

*Living in the Moment
with Eternal Purpose*

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

GRACE PUBLICATIONS

P.O. BOX 18715

BALTIMORE, MD 21206

Printed in Baltimore, Maryland, U.S.A.

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Greater Grace World Outreach, Inc.

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INTRODUCTION

One of the great misunderstandings of the average Christian is that he must discover his identity from day to day. There is a beautiful song, "One Day at a Time, Sweet Jesus" and it really is one of my all-time favorites. I would not change it. But, the truth, according to the Bible, is that God's plan, according to His purpose, is revealed from moment to moment.

In Isaiah 27:3, the Lord promised Israel that He would take care of her as a husbandman over His garden. He promised to water her every moment and keep her night and day. As children of God, we need to learn to live moment by moment. There are so many moments in a day, the problems could overwhelm us if we tried to manage them day by day.

Many believers do not possess the intention and purpose of God's identity. To have His identity means that we can have His same interests, His same objective thinking, His same values

and virtues, and His same provisions for problems through our Lord Jesus Christ. In this booklet, we will examine the importance of having an identity with God that carries us through our days moment by moment.

Chapter One

QUICKENED TO LIVE IN OUR DIVINE PURPOSE

“Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself” (Ephesians 1:9).

“Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;

“And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

“To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,

“According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Ephesians 3:8-11).

God has a specific will for each of us to develop a God-given special identity which He purposed in Himself. The apostle Paul understood that though a man may be considered "less than the least," when he discovers God's eternal purpose and lives in it, God is able to give him a provision that is specifically for that purpose.

God's provision is for an eternal purpose. Therefore, we must make a decision to evaluate our opportunities according to God's purpose. That is what Daniel did when he purposed in his heart not to partake of the king's meat or wine while his brethren suffered under Babylonian captivity (Daniel 1:8).

Daniel recognized the superiority of God's provision and refused to partake of the king's meat. He purposed in his heart and would not allow himself to be defiled by worldly provisions put before him. His obedience became a great testimony in the palace of Babylon. Soon, many in the palace were eating as Daniel was eating, and they all prospered in their health.

Recognize Your Purpose

Many Christians have wounded emotions. They carry around wounds because they live in

a temporal purpose. Their identity is not properly established in the grace of God through Jesus Christ.

There is simply no reason for us to live beneath the purpose that God has established for us. For example, according to Ephesians 2:1-5, even as we were dead in sins, He has quickened us together with Christ:

“And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

“Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

“Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

“But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,

“Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

“And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

“That in the ages to come he might shew the

exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:1-7).

Walk in the Spirit

“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

“For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would” (Galatians 5:16-17).

We are not living in God’s eternal purpose unless we walk in the Holy Spirit for each moment, using the principle of rebound when we fail. This is very difficult for many believers to accept—especially for those who live by a system of good works. Yet, I cannot emphasize enough our need to live under the leading of the Holy Spirit moment by moment.

Here is the problem: The flesh gets very weary trying to serve God. Certainly, such a person may be saved, but walking in the flesh brings only weariness and familiarity.

Think about it: What people do you feel most comfortable with? Where do you find yourself becoming familiar and bored?

Revelation 3 describes a church of lukewarm Christians in Laodicea. Jesus said they were not

hot and they were not cold. They were just room temperature—they took on the purpose of the air around them. Their contribution to the kingdom of God is called “vomit.” This word refers to good food that goes into the body’s system but is never digested. It comes right back up again, and the food is never allowed to nourish the organism.

The spiritual food God communicated to the Laodiceans took on the acids of their attitude and it became useless and spoiled. It was not allowed to create a divine identity for them. Whenever someone goes against the truth, he cannot develop a proper spiritual identity.

The Divine Outline

I love the provision of God. The Greek word for “purpose” in Ephesians 3:11 is *prothesis*, which speaks of an outline put forth by God. In other words, God outlines our moments, not our days. Consider Psalm 119:133:

“Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.”

This should be our prayer and practice. We need to recognize that God outlines not just our days, but our steps and our moments! Still, so many people do not realize this truth. Our

Christianity must be experienced one moment at a time, not even minute by minute. We are to live for Him each moment.

Chapter Two

NOTHING IS LITTLE WHEN GOD IS IN IT

Let me tell you this great story about the late Dr. Jack Hyles. Dr. Hyles was going to college and pastoring a church on the weekends. Every Monday morning, his teacher, Dr. Bruce, would ask the students to get up and talk about what they did over the weekend.

Dr. Hyles stood up and said, "Well, I have this little church down in...."

"Sit down," Dr. Bruce said. "I don't want to hear about it."

All the other men in the room were allowed to go on with their reports.

The next week, Dr. Bruce asked the same question and Dr. Hyles stood and said, "Our little church...."

"Sit down! I don't want to hear from you," Dr. Bruce shouted, again in front of a classroom full of students.

This time, Dr. Hyles spoke back. "Why are you telling me to sit down? You are embarrassing me!"

Dr. Bruce answered him: "I'll tell you why. There are no "little" churches! If Jesus Christ is the Head of your church, it is by no means a little church."

At that moment, Dr. Hyles learned a lesson about having a right confession. The next week he got up and said this: "I have this huge church and it pays me five dollars a week."

God's Purpose in the Small Things

"For who hath despised the day of small things?" (Zechariah 4:10a).

There are no small, insignificant moments with God. Every single moment is another opportunity to glorify Him and to exalt His Kingdom.

There was a great conference taking place in New England, and an evangelist walked to the conference hall from his hotel every day. On the way, he encountered a man sweeping the sidewalk in front a very large department store.

"Good job. Good job," the evangelist said, thinking he was edifying a janitor who was just doing his daily duty.

One day the evangelist walked into the store and saw an employee meeting taking place in one department. Taking charge of the meeting was the man he had seen sweeping the sidewalk. The man he thought was a janitor turned out to be the president and owner of the company.

That man was very popular with his employees and with the folks in that town. One reason, believe it or not, was that his sidewalk was always well-kept. He understood how a few moments of doing a seemingly small task could make such a big difference.

Energized in Divine Provisions

“And the land shall tremble and sorrow: for every purpose of the LORD shall be performed against Babylon, to make the land of Babylon a desolation without an inhabitant” (Jeremiah 51:29).

“(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth)” (Romans 9:11).

“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

“Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testi-

mony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God;

“Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began” (2 Timothy 1:7-9).

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

“Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

“And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

“If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit” (Galatians 5:22-25).

God performs the purpose that is His. You can mark it down: His purpose will stand. The Word of God clearly declares that it is His own purpose.

I want always to live as one who practices God’s eternal purpose. That is what motivates the manifestation of divine provision. That provision is the Holy Spirit’s love. It is constant forgiveness. It is the Finished Work. God’s total work is finished. Our failures are never final with the Lord; He is faithful and just to forgive

us our sins and put us right back on our feet when we confess it, isolate it, and rebound.

God's provision is joy and peace and long-suffering. He puts His doctrine inside of us for the purpose of providing us with gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, and temperance. It is His work that develops the fruit of the Spirit in our lives.

Chapter Three

GOING FORWARD IN GOD'S PROVISION

God's eternal purpose carries an eternal provision and an eternal identity that declares that we have been crucified, buried, risen, ascended, seated, freed, liberated, and delivered in Christ.

A Christian living in God's eternal purpose is never Laodicean. He resists the devil. He refuses to be up and down, but neither hot nor cold in his testimony. He is ready to smash the devil to hell and back. He just refuses to step out of God's provision. Recognizing the Lord's purpose for his life, this Christian walks in the Spirit step by step.

As we are led by the Holy Spirit, we can confess our sins and declare, "My sin was crucified and judged by Jesus on Calvary. I do not need to do anything more than confess that it was paid for." Then he goes forward to the next moment.

Redemptive Moments

There was a man who used to visit me all the time, but there was just one problem. He was always chewing tobacco. He was a sweet man, but he had a terrible habit of chewing and spitting tobacco. He would have to spit out gobs of tobacco just to speak a sentence.

I did not want to legislate righteousness to him, so I just let it go on without saying a word. I let him do it until one day he asked, "Pastor, what do you think of the fact that I chew tobacco?"

"It's terrible," I told him. "I think you should get rid of it before you get tongue cancer."

He stopped right there and started chewing sugar-free gum instead.

What is my point in telling that story? God's purpose is always wrapped up in redemption. The right moment came for me to tell this man to stop chewing tobacco. I said what had to be said, but it was said in the right season and it probably saved the guy from a lot of medical problems.

Seeing God's Purpose for Others

Many years ago, a famous doctor in London made friends with a dirty street boy who lived

by picking up trash off the city's streets. Every day the doctor would stop and say, "Hello, Billy," and talk with him. He didn't just say hello; he took a moment for the boy.

One day, Billy was missing, so the doctor went to the people the boy worked for and asked about him.

"Billy is very ill in the hospital with pneumonia," the doctor was told.

He found the hospital and spent the next several days and nights making sure Billy was well cared for. That doctor was a wonderful Christian with a great testimony for God. But most impressively, he redeemed moments in his busy schedule to be concerned for that young man. He saw God's purpose for the boy's life.

God sees great purpose in our lives. And, just like this doctor, the Lord is with us moment by moment by moment. May we constantly derive our identity from this truth.

CONCLUSION

Recently, a dear friend of mine was going through something serious and he finally gave it over to God. For a time, he let it trouble him and he even lost some sleep over it. So he asked God, "Why am I so troubled? I can't seem to get rid of this thing." God revealed that he did not trust Him with his whole heart, moment by moment.

We are so quick to lean on our own understanding and let fear interfere with God's love. All we have to do is take on His identity and start fulfilling His purpose. So, he just said, "Here, God! I give this concern to you."

There is never any reason for us to live by our emotions. When we are not rightly related to the Word and the Spirit, our emotions can only cause us to lose our purpose and our identity.

Moment by moment, you and I must let the Holy Spirit remind us of these realities: I am cru-

cified with Christ. My old sin nature has been buried. I have been raised up with Christ. I have the Holy Spirit, and I can be guided by the Word of God.

By these truths, we can live in our eternal purpose and go forward, moment by moment, hid with Christ in God.