

Are you fulfilling God's purpose for your life?

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God has a plan for our lives. He purposes to give rest to all those who bring their cares to Him. Matthew 11:28. Satan also has plans for us. He goes about like a roaring lion seeking who he may devour. See 1 Peter 5:8. All my life I have watched many people who have been brought up in Christian homes and exposed to Bible teaching turn away from God and take a different path later in life. I have been tripped up in my own life in the past, and today I want to share with you some insights in the word of God that I believe will help us to become more aware of the methods of Satan, the deceiver, and will give us tools to counter his attacks in our lives. I am not satisfied to being a survivor; I aim to be an overcomer. Revelation contains many wonderful promises to those who overcome. We overcome by the blood

In 2 Corinthians chapter 2, Paul wrote to the church concerning a believer who had fallen into sin and the church disciplined him according to the instructions that Paul gave to them. Paul warned them that sexual immorality (a man had taken his father's wife), if condoned or overlooked, opens the door to further contamination within the body of Christ. See 1 Corinthians 5:1-6 for further reading. In his letter in 2 Corinthians Chapter 2, Paul admonished the church leaders to restore the man and to reaffirm their love for him He should be forgiven and comforted and Paul told them that he was testing them to see if they would be obedient to his counsel. He mentions that he didn't want Satan to take note of the situation and use it to his advantage. Paul said, "We are not ignorant of his devices." Today I want to expose some of the methods that Satan uses to entrap believers to weaken their testimony and destroy their faith and confidence.

When Jesus ministered to the woman at the well, He was very careful in his approach to her. Jesus came at the sixth hour of the day, sent his disciples into the city to buy food and He sat down by the well. When the woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." The woman was curious about Jesus and asked him "How come you are asking me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink when the Jews have no dealings with Samaritans?" Jesus replied that if she knew the gift of God and who it was speaking to her to give him a drink, she would have asked Him and He would have given her living water. Jesus then drew her into a conversation leading up to the point where he told her to go get her husband and she said that she had no husband. Jesus then told her that she had spoken correctly in her statement that she had no husband for she had five former husbands and the man she was presently living with was not her husband. She immediately perceived that he was a prophet. Jesus brought her into the light and exposed the deep secrets of her heart, ones that had brought guilt, shame, self-hate, and caused her to hide from those who would cast judgment on her and refuse to associate

with her. The web that she was entangled in burdened her to the point that she felt lonely and isolated but Jesus' love and mercy freed her from all of the pain that her heart was suffering from. He told her life's story and yet He revealed to her that the one who she was longing for to come had indeed known of her plight and he had come to rescue her. He offered her living water that would give new life to her and restore joy and peace within her heart. She left the water pots and ran into the city spreading the truth that "He told me all that I ever did." The men of the city followed her so they could meet Jesus and many believed that Jesus was the Christ not just by her testimony but they heard words from the mouth of Jesus that caused them to recognize him as the Christ, the Savior of the world.

One of Satan's effective tools of destruction is to bring up our past failures. The Apostle Paul had to face this in his own life. In Ephesians 3:8, it says that Paul became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to him by the effective working of His power. Verse 8 says this: "To me, who am least of the least of all the saints this grace was given that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:9 says "For I am the least of the apostles who am not worthy to be called an apostle because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am and his grace towards me was not in vain but I labored more abundantly than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. Whether it is I or the other apostles, we preach and you believe."

Paul's secret weapon against Satan reminding him of his past cruelty towards God's people is found in Philippians 3:13. Paul stayed focused on God's calling on his life day by day. He acknowledged that he hadn't reached perfection, but he set it as a goal and worked towards it. He was determined to attain the rewards that God had in store for him in heaven. There was one thing he did and it is important for us to do the same. He forgot those things that were behind him and reached forward to those things that were ahead.

The important thing for us to remember is that God knows all about us. He doesn't want excuses and he doesn't want us blaming others for our failures. James 1:14 tells us that we are tempted when we are drawn away by our own desires and enticed. God looks for truth in the inner cavities of our hearts. Read Psalms 51 to understand why David was so special to God. He understood what God was searching for in a godly heart. David had sinned by committing adultery with Bathsheba, an honorable soldier's wife, and then because he couldn't bear the thought of being exposed after he learned that she was with child, he tried to get her husband to take the responsibility for the act. Because the soldier was *upright and* faithful to his fellow soldiers, he refused to go home to his wife. Therefore, David felt he had no alternative but to have him killed in battle. Yet God, in his mercy confronted David through the prophet Nathan and David wrote Psalms 51.

He was truly *sorry* for his sins and he asked God to blot out his sins according to the multitude of God's tender mercies He asked God to wash him thoroughly from his iniquities and to cleanse him from his sin He acknowledged his transgressions and his sin was always before him. He realized that he had sinned grievously against God, his friend He stated that God wants truth and nothing but the truth. David had gained wisdom from being honest before God He also stated that God had broken his bones and now he desired to be healed that he might have joy and gladness once again Sin brings suffering and only God can restore a life and bring healing to a person who has gone astray. Only God can create a new heart and renew a right spirit within us He is the master creator and He alone can restore the joy of salvation and He will uphold us by his generous Spirit We are called on to set aside every weight and sin that so easily attaches itself to us and ensnares us so we may run with endurance the race that set before us. 11 ebi'ews Ut Psalms 103•11 says "For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him; as far as the east is from the west so far has He removed our transgressions from us As a father pities his children, so the Lord pities those who fear Him; for he knows our frame; he remember that we are dust."

Hebrews 10:17 says that God blots out our sins and doesn't remember them against us ever again. Isaiah 43:25 says "I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake and remembers your sins no more.

In Mark 2:4, there is a wonderful story. Jesus entered Capernaum and word spread that He was in a certain house. So many people gathered into the house that there wasn't any extra room. It was filled to capacity. Then four men carried their paralyzed friend on a bed and tried to enter the house so Jesus would heal the man. While Jesus was preaching, the men realized that they were not going to be able to enter the house, so they climbed up on the roof, pulled up the roofing and lowered the bed down in the midst where Jesus was standing. When Jesus saw their "faith He said to the ^{man}, "Son, your sins are forgiven you." There were scribes present and they began to reason, "Who can forgive sins but God only?" They accused Jesus of blasphemy. Jesus discerned their thoughts and asked, "Why do you reason about those things in your hearts? Which is easier to say to the paralytic, your sins are forgiven you or to say arise, take up your bed and walk? But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins," he said to the paralytic "I say to you, arise, take up your bed and go to your house." Immediately he arose, picked up his bed and went Out from the presence of them all. The people were amazed and glorified God saying, "We never have seen anything like Him."

Let go of the past; be thankful and give God praise and glory for cleansing you and setting you free from the enslavement of Satan and rejoice in the freedom that God has given to you. Read Hebrews 12:12. This chapter speaks about God correcting his children when

they go astray. Those whom He loves, He corrects. Just as earthly fathers who love their children will guide and correct them when they do wrong, so God corrects us and it is not pleasant when He punishes us but we profit by it. It is painful at the time but afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet so that what is lame may not be dislocated but rather be healed. Pursue peace with all people and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord; looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God, lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled. It is no secret what God can do. What He does for others, He will do for you. When you let go of the past, forgive those who need your forgiveness and accept God's forgiveness for your rebellion and transgressions, the peace of God will fill your heart and you will become fruitful in your walk with your Creator. Your name will be found in the Book of Life and you will enjoy eternity with Jesus Christ and the Saints of God gathered around his throne. I don't want to miss out on the most important transition from this life to eternal life with Christ, my Lord. I want to see you there also.
