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# Discovering God's Plan, Part III (Future – This Is Not My End)

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## God's Plan

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***Sermon: God's Plan: Discovering God's Plan, Part III (Future – This Is Not My End)***

***Lesson Text***

Jeremiah 29:11 (AV) <sup>11</sup> For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.

Ecclesiastes 7:8–10 (AV)<sup>8</sup> Better *is* the end of a thing than the beginning thereof: *and* the patient in spirit *is* better than the proud in spirit. <sup>9</sup> Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools. <sup>10</sup> Say not thou, What is *the cause* that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not enquire wisely concerning this.

***Introduction***

Discovering God's Plan for our lives is a process. It's not a mystery, it's not a secret, it's not spiritually, God is not hiding it from you; it is a process of walking with God to discover it!

So far, we've looked at the process of realizing and revealing God's Plan. Next, we looked at the process of eliminating what is not God's Plan.

- Disconnecting False People
- Discerning False Prophets
- Disregarding False Emotions

Today, we will continue the process of Discovering God's Plan by fast forwarding to our future, our destiny, our end.

Jeremiah 29:11 (BSB – Berean Study Bible) For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, to give you a ***future and a hope***.

A lot of people give up on life, give up on dreams, give up on marriages, give up on ministries because they don't see a future, and they lose their hope.

The future represents the goal, the destiny, the end. And our lesson text teaches us that "Better is the ***END*** of a thing than the ***BEGINNING*** thereof".

So why do so many people give up before they get to the end? Because they get stuck in the middle. Stuck in the middle of struggle, stuck in the middle of disappointment, stuck in the middle of betrayal, the middle of things not working out, the middle of pain and suffering.

In this message on discovering God's plan for our lives, we will explore how to get unstuck so we can get to our end. Why? Because our future, our end, is going to be better!

***Series and Sermon: God's Plan: Discovering God's Plan, Part III (Future – This Is Not My End)***

"The Heart Is Not My End, The Past Is Not My End, The Lord Is My End"

***I. The Heart Is Not My End***

Ecclesiastes 7:9 (AV) <sup>9</sup> Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools.

- Ecclesiastes 7:9 (GNB) <sup>9</sup> Keep your temper under control; it is foolish to harbour a grudge.
- Ecclesiastes 7:9 (NLT) <sup>9</sup> Control your temper, for anger labels you a fool.
- Ecclesiastes 7:9 (The Message) <sup>9</sup> Don't be quick to fly off the handle. Anger boomerangs. You can spot a fool by the lumps on his head.

One of the first challenges we have in getting to our end is getting stuck with our heart!

One of the trainings we give in our Marriage Boot Camp deals with Conflict Resolution and how most of us are not very good at it. One of the main reasons we are not good at it is because we try to resolve conflict with the wrong emotion, that being anger.

Anger is what I call “Emotional Alcohol.” Anger does to us emotionally, what alcohol does to us physically. It impairs our judgement, loosens our tongue, and causes us to make decisions that we never would have made if we weren't drunk. Only later to regret the decision once we sober up!

Ephesians 4:26–27 (AV)<sup>26</sup> Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: <sup>27</sup> Neither give place to the devil.

Our heart is driven by emotions, and emotions can't be trusted. It will cause you to make a permanent decision based on a temporary situation. **And so we get Stuck!**

Jeremiah 17:9 (AV) <sup>9</sup> The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

So, when it comes to God's plan for your life, the plan that gets you to your end, your destiny, you can't go by how you feel, you can't go by your heart, you can't rely on your emotions.

Proverbs 16:25 (AV)<sup>25</sup> There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof *are* the ways of death.

Which is why we must change our heart from being driven by our emotions to being driven the by the Word of God and the Spirit of God

Psalms 119:11 (AV)<sup>11</sup> Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

Psalms 51:10 (AV)<sup>10</sup> Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

## ***II. The Past Is Not Your End***

Ecclesiastes 7:10 (AV) <sup>10</sup> Say not thou, What is *the cause* that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not enquire wisely concerning this.

- Ecclesiastes 7:10 (GNB) <sup>10</sup> Never ask, “Oh, why were things so much better in the old days?” It's not an intelligent question.

- Ecclesiastes 7:10 (NLT) <sup>10</sup> Don't long for "the good old days." This is not wise.
- Ecclesiastes 7:10 (The Message)<sup>10</sup> Don't always be asking, "Where are the good old days?" Wise folks don't ask questions like that.

Another challenge we have in getting to our end is getting stuck in the past.

Most of us are transient people; that is, we have transitioned from one place to another.

The majority of the people I meet are usually not from here. They have transitioned from down east, up north, down south, from the Midwest, from the West Coast, from the big city, from the one stoplight country town; but not from here!

Most of us are like Abraham:

- Genesis 12:1–2 (AV)<sup>1</sup> Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: <sup>2</sup> And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:

Our end, our blessing, our destiny is usually not where we started, but where we are going.

However, I've also learned another interesting phenomenon. Many people tend to go back home when they face challenges, struggles, hardships, and sufferings during their transition (middle).

Numbers 11:5–6 (AV)<sup>5</sup> We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick: <sup>6</sup> But now our soul *is* dried away: *there is* nothing at all, beside this manna, *before* our eyes.

The Children of Israel longed for their past in Egypt because of the struggles they faced in the wilderness (their middle) on their way to the Promised Land (their end). **They got stuck!**

But they must have forgotten that those onions, leaks, melons, and cucumbers had a cost; and that cost was their freedom. They were slaves.

When it comes to our past, the enemy has a way of giving us selective amnesia. We remember the onions and melons, but we forget the slavery. We remember having a man, but we forget the cheating and abuse; we remember having friends and parties, but we forget the betrayal.

If the past was all that, why did you leave it in the first place. "Ya'll must've forgot!!!"

When it comes to God's plan for your life that gets you to your end, it can't be found in the past.

Philippians 3:13–14 (AV)<sup>13</sup> Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but *this* one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, <sup>14</sup> I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

### ***III. The Lord Is Your End***

Ecclesiastes 7:8 (AV) <sup>8</sup> Better *is* the end of a thing than the beginning thereof: *and* the patient in spirit *is* better than the proud in spirit.

- Ecclesiastes 7:8 (GNB) <sup>8</sup> The end of anything is better than its beginning. Patience is better than pride.
- Ecclesiastes 7:8 (NLT) <sup>8</sup> Finishing is better than starting. Patience is better than pride.
- Ecclesiastes 7:8 (The Message) <sup>8</sup> Endings are better than beginnings. Sticking to it is better than standing out.

My End is not in my Heart, it will deceive me and so I must create a new heart.

My End is not in my Past, so I must keep pressing forward towards my future.

My End can only be found in my Lord, and so I must wait on the Lord.

Psalms 27:14 (AV)<sup>14</sup> Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.

Isaiah 40:31 (AV) <sup>31</sup> But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew *their* strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; *and* they shall walk, and not faint.

The Lord doesn't just start a thing, he always Finishes it:

- Philippians 1:6 (AV) <sup>6</sup> Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform *it* until the day of Jesus Christ:
- Philippians 1:6 (NLT) <sup>6</sup> And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.
- Philippians 1:6 (The Message) <sup>6</sup> There has never been the slightest doubt in my mind that the God who started this great work in you would keep at it and bring it to a flourishing finish on the very day Christ Jesus appears.

The Lord is your Light, so Finish; The Lord is your Strength, so Finish; The Lord is your Shepherd, so Finish, The Lord fights for you, so Finish; The Lord has all power, so Finish!

Ecclesiastes 9:11 (AV)<sup>11</sup> I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race *is* not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, ...

Matthew 24:13 (AV)<sup>13</sup> **But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.**

**Midweek Study Lesson Plan (Sermon: Discovering God's Plan, Part III (Future – This Is Not My End))**

**Lesson Text**

- Ecclesiastes 7:8–10

**Sermon Outline (Notes)**

**I. *The Heart Is Not My End***

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**II. *The Past Is Not My End***

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**III. *The Lord Is My End***

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**Questions (What was your main takeaway from Sunday's Sermon?)**

**I. Getting to Know "Me"**

1. What is one discovery you made about yourself in 2020?
2. Name one thing that you must do for yourself in 2021.

**II. Into the Bible**

1. 1 John 3:1 tells us to "See what an incredible quality of love the Father has shown to us . . ." How does focusing on God's love for us help us to not get or remain stuck as we move toward the future and hope God has planned for us? Read each Bible verse below and state what different thing each shows us about God's love for us, His children: (a) Jeremiah 31:3; (b) Ephesians 2:4-5; (c) 1 John 4:9; (d) Romans 5:8; and (e) 1 John 3:1.
2. Read Romans 8:29 and 1 John 3:2-3. What is God's ultimate goal for our lives? What then should be ultimate hope? When should we expect to *begin* seeing that ultimate hope come to pass in our lives?

**III. Life Application**

1. If you could turn back the hands of time, how would you change a situation where you were "stuck" and left it as "unfinished business" in your life?
2. What scriptures or songs encourage you as you are going through the "middle?"