

Seeking for the Plan of God for our lives

Key Verse: "Lord, what do you want me to do?" (Acts 9:6)

(Editor: following King James edition)

Did the conversion of Saul happened by "accident"? Did he just "by chance" travelling to Damascus and was suddenly converted? Or did this happen according to a holy plan with a divine purpose? Acts 9:15 tells us that this incident was "planned" by God. Does God has a plan for our lives? If yes, how can I know the plan, and what is involved in seeking for it? All these questions need an answer.

1. The Lord has a specific plan and purpose of life for each of His children

There are three forceful reasons for us to believe so:

- a. **This is reasonable.** God is a God of order and plan. If we want to build a house or design a garment, we would have a plan and a pattern. God also works in the same way.
- b. **Based on experience.** Consider Abraham (Heb. 11:8-10), Moses (Heb. 11:24-27), David (1 Chron. 17:7), Isaiah (Isa 6:8), Jeremiah (Jer. 1:5-8) and Paul (Acts 9:15). God has a specific plan for each of them.
- c. **By the teachings of God.** Look up Ephesians 2:10, compare Psalms 27:11, 37:23, 73:24, 148:8, Prov. 3:6, 15:19, 16:3, Isaiah 6:8-9, 30:21 and James 1:5.

Note that God's plan for our lives has the following three characteristics:

- a. **It is a personal plan.** Note the personal pronouns - "you" and "I" in Acts 9:4, and the same two words appear in 9:6. There is no one like you in the world, so God's plan for you is unique and individual - just for you! He has a purpose to be accomplished in and with your life that cannot be accomplished in or with anyone else's life
- b. **It is a perfect plan.** Romans 12:2 (should be read together with 12:1) tells us that the will of God, or God's plan and purpose for the lives of his children are "good, pure, and pleasing."
- c. **It is a practical plan.** It is workable and totally relevant to our daily life and ministry. It is not just a plan that appears to be "good, pure, and pleasing" in theory, but also in practice!

2. Therefore the most important thing in life is to discover this plan an purpose

This is an obvious and simple truth. But unfortunately, there are some Christians who fail to discover God's plan and purpose for their lives, and their entire lives are filled with disappointment, discouragement, frustration, and failure. How wonderful it is when we feel that we are accomplishing something truly worthwhile and know that we are not doing it for ourselves, but according to the will of our loving Heavenly Father! Every unconverted person is living a self-planned life, like Saul, until he arises when he is converted (cf. Acts 9:5). But equally sad is that many Christians plan their own lives according to their own minds. Many of the decisions and choices we made are later proved to be wrong (cf. John 21:3). There is nothing more important and comforting than knowing that we are walking in God's will, which everyone of us is capable to know.

3. We enter into God's plan when we received and confessed Jesus as our Lord and Savior

When Saul spoke, he entered into God's plan (Acts 9:6). The Lord Jesus appeared to Saul and said, "I am Jesus...", or "Savior" (cf. Matt. 1:21). This is not to say that God did not pay attention to Saul or watch over him before he repented, but it is true that Saul only truly entered into God's plan when he fell at the feet of Jesus and accepted him as his Savior and Lord of life.

4. We will continually discover God's plan and walk in it through our daily obedience to Him

God has a plan for our whole life, but He will only reveal a little at a time (see Psalm 37:23). He indicated the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:9-10). If we are to know and to do the will of God, certain conditions must be met, which are total obedience to him and a desperate desire to obey him (cf. Acts 9:6). What is God's will? This question involves the following four points:

- a. **Be united with Him in prayer.** There is a fitting prayer in Psalm 27:11. The Lord will graciously reveal His plan to us step by step when we understand what it is to constantly enter into the secret place.
- b. **Study and examine His Word.** When the saints of God read the Word of God and submit their lives to the commandments and instructions of the Word of God, they will be marvelously guided. (look up Psalm 119:105)
- c. **Heed promptly and without hesitation.** When we obey God, He manifests His will to us (look up 1 Samuel 15:22). He would only reveal step by step. Saul had to go into the city before God told him what to do next. (Acts 9:6)
- d. **Complete and absolute trust.** We live by faith, not by sight. So we rarely find traces of what God is doing in our lives. It means that we must trust Him. The Lord chose Saul to be a "vessel of choice," and Saul had to trust God in what God allowed to happen to his life—suffering,

affliction, stoning, imprisonment... (2 Corinthians 11:24-28) We must remember that God's plan includes the test of life that He allows (cf. 1 Peter 4:12-13 and 4:19)

5. God's plans for our lives are eternal

Maybe when you read this last point, you would say, "What an exciting subject it is for the young people with great prospects ahead!" But for majority of older Christians, this is an equally exciting subject, because all of us who belong to the Lord have a glorious eternity before us, and God's plan includes both earthly and heavenly parts. The earthly part is like the foundation of a building; the heavenly part is like the structure of the building. It's easy to have a very limited conception of God's plan. When a Christian dies in his thirties or forties, we say, "What a tragedy!"—from a finite earthly perspective; but God's loving plan for his children is an eternal plan (see Ephesians 2:10, 1 John 2:17 and 2 Timothy 4:7-8).

Remember this: we cannot please God by our own strength (cf. Phil. 2:13)!