



PREPARING TO STAND

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“In this age, just prior to the second coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven, God calls for men who will prepare a people to stand in the great day of the Lord.” SW 3-21-1905

“LET GOD PLAN FOR YOU”

We all have things we want to do. We have plans for next year, next month, tomorrow, even plans for the rest of today. As Proverbs 19:21 starts out, “There are many plans in a man’s heart.” But, our plans don’t always work out. All too often, things happen that mess up our plans. So this verse goes on to contrast them with God’s plans saying, “Nevertheless the Lord’s counsel—that will stand.” Although our plans may or may not happen, God’s plans always work out! Nothing, or nobody can mess up God’s plans! As Proverbs 21:30 tells us, “There is no wisdom or understanding or counsel against the Lord.”

In his love, God also has plans for us. In Jeremiah 29:11 He tells us, “For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.” And we are probably all familiar with the verse in John 14:1-3 where Jesus promises,

Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many dwellings; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. [marginal reading]

Christ’s Object Lessons, page 326, gives us the following comment on this verse. “Not more surely is the place prepared for us in the heavenly mansions than is the special place designated on earth where we are to work for God.” God has a place for *us* in His plan. So, since God’s plans always work out, if we are in our place in His plan, we will go through along with His plan!

But, notice the last phrase of this quotation again, there is “special place designated on earth where we are to *work for God*.” Not only does He have a *place* for us in His plan, He also has *things* planned for us to *do*. Unfortunately many of us get into trouble on this point. We like the idea of God planning to give us “hope” and a “future,” of Him planning a place for us in Heaven, and even the assurance of success by being able to go through along with His plan—but we have things *we* want to do.

The *work* God has for us might just take up so much of our time that we will not be able to pursue our own plans.

There is another issue closely related to this one —that God’s plans may actually stand in the way of our plans. For example, how many young people have said something like, “Yes, I want Jesus to come. But there are things I want to do first, like get married and have a family.” There’s something we don’t like about the idea of God’s plans overriding our plans.

This issue goes all the way back to the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. The serpent told Eve that if she ate the fruit, her “eyes [would] be opened, and [she would] be like God, knowing good and evil.” (Genesis 3:5.) The implication being that eating the fruit would make her wise enough to choose and plan for herself, that she wouldn’t need God to tell her what to do. And ever since then, the human race has tenaciously clung to the idea of making *our own* plans and pursuing *our own* agenda. Many people, like the “citizens” in the parable, have consciously or sub-consciously declared, “We will not have this Man to reign over us.” (Luke 19:14.) Indeed, the main reason the Jewish leaders hated and killed Jesus was because He stood in the way of their agenda and the things they were wanting to accomplish.

So what about us? Are we going to pursue the course of the Jewish leaders, or are we going to have faith that God’s plans for us are really better than our own plans for ourselves? Notice the following from *The Ministry of Healing*, page 479.

Too many, in planning for a brilliant future, make an utter failure. Let God plan for you. As a little child, trust to the guidance of Him who will “keep the feet of His saints.” 1 Samuel 2:9. God never leads His children otherwise than they would choose to be led, if they could see the end from the beginning and discern the glory of the purpose which they are fulfilling as co-workers with Him.

Instead of planning our own agenda, we are encouraged here to trust God’s guidance, and to *let Him plan for us*. Note particularly the promise in the last sentence. “God never leads His children otherwise than they would choose to be led, if they could see the end from the beginning and discern the glory of the purpose which they are fulfilling as co-workers with Him.” We can trust God’s foresight and purpose to lead us the same way we would choose to be led.

On the surface this sound good, and we may be willing to admit that we *should* let God plan for us. After all, we know this is the “right” answer. But let’s be honest and look deeper into the issue. Is it really safe to let Him plan for us? What about the things He has put some of His people through? The classic example of this is probably Job. Look at all *he* went through as a result of submitting to God’s plan. If Job could have seen the end from the beginning, and knew all that would happen to him, would he have *chosen* to go through it?

The way the story ends in the book of Job, he has ten more children, and ends up with twice as much wealth as before. (See Job 42:10-17.) But was this worth all that he went through? I don’t think so. As any loving parent knows, no amount of wealth would

have made up for the loss of even one child —and he had lost ten! And simply having *more* children, *does not at all* make up for ones that are lost.

But, let's look at the bigger picture. The “end,” especially in Job's case, isn't just the way the account ends in the book that bears his name. His story has come down through the ages as an encouragement and blessing to innumerable people, many of whom will be in the kingdom. If before these things happened to him: Job could have been transported into the future and been able to look back and seen how many people his story would bless; if he had also understood how his experience would help to vindicate God and His dealings before the universe; if he trusted the salvation of his children to God, and had faith in the resurrection; then, I think Job *would have chosen* to go through all he did.

From a selfish point of view, this does not make any sense. Why go through all that loss and suffering just to encourage other people? And God can take care of Himself. No thank you!

But remember, Job was already a godly man before these things happened to him. (See Job 1:1.) By the time the account begins, he would have already allowed the Holy Spirit and God's grace to change him, so he would have been driven by *unselfish* principles. Thus, he *would* have been willing to go through this experience for the sake of those who would be benefitted as a result.

Jesus gives us another example of being willing to go through a difficult situation for the sake of those who would be benefitted. Hebrews 12:2 says, “for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross.” For the sake of those who would be saved and receive eternal life, Jesus was willing to “endure the cross.” He was even joyful in the anticipated result of His suffering.

Selfishness versus unselfishness is the real issue here. Whether we choose to submit to God's plan or not, will ultimately depend on whether we believe God's way of unselfishness is best, or if our own selfish way is better. May we be willing to choose God's way —even though it may bring us pain and suffering.

All this becomes very practical for us living in the end-times, because what if God has something similar to the cross, or what Job went through, planned for *us*? —such as the things that will happen during in the Time of Trouble. We may not understand how going through these things will benefit anybody. But then, at the time Job was going through his experience, he probably didn't see how it would be a blessing to anyone either. Like Job, we will simply have to trust God's wisdom, and in faith cling to Him.

And so we see, that to *choose* to stay true and endure to the end we will need a strong faith —much stronger than what we can not come up with on our own. But remember Jesus said, “Without Me you can do nothing.” (John 15:5.) Which is one big reason we need to let God plan for us. Because as a part of His plan, He will also train us to be unselfish, and teach us to have the kind of faith we will need to make it through to the end.

In His life on earth, Jesus gave us an example of how this works. Note the following quotation from *Desire of Ages*, page 208.

“The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do.” [John 5:19.] ... The Son of God was surrendered to the Father's will, and dependent

upon His power. So utterly was Christ emptied of self that He made no plans for Himself. He accepted God's plans for Him, and day by day the Father unfolded His plans. So should we depend upon God, that our lives may be the simple outworking of His will.

Jesus "accepted God's plans for Him" because He was "emptied of self." *Steps to Christ*, page 70 adds to this by pointing out that emptying ourselves of self and submitting to God plan is a daily matter.

Consecrate yourself to God in the morning; make this your very first work. Let your prayer be, "Take me, O Lord, as wholly Thine. I lay all my plans at Thy feet. Use me today in Thy service. Abide with me, and let all my work be wrought in Thee." This is a daily matter. Each morning consecrate yourself to God for that day. Surrender all your plans to Him, to be carried out or given up as His providence shall indicate. Thus day by day you may be giving your life into the hands of God, and thus your life will be molded more and more after the life of Christ.

May we get to *know* God now, so that from our own experience we will be certain that we *can trust* Him with every aspect of our lives. May we realize that in His wisdom and love He really can do a better job of planning and leading our lives than we can do for ourselves. And thus may we choose, not what we would selfishly want to do, (see Galatians 5:17), or to pursue our own plans; but to let God lead us and plan for us. May we be able to say along with the Apostle Paul, "I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day." (2 Timothy 1:12.)

The Ministry of Healing, page 478-479

"Plans for the Future"

Many are unable to make definite plans for the future. Their life is unsettled. They cannot discern the outcome of affairs, and this often fills them with anxiety and unrest. Let us remember that the life of God's children in this world is a pilgrim life. We have not wisdom to plan our own lives. It is not for us to shape our future. "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went." Hebrews 11:8.

Christ in His life on earth made no plans for Himself. He accepted God's plans for Him, and day by day the Father unfolded His plans. So should we depend upon God, that our lives may be the simple outworking of His will. As we commit our ways to Him, He will direct our steps.

Too many, in planning for a brilliant future, make an utter failure. Let God plan for you. As a little child, trust to the guidance of Him who will "keep the feet of His saints." 1 Samuel 2:9. God never leads His children otherwise than they would choose to be led, if

they could see the end from the beginning and discern the glory of the purpose which they are fulfilling as co-workers with Him.

Gospel Workers, pages 418-419

It is natural for us to have much self-confidence and to follow our own ideas, and in so doing we separate from God. ... We should be much in prayer. We need Jesus as our counselor; at every step we need Him as our guide and protector. If there was more praying, more pleading with God to work for us, there would be greater dependence upon Him, and faith would be strengthened to take Him at his word.

TYING UP A BLANKET MAT

Blanket mats are fairly easy to make by tying together bundles of long grasses, strips of fibrous bark, long leaves, or light-weight plant stalks. If the bundles are 2-3 in / 5-7 cm diameter, the mat will actually be quite warm. These blankets seem to work best when made with the bundles running in-line with your body, rather than cross-ways to it.

Make each cord about 3-4 times as long as the desired width of the finished mat. The number of tie cords depends on the length of the material, and the finished size of the mat. Place the middle of each cord in a line, then wrap up the ends to help keep them manageable.



Surgeon's Knot

Lay a bundle of material evenly across the cords. Be sure there is sufficient overlapping of the material across more than one tie cord. Then tie each cord around the bundle with a Surgeon's Knots. Lay in, and tie more bundles until the mat is as wide as you want it. Finish, by tying off the cords with a Square Knot, and trim the ends of the mat as necessary.