

Plan and Practice

Part 1

How in the world are we expected to move forward in faith when we're faced with so much negativity and disappointment day by day? The bible tells us that we can have a "*never let'em see you sweat*" attitude of champions. We're supposed to keep our chins up and remain cool, calm, and collected when everyone else may be panicking around us. We ought to be the *go to* persons...the folks people look to for encouragement and wisdom. This is a tall order for sure, and considering the times in which we now live, it has become increasingly difficult for many of us to operate at this level of optimism.

The dictionary defines optimism as the belief that good ultimately predominates over evil in the world. Most of us can get on board with that. What we have a problem with though, is holding ourselves together mentally and emotionally when the turnaround time for the "*good*" exceeds what we consider acceptable. We can take a slap in the face if the person doing the slapping is going to get what's coming to them before we feel the sting, but often that isn't the case. Sometimes we've got to take it on the chin with no sense of when justice will prevail. And not only that, we've got to remain positive and enthusiastic about life even when things look bleak.

This is the kind of stuff you can't fake. Many Christians try to put on a happy face when their worlds are crumbling around them, and it just doesn't fly. Their disappointment with life is as transparent as water, and what's worse is that they don't believe they can turn their circumstances around. Optimism comes from the unwavering belief that one has the capacity to do just that...to summon their internal source of power in a way that turns darkness into light. Because here's the big clincher, no matter how hard you try-- you can't put on a happy face if you don't believe that you have the power to bring about a change for the better. The thing that translates and affects the hearts of everyone with whom you come in contact is a deep and abiding belief in your own power through Jesus Christ; and you can't believe in it if you don't have sufficient knowledge about it.

1Corinthians 13:12 tells us that "*now we see through a glass, darkly...*" Most of us have a dim view of what is before us. We develop opinions and beliefs about things based on our knowledge, and if that knowledge is limited, then so will our opinions and beliefs be. This verse suggests that there is so much more that we COULD know, but for one reason or another we have limited ourselves. It is not God who limits our knowledge, because 1Timothy 2:4 KJV says that God wants everyone to be saved and come into a knowledge of the truth.

The Word of God is life. It is a lamp unto our feet, guiding us into becoming more than we ever thought we could be. It is the most valuable thing that can be owned in all the world's treasures, but you will not see it for the treasure it truly is unless you trust that it holds the key to your happiness. If you are a person who sits and waits for God to put something in your lap, then you may wait a lifetime, but if you trust in the gift that is within you, then you will study the Word to find out how to plan for what you want to have and practice for what you want to become. These are the things the Word teaches us.

Those of you who have been with me a while have often either heard me say, or seen it written in my teachings, that you've got to have a plan...you've just got to. Not only did God give us a mind to think strategically, but He has given us spiritual intelligence. We have the capacity to see and hear beyond what is before us. When we are spiritual infants, God's grace and mercy carries us until we are able to stand tall and firm, but when you've been on this Christian journey a while you cannot expect this coddling to continue.

While you are waiting on God, He is waiting on you. The Christ in you is more than enough to live a life of abundance. Right this very moment you have all you need. You are already a conqueror. There is nothing more that God needs to give you. He has not set limitations on what you can or can't have. Nor is He limiting what you can or cannot do. Those limitations are ones that you have set for yourself. We continue to ask Him for more not because we need more, but because we need a greater appreciation and vision of who He has made us in Christ.

We can find no record in the Word where Jesus Christ asked the Father to provide more of His spirit. He knew that when God did something, there was never a need for Him to backtrack. God provided all that was necessary for Jesus to carry forth his ministry in the earth. He trusted that Heavenly Father had not withheld any good thing from him. He knew that all he needed to do was to walk out in faith. And that's exactly what Christ did, but he didn't do it without having a plan first.

John 8:29 KJV

29 And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.

You see, the plan of Christ was a simple one, it was to always please the Father. How about that? It was so engrained in his mind and heart that he lived it every moment of the day. He didn't need to check in with any particular person, or look to another human being for instruction or approval. He stayed zoned into the Father morning, noon, day, and night. He knew that the key to living a blessed existence was to make pleasing God a number one priority. This is how faith works! It's a confident hope based on a genuine desire to please God. It's knowing that if we do our part God will certainly do His. Pleasing Him is everything, and He has taken extraordinary measures to ensure that we are well equipped to do it.

Romans 12:1 beseeches us to present our whole beings to God as a reasonable sacrifice. We should desire to do this because of all that He has done for us. We owe Him every drop of consciousness we can muster. God would not ask us to do something that we are incapable of doing. We can offer ourselves as an acceptable presentation before His throne because He has made us complete in Christ. (Colossians 2:10) And yet, we go back to the Father constantly, asking Him to fill us with more when we haven't begun to tap what He has already provided.

We don't have any excuses, because He has equipped us to go the distance with every success. To speak, think, or behave as though you lack what is necessary to extract what you need to live in bliss-is to say that you lack what is necessary to please God, and that simply isn't true. It's our stubbornness, fear, and limited vision that holds us back and keeps us from being all that He has called us to be.

We spend the majority of our lives doing what we want to do. We awaken each morning and decide how to spend our day, but we're quick to play amnesia when it comes to the things of God. We claim we just can't figure out His plan for our lives...that we don't know our purpose and that we don't know what He intends us to do. We figure out how to do everything under the sun for the devil, but can't figure out how to fully walk in Christ. Now does that make sense? Of course it doesn't. The onus is ours and ours alone. It is our responsibility to take the time to think, analyze, strategize, and develop a plan to please God. Pleasing Him is the key to getting our heart's desires.

And when you design your plan, make sure you take in account your mission to live, give, and share the Word of God. Know that your mission is to shed light in dark places, to raise up a family of believing children who know Christ in the pardon of their sins. Your mission is to continue that same legacy that God imparted unto you through His beloved Son. And make doubly sure that you don't take ownership of something the Lord didn't give you. Shed the fear; it's not a part of your DNA. Shed the thing that holds you back; it's not of God. He didn't give you limitations; He set you free. You have liberty!

Through Jesus Christ, our blessed Lord and Savior, you've got all the building material you need, and you've got a mind to plan how to use it. Never for one minute let it be said that you refused to use it for God's glory.

Stay tuned to Part 2-Practice for What You Want to Become!