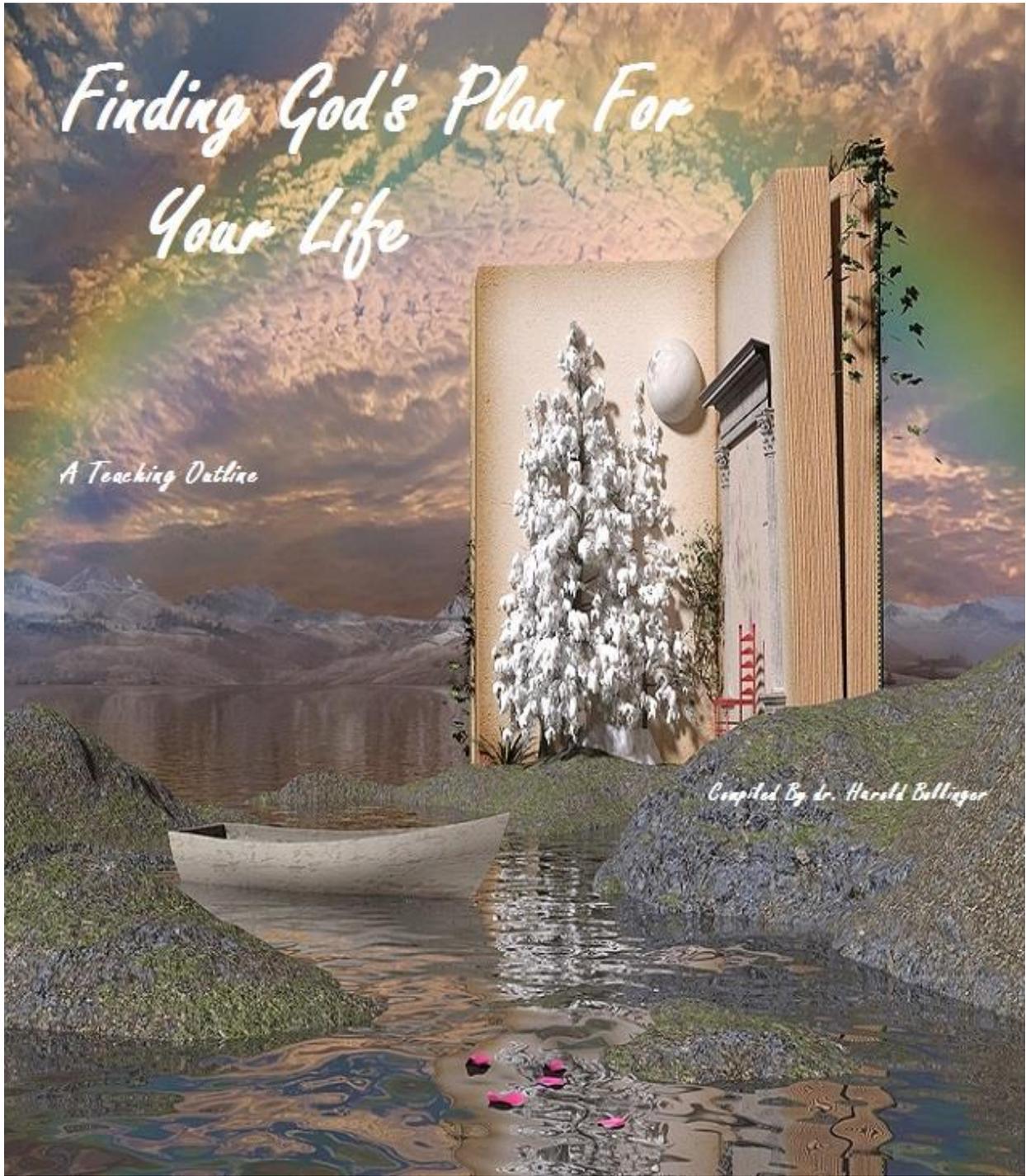


Finding God's Plan For Your Life

A Teaching Outline

Compiled By Dr. Harold Bollinger



Finding God's Plan For living

For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. (Ephesians 2:10)

We become Christians through God's unmerited favor, not as the result of any effort, ability, intelligent choice, or act of service on our part. However, out of gratitude for this free gift, we will seek to help and serve others with kindness, love, and gentleness, and not merely to please ourselves.

While no action or work we do can help us obtain salvation, God's intention is that our salvation will result in acts of service. We are not saved merely for our own benefit but to serve Christ and build up the church

We are God's masterpiece (work of art, workmanship). Our salvation is something only God can do. It is his powerful, creative work in us. If God considers us his masterpieces, we dare not treat ourselves or others with disrespect or as inferior work.

God created you. You are not an accident.

God has a plan for you. You have a purpose in life.

You are created to know God

John 3:3

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

What did Nicodemus know about the Kingdom? From the Bible he knew it would be ruled by God, it would be restored on earth, and it would incorporate God's people. Jesus revealed to this devout Pharisee that the Kingdom would come to the whole world (3:16), not just the Jews, and that Nicodemus wouldn't be a part of it unless he was personally born again.

This was a revolutionary concept: The Kingdom is personal, not national or ethnic, and its entrance requirements are repentance and spiritual rebirth. Jesus later taught that God's Kingdom has *already begun* in the hearts of believers (Luke 17:21). It will be fully realized when Jesus returns again to judge the world and abolish evil forever (Revelation 21-22).

Come to Christ and never hunger or thirst after righteousness.

John 6:35

And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

People eat bread to satisfy physical hunger and to sustain physical life. We can satisfy spiritual hunger and sustain spiritual life only by a right relationship with Jesus Christ. No wonder he called himself the bread of life. But bread must be eaten to sustain life, and Christ must be invited into our daily walk to sustain spiritual life.

All people come to God through Christ.

John 14:6

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

This is one of the most basic and important passages in Scripture. How can we know the way to God? Only through Jesus. Jesus is the way because he is both God and man. By uniting our lives with his, we are united with God. Trust Jesus to take you to the Father, and all the benefits of being God's child will be yours.

You are created for God's glory

Isaiah 43:6-7

I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth; [7] Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.

Isaiah was speaking primarily of Israel's return from Babylon. But there is a broader meaning: All God's people will be regathered when Christ comes to rule in peace over the earth.

You are created to praise God

Psalms 86:12

I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart: and I will glorify thy name for evermore.

This prayer within a prayer captures a glimpse of vibrant spiritual vitality. Two requests are made: "teach me your ways" and "grant me purity of heart." Each request has a God-centered purpose: that the person praying would "live according to your truth" and "honor you." No matter how well we know and follow God, we can always ask him to increase our awareness and improve our obedience. Jesus echoed one of these requests in the sixth beatitude, "God blesses those whose hearts are pure, for they will see God.

One purpose in life is to praise and worship God.

Psalms 86:9

All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name.

"No pagan god is like you." The God of the Bible is unique! He is alive and able to do mighty deeds for those who love him. All human-created deities are powerless because they are merely inventions of the mind, not living beings. The Lord alone is "worthy... to receive glory and honor and power.

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You are created to grow in the fruit of the Spirit

Galatians 5:22-23

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, [23] Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

The fruit of the Spirit is the spontaneous work of the Holy Spirit in us. The Spirit produces these character traits that are found in the nature of Christ. They are the byproducts of Christ's control—we can't obtain them by *trying* to get them without his help. If we want the fruit of the Spirit to grow in us, we must join our life to his. We must know him, love him, remember him, and imitate him. As a result, we will fulfill the intended purpose of the law—to love God and our neighbors.

You are created to spread the gospel

Psalm 96:3

Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people.

The psalm writer sings out his praises to God, overwhelmed by all that God has done. As we reflect on God's majesty and his goodness to us, we cannot help telling others about him. Witnessing comes naturally when our hearts are full of appreciation for what he has done. God has chosen to use us to "publish his glorious deeds among the nations." Praise for our great God overflows from his creation and should overflow from our lips.

One purpose in life is to tell others about Jesus' love for them.

Isaiah 12:4

And in that day shall ye say, Praise the Lord, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted.

Matthew 28:19-20

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: [20] teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

You are created to use the talents God gave you

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 sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

Paul uses the concept of the human body to teach how Christians should live and work together. Just as the parts of the body function under the direction of the brain, so Christians are to work together under the command and authority of Jesus Christ (see 1 Corinthians 12:12-31; Ephesians 4:1-16).

God gives us gifts so we can build up his church. To use them effectively, we must

- (1) Realize that all gifts and abilities come from God;
- (2) Understand that not everyone has the same gifts;
- (3) Know who we are and what we do best;
- (4) Dedicate our gifts to God's service and not to our personal success;
- (5) Be willing to utilize our gifts wholeheartedly, not holding back anything from God's service.

God's gifts differ in nature, power, and effectiveness according to his wisdom and gracious-ness, not according to our faith. Our role is to be faithful and to seek ways to serve others with what Christ has given us.

"Prophesying" in Scripture is not always predicting the future. Often it means preaching God's messages (1 Corinthians 14:1-3).

Look at this list of gifts and imagine the kinds of people who would have each gift. Prophets are often bold and articulate. Servers (those in ministry) are faithful and loyal. Teachers are clear thinkers. Encouragers know how to motivate others. Givers are generous and trusting. Leaders are good organizers and managers.

Those who show kindness are caring people who are happy to give their time to others. It would be difficult for one person to embody all these gifts. An assertive prophet would not usually make a good counselor, and a generous giver might fail as a leader.

When you identify your own gifts (and this list is far from complete), ask how you can use them to build up God's family. At the same time, realize that your gifts can't do the work of the church all alone. Be thankful for people whose gifts are completely different from yours. Let your strengths balance their weaknesses, and be grateful that their abilities make up for your deficiencies. Together you can build Christ's church.

All Christians collectively form the body of Christ. The body is formed of many different parts

1 Cor. 12:22-24

Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: [23] And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. [24] For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked:

On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it.

An invitation is given to open your heart's door to Jesus

Rev. 3:20

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

To ask Jesus to come into your heart, please pray this Prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

References:

Holy Bible: King James Translation

Additional comments and charts are taken from: *Life Application Study Bible*. Illinois: Tyndale House 2007. Print

Be encouraged by God's love for you