

STAYING FOCUSED ON THINGS ABOVE

(Fulfilling God's Destiny for our life)

The Apostle Paul wrote,

“If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.” (Colossians 3:1-2)

God has a unique destiny and plan for each of our lives which begins the moment we come to Christ

No matter where you may find yourself today, God is able to turn your circumstances around. King David wrote,

“Bless the Lord, O my soul, And **forget not all His benefits**; Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, **who redeems your life from destruction**, Who crowns you with loving kindness and tender mercies, Who satisfies your mouth with good things, So that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.” (Psalm 103:2-5)

We must simply continually keep our focus on what God has called us to do in life – God will continually unfold His plan for our life over time if we simply stay committed to doing His will for our life. King David wrote,

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

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)

It is in the fulfilment of God’s plan for our life that many others will be impacted for eternity through our life

We are living in a time when multitudes are in the valley of decision - So more than ever before we need to be focussed on things above – Helping people to come to Christ to receive the gift of eternal life

We need to therefore be very focused in our walk with the Lord and be committed to being an overcomer in our faith and to completing all that God has called us to do

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)

If we remain committed to what God has called us to do in life, we will begin to see many doors of opportunity opening up in our life to make a great impact in this world for eternity

All that God needs and looks for is our availability and ongoing obedience

GOD'S WAYS ARE FAR HIGHER THAN OUR WAYS

In the book of Isaiah we read,

“Seek the Lord while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near.” **(Isaiah 55:6)** “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)**

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)**

As we allow the Lord to direct our steps in life we begin to see the fullness of what God has planned for our life come to pass

We must choose to never restrict what God wants to do in and through our lives by trying to maintain control of our own life and by endeavouring to do things in our own strength - WHAT GOD HAS PLANNED FOR OUR LIFE WILL AT TIMES INVOLVE TAKING STEPS OF FAITH AND STEPPING OUT TO DO THE IMPOSSIBLE – It is then that we see the miracles in our life

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)

The word of the Lord came to the Prophet Jeremiah in prison,

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

The heart of God is that we would bear MUCH eternal fruit in our life - That our lives would make a great impact in this world for eternity. 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)

God is always greatly pleased when He sees us as believers living a life that is full of purpose and meaning

King David had a great love for God and was a man after God’s own heart. He 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. How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand; When I awake, I am still with You.” (Psalm 139:13-18)

Jesus however made it clear that we must be careful not to allow other things and other influences and even peer group pressure, to stop us from bearing much fruit in our life AND FROM FULFILLING OUR GOD GIVEN DESTINY – As Christians we need to continually appropriate all that God has planned for our life by remaining strong in our walk with the Lord – Without a commitment to pursuing God’s plan for our life, we will invariably miss God’s best for our life

We see this in the parable of the Sower. Jesus said,

“A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trampled down, and the birds of the air devoured it. “Some fell on rock; and as soon as it sprang up, it withered away because it lacked moisture. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up with it and choked it. But others fell on good ground, sprang up, and yielded a crop a hundredfold.” When He had said these things He cried, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear!” **(Luke 8:5-8)**

Jesus then went on to explain this parable,

“Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.

But the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away. Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity. “But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience.” **(Luke 8:11-15)**

From this parable we see that some people who make a decision to accept Christ into their life quickly fall away in their walk with the Lord when temptation arises for the word sake. This happens because they have never built a firm foundation in their walk with the Lord

We also see from this parable that some who have put their faith in the Lord never produce any fruit in their life and fail to fulfil God's destiny and plan for their life

These believers are continually sidetracked by the things of this world and the deceitfulness of riches and allow the cares of this world to distract and discourage them

These Christians never fully embrace God's plan for their life as they allow the things of this world to take their focus off the Lord and His plan for their life

We also see in this parable that some however build their life on the Word of God and PATIENTLY endure all trials that come their way in life. This group of Christians continually bear fruit in their life as they both read and apply God's word to their own life

It is this final group of believers who MAKE A GREAT DIFFERENCE IN THIS WORLD FOR ETERNITY

TO FULFIL ALL THAT GOD HAS PLANNED FOR OUR LIFE WE NEED TO BE:

- **Available to be used of God**
- **Prepared to endure hardships for His Name's sake**
- **Committed to a life of simple childlike obedience, and**
- **Above all, that we are people that never lose our first love for Jesus Christ – When Jesus Christ is always our first love we will continually have His compassion to reach out to the lost and a desire to live wholeheartedly for the things of the Kingdom**

IT IS IN THE DOING OF WHAT GOD HAS CALLED US TO DO IN LIFE THAT WE EXPERIENCE THE “Life and life more abundantly” that Jesus spoke of in John 10:10

TODAY I WANT TO SHARE BRIEFLY FOUR THINGS THAT WE CAN LEARN FROM THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER THAT CAN HELP US TO FULFIL GOD'S DESTINY AND PLAN FOR OUR LIFE

1) We need to learn to continually cast our cares upon the Lord

The Apostle Peter wrote,

“casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.” (1 Peter 5:7)

THIS SMALL PASSAGE OF SCRIPTURE CONTAINS TWO IMPORTANT FACTS – Firstly, we need to cast ALL of our care upon Him and refuse to worry about anything. Worrying never achieves anything. Secondly this passage of Scripture emphasises the fact that God CARES FOR US

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)

We need to learn to continually give our cares to the Lord and to leave them with Him

The Apostle Paul wrote, “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:6-7)

We can be assured of God’s help if we just simply put Him first place in our life – Our heavenly father knows what we have need of even before we ask

Jesus Himself said,

“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)

**2) We need to learn to simply TRUST the Lord
on a daily basis**

**(That we are not always continually moved by
our circumstances and emotions)**

The Angel Gabriel said to Mary the mother of Jesus,

“For with God nothing will be impossible.” **(Luke 1:37)**

**As Christians we can be assured that we have a
God who is both willing and able to help us**

Jesus Himself said,

“Have faith in God. For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says.”

“Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.”
(Mark 11:22-24)

We must simply choose to trust God and to seek Him for help in time of need and when we have need for wisdom and guidance in life – It is important however that we always ask in faith without doubting. In the book of James we read,

“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. “But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.” **(James 1:5-8)**

If we simply just continually trust the Lord on a daily basis and allow Him to be Lord of all, we can be assured that all that God has planned for our life WILL COME TO PASS

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)**

In the book of Psalms we read,

“Trust in the Lord, and do good; Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness. **Delight yourself also in the Lord**, And He shall give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord, Trust also in Him, And He shall bring it to pass.” **(Psalm 37:3-5)**

3) We need to be continually committed to just doing what Jesus tells us to do

(That we are prepared to daily take up our cross and to live wholeheartedly for Jesus Christ and for others)

In a world full of temptations and distractions we must simply just be committed to DOING WHAT JESUS TELLS US TO DO ON A DAILY BASIS

We are now living in those perilous times that the Apostle Paul spoke of. The Apostle Paul wrote,

“But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!” **(2 Timothy 3:1-5)**

Jesus Himself said, “And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold, But he who endures to the end shall be saved.” **(Matthew 24:12-13)**

The Christian walk is one of continually rowing upstream against the current of this world

We must therefore purposely and on a DAILY basis simply choose to live in the fullness of what God has planned for our life

Jesus Himself said,

“If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man will come in the glory of his Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.” (Matthew 16:24-27)

IT IS ONLY IN GIVING OUR LIVES AWAY FOR THE CAUSE OF CHRIST, THAT OUR LIVES WILL BEAR MUCH FRUIT. It is in wholeheartedly living for the cause of Christ that our lives make a great impact in this world for eternity - Exceedingly abundantly above all that we could ask or think - more than we could ever imagine

However if we do not purposely give our lives away for the cause of Christ, the things of this world will invariably distract us and prevent us from fulfilling God’s destiny for our life

Jesus Himself said,

“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honour.” (John 12:24-26)

4) We need to build our life on the word of God

- **THERE ARE MANY REASONS WHY IT IS SO IMPORTANT THAT WE CONTINUALLY BUILD OUR LIFE ON THE WISDOM AND PROMISES CONTAINED IN THE WORD OF GOD**
- **I will now look at four very important reasons why we need to continually meditate on the word of God**

- i) **That we can receive encouragement from God during our trials in life – God will consistently speak to us through His Word. The Holy Spirit will often highlight passages of Scripture in the bible to give us a word of encouragement in times of need – A word in season**

In the book of Proverbs we read, “A man has joy by the answer of his mouth, and a word spoken in due season, how good it is!” (Proverbs 15:23)

- ii) **To help us to receive direction for life so that we can make good choices in life**

The Psalmist wrote, “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” (Psalm 119:105)

“Your testimonies are wonderful; Therefore my soul keeps them. The entrance of Your words gives light; It gives understanding to the simple.” (Psalm 119:129-130)

“Direct my steps by Your word, And let no iniquity have dominion over me.” (Psalm 119:133)

- iii) **To gain wisdom to grow in Christlike character and to become strong in our faith so that we can fulfil our God given destiny**

The Apostle Paul wrote to the young pastor Timothy,

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

(2 Timothy 3:16-17) AND

- iv) **To be prosperous in life**

The LORD said to Joshua before he was about to lead the children of Israel into the Promised Land

“This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.” **(Joshua 1:8)**

WE MUST CONTINUALLY LEARN TO LIVE OUR LIFE IN LINE WITH WHAT GOD SAYS ABOUT OUR FUTURE IN HIS WORD – As we learn to walk in His ways our lives will be blessed and fruitful

The Apostle Paul wrote,

“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

(Romans 12:2)

GOD HAS SO MUCH IN STORE FOR EVERY BELIEVER'S LIFE

Every believer has the potential to make a great impact and difference in this world for eternity. AS WE

- 1) Learn to continually cast our care upon the Lord**
- 2) As we learn to simply TRUST the Lord on a daily basis in every area of our life**
- 3) As we remain continually committed to just doing what Jesus tells us to do, and**
- 4) As we continually choose to build our life on the Word of God**

OUR LIVES WILL MAKE A GREAT IMPACT IN THIS WORLD FOR ETERNITY – Not by might, nor by power but by His Spirit

Just believe that your life can make a great impact in this world for eternity. For with God nothing will be impossible