

Lesson 4

Fulfilling God's Plan

- I. It is God's desire that you believe in Jesus Christ and accept Him as your Lord and Savior. This allows:
 - A. Your human spirit to be resurrected, enabling you to communicate with Him. (John 3:8)
 - B. You to experience His forgiveness; His forgiveness begins to relieve the distress caused by the human tragedy. (1 John 1:9)
 - C. You to receive His guidance; God wants to be a positive force in your life and help you to develop your full potential. (Proverbs 3:5-6)
 - D. You to feel His presence, as you make pragmatic choices regarding how to live life.
 - E. You to fully engage with your original design, as you integrate Him into the complex areas of your life.
 - F. You to utilize His power to avoid future self-destructive choices.
 - G. You to fulfill His purpose in your life by your unique representation of _____ in all of your relationships.

- H. You to share His message of love and salvation with others and inspire them to make a similar spiritual choice. (Matthew 28:19-20)
- II. God wants us to apply His perspective and influence to every aspect of our lives. In order to do His will:
- A. Our bodies should be viewed as His temple; our bodies should not be defiled, but honored.
 - B. We should base our personal decisions on what we learn from the Bible. “Never stop reading this Scroll of the Law. Day and night you must think about what it says. Make sure you do everything that is written in it. Then things will go well with you. And you will have great success.” (Joshua 1:8)
 - C. We need to communicate regularly with Him through prayer. “Look to the LORD and to his strength. Always look to him.” (1 Chronicles 16:11)
 - D. We need to stay in tune with God’s will; when we do, He will give us what we want. “Find your delight in the LORD. Then he will give you everything your heart really wants.” (Psalm 37:4)
 - E. We need to interact regularly with our Christian brothers; this will help us become more Christ-like. “As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.” (Proverbs 27:17)

III. We need to be aware of our personality traits and make the changes which allow God to be seen in everything we do. We have negative personality tendencies which we must ask God to help us with. Place a check mark (✓) beside each tendency that is a struggle for you:

___A. Our tendency to _____ others, which is a way to avoid taking responsibility for our choices.

___B. Our self-focused nature which causes us to be insensitive to the needs of others.

___C. Our use of behaviors and substances (food, drugs, alcohol, work, sex) to avoid feeling our emotions and facing reality.

___D. Our anger, when it is expressed in sinful ways.
(Ephesians 4:26)

___1. Expressing ourselves with words or moods that are threatening, dominating, explosive or harsh.

___2. Expressing our anger and hurt in indirect ways (passive aggressive).

___E. The ways we misuse our bodies when we internalize the stress of the unresolved issues in our lives can make us physically sick.

___F. Our choice to become dramatic, as a way of avoiding the hard work that is required by facing reality, developing a plan and executing it.

- ___G. Our choice to distrust others instead of doing the hard work of getting to know them.
- ___H. Choosing to hang onto resentment from our past and not forgiving those who hurt us.
- ___I. Our anxiety over what life may bring us in the future, which allows fear to rule our choices.
- ___J. Our choice to deny what is going on around us, which allows us to create a fantasy that we are not part of the problem and everything will be okay.
- ___K. Our choice to be so concerned about the details that we fail to see the big picture.
- ___L. Our choice not to grieve and not to work through our sadness by expecting others to fix us.
- ___M. Allowing our self-criticism to get so loud that we fail to try.
- ___N. Our failure to develop basic social skills which inhibits our ability to relate to others in ways that help them feel loved.
- ___O. Feeling so worthless and debilitated by guilt that we ignore the gifts God has given to us which are needed to develop our potential and use it for His service. (This inhibits us from feeling the true grace of God through the death of His Son, Jesus, causing us to feel like we must martyr ourselves.)

- ___P. Our choice to give ourselves the benefit of the doubt while expecting others to be punished, instead of granting them the same understanding that we give ourselves.
- ___Q. Our lack of conscience, which makes it easy for us to harm others in order to get something we want.
- ___R. Our prejudice, which encourages us to diminish or demean those who are different from us.
- ___S. Our inconsistent practice of the values we claim to espouse.
- ___T. Our choice to hide our true feelings and pretend to be someone other than who we are, which causes us not to be authentic.
- ___U. Our failure to live life in a structured or organized way which fosters an identity that is defined as chaotic.
- ___V. Using our intellect to avoid or deny our underlying feelings.
- ___W. In order to prove something to ourselves, we are driven by our work, like Martha (Luke 10:38-42); this causes us to miss the joy of having God present in our lives.

- ___X. Our choice not to act on the negative experiences from our past which ultimately leads to our failure to resolve the ways they impact our lives and our relationships. (Exodus 25)

- ___Y. Saying what we feel before we think about how to express these feelings in ways that can be heard by others. (Ephesians 4:15)

- ___Z. Our attempt to live our lives through others; when we do this, we establish a dependent lifestyle which inhibits our ability to develop our own identify with God.

IV. We experience the contradiction between what God has called us for and who we are. (Romans 7:24-25)

Some people:

- A. Are overwhelmed with guilt.

- B. Are less concerned about their sin, because they know they can rely on God's grace and forgiveness. (Romans 6:1)

- C. Give up any hope of positive change regarding their personality traits in their earthly life.

- D. Start the journey of becoming who God called them to be.

Group Discussion: Share your answers with your group.

1. Briefly talk about your week, sharing the highlights or the concerns you may have. You may also want to give an update on what you shared last week.
2. Share a thought or an idea that stood out to you from this lesson.
3. Review the benefits described in Section I; select one that you appreciate, as a result of your belief in Jesus Christ.
4. Is it easy or hard for you to take care of yourself physically? Remember, to be your best, you must be willing to see a doctor and a dentist regularly!
5. Review the list of negative personality tendencies you checked off in Section III; identify the one that you struggle with the most and would like to improve.
6. Psalm 142:1-2 states: “I call out to the LORD. I pray to him for his favor. I pour out my problem to him. I tell him about my trouble.” How do these Bible verses apply to your manhood journey?

Answer Key

Lesson 4 - Page 20

- I. G. Him
- III. A. blame