in our life until we have taken the first step

To the four disciples all Jesus said was “Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men.” (Luke 5:10)

All four of these fishermen *eventually* became world changing Apostles of the faith

- 13) We see the urgency for winning people to Christ (Being fishers of men)

These four fishermen were being immediately called by Jesus into the task of fishing for lost souls

Like never before as we see the imminent return of the Lord, how we all need to be active in the area of leading people to Christ. Truly the harvest is ripe but the labourers are few

Jesus Himself emphasised the urgency for evangelism when He said,

“Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and then comes the harvest? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!” **(John 4:35)**

In the book of Proverbs we read,

“... And he who wins souls is wise.” **(Proverbs 11:30)**

14) All four fishermen were prepared to put their trust and faith in Christ alone

They had faith that Jesus would not let them down if they wholeheartedly pursued His plan and calling for their lives

They were prepared to leave their fishing occupation because they fully trusted the Lord with their future

How we too need to trust the Lord in every area of our life and simply commit to following God’s plan for our life

In the book of Jeremiah we read,

“Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, And whose hope is the Lord. For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, Which spreads out its roots by the river, And will not fear when heat comes; But its leaf will be green, And will not be anxious in the year of drought, Nor will cease from yielding fruit.” **(Jeremiah 17:7-8)**

AND

15) If we do not immediately respond to God's calling upon our life and seize God given opportunities in life we can miss God's best plan for our life

“We must choose to be chosen”

In Chapter fourteen of the book of Numbers we see that a whole generation of the children of Israel missed out on entering into the Promised Land *by one day, EXCEPT for Joshua and Caleb, the only two who had faith to enter into the land of Canaan*

After much murmuring and complaining they finally decided that they would enter into the Promised Land. (Numbers 14:40) However God had already decreed that only the next generation would enter into the Promised Land (Numbers 14:26-31)

The four fishermen immediately responded to Jesus' invitation to follow Him and His plan for their lives and became great Apostles of the faith

They were simply committed to trusting Jesus with their future and to following God's plan for their life

So in conclusion:

- You will never come second putting God first
- God has a plan for every believer's life that is full of purpose and meaning

Jesus Himself said,

“... I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” **(John 10:10)**

- However to embrace the fullness of what God has planned for our life requires a complete surrender of our life to Jesus Christ; That He is truly both Lord and Saviour of our life

Jesus Himself said,

“Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way that leads to life, and there are few who find it.” **(Matthew 7:13-14)**

- We have one life to connect with Christ and to invest in storing up treasures in heaven

Jesus Himself said,

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” **(Matthew 6:19-21)**

- The simple question is; are we prepared to forsake the things of this world that would steal our passion for the things of God? Are we prepared to fully surrender our lives and plans to the Lord and wholeheartedly pursue His plan for our lives in the days to come?
- If yes your life will make a great eternal difference in the lives of many in the days to come
- If yes you will truly experience a life of great purpose

The Apostle Paul wrote,

“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,”
(Ephesians 3:20)

The LORD said to the prophet Jeremiah,

“Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.” **(Jeremiah 33:3)**

- **You will never come second putting God first in your life. As you pursue God’s plan for your life and put Christ first in your life you can be assured that all that you ever need in life will be added to you along the way**

I will finish with the words of Jesus,

“Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ Or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”
(Matthew 6:31-33)

- Today like the four fishermen who became world changers, are you prepared to wholeheartedly follow God’s plan for your life?