Becoming a Woman of Purpose

CHAPTER SIX - GOD’S PURPOSE: TO CARRY OUT HIS WAYS IN OUR LIVES

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

Isaiah 55:8-9 KJV

The beginnings of that transformation which is to change the believing man’s nature from the image of sin to the image of God are found in conversion when the man is made a partaker of the divine nature. By regeneration and sanctification, by faith and prayer, by suffering and discipline, by the Word and the Spirit, the work goes on till the dream of God has been realized in the Christian heart. Everything that God does in His ransomed children has as its long-range purpose the final restoration of the divine image in human nature.

A.W. Tozer, The Root of the Righteous

God has a marvelous track record of redeeming impossible situations. He is intent on proving that He is God and there is no other. He delights in receiving glory and He works in surprising ways so that our faith is increased and we are drawn to further dependence upon Him. Gideon had too many men to go into battle; Joshua just needed to shout the wall down in Jericho! Often God’s ways seem quite illogical. And sometimes we wonder if He is even involved in what is going on. Certainly His ways are not our ways! But He is sovereign, He has a plan, He loves us, and He has His own ways of working all things together for good.

God’s Purpose: To Work His Ways

1. A truth that we can cling to is this: “The way of the Lord is strength to the upright: but destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity” (Proverbs 10:29). How He works in each of us is unique and different, but He does have some consistent ways of working. Read these Scriptures and write down His way and the expected result.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>HIS WAY</th>
<th>THE RESULT</th>
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<tr>
<td>Galations 5:16-26</td>
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<td>2 Corinthians 4:16-18</td>
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<td>2 Timothy 3:16</td>
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Hebrews 12:7-11

2. What are some of the “ways” of the Lord that have produced good results in your life?

3. It is important to distinguish between God’s working the “outside forces” surrounding our lives for good and our own sinful choices that bring His discipline into our lives. These passages exemplify our choices and God’s discipline. Write down the choices made and the consequences that followed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHOICES</th>
<th>CONSEQUENCES</th>
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<tr>
<td>Miriam and Aaron</td>
<td>Numbers 12:1-15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>Jeremiah 4:14-18</td>
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God disciplines us with reluctance, though He does it faithfully. He does not delight in our adversities, but He will not spare us that which we need to grow more and more into the likeness of His Son. It is our imperfect spiritual condition that makes discipline necessary. This is not to say that every adversity that occurs in our lives is related to some specific sin we have committed. The issue God is dealing with in our lives is not so much what we do, but what we are.

Jerry Bridges

God’s Purpose: To Have Us Acknowledge Him

4. God’s ability to take people’s evil intent and work it out for good is exciting, to say the least. God’s plans cannot be thwarted even in the face of overwhelming circumstances. Read the following passages and record God’s use of people’s ways to accomplish His purposes.

Daniel 3:8-30

Acts 2:22-24

Philippians 1:12-14
5. Can you recall an example in your life where God worked difficult circumstances for good? Describe your experience.

God called Jesus Christ to what seemed unmitigated disaster. Jesus Christ called His disciples to see Him put to death; He led every one of them to the place where their hearts were broken. Jesus Christ’s life was an absolute failure from every standpoint but God’s. But what seemed failure from man’s standpoint was a tremendous triumph from God’s, because God’s purpose is never man’s purpose. . . . The things that happen do not happen by chance, they happen entirely in the decree of God. God is working out His purposes.

Oswald Chambers

6. God will take events and intervene to accomplish His purpose. But God also will initiate circumstances that will cause us to depend upon Him and acknowledge Him as we never have before. Read Scriptures and fill in the columns.

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<tr>
<th>GOD’S PART</th>
<th>GOD’S BLESSING</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Job 1:1-12</td>
<td>Job 42:1-17</td>
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God is for us far more, at times, than we would prefer. He is committed to removing all vestiges of sin from our soul when we wish He’d be satisfied with a clean new outfit. His interest in us far exceeds our concerns. Our perspective is usually limited to achieving a better life, and His desire for us is radical conformity to His Son’s perfect character. No wonder He seems like an enemy when His discipline begins to grind off our arrogance in order to perfect His beauty.

Dan B. Allender

AUTHOR’S REFLECTION – Once while traveling, I took someone else’s luggage and she took mine. It wasn’t until I arrived at the retreat center, an hour away from the airport, that I realized the mix-up. I prayed, “Lord, why did this happen? Now I’ve got to spend time contacting this person, I’ll have to find someone to take a two hour
trip, and I need my bag! All of this could have been avoided, this isn’t a good use of my time, it’s an inconvenience for everyone involved. I don’t see any good in this at all!” (I respond well to adversity, don’t I?)

This was certainly a very minor irritation in life, but what I learned from it applies to understanding God’s ways. As I moved through the next hour arranging this “totally unnecessary interruption” in my life, I began to sense the Lord’s thoughts in my heart, “Cynthia, this happened as a reminder that you cannot live life in your own strength or way; more than anything I want you to learn to depend on Me. Sometimes I need to put you into situations, so that you can see Me work and then you will give Me glory. Also, this dear young woman – whose suitcase you have – needs to know of Me, so give her a booklet and write her a personal note.”

God’s ways are not our ways, but His ways are always right, always for His glory, and always for our good.

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**God’s Purpose for Me (For Contemplation and Prayer)**

7. Over the next few days think about how God works and about His desire to be acknowledged. To help your reflection and application, carefully consider the verses given below.

> “Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols? I have heard him, and observed him: I am like a green fir tree. From me is thy fruit found. Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? Prudent, and he shall know them? For the ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein.” Hosea 14:8-9

Use these questions to guide your meditation.

8. What is the best response I can have to God’s ways in my life?

9. What blessings are mine when I walk in His ways?

**SUGGESTED SCRIPTURE MEMORY:** Hosea 14:8-9
CHAPTER SIX - SCRIPTURE VERSES

Galatians 5:16-26
16. This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. 17. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. 18. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. 19. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20. Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, 21. Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. 22. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23. Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. 24. And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. 25. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. 26. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18
16. For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. 17. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; 18. While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

2 Timothy 3:16
All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness;

Hebrews 12:7-11
7. If he endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? 8. But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. 9. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? 10. For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. 11. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

Numbers 12:1-15
1. And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman. 2. And they said, Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses? Hath he not spoken also by us? And the Lord heard it. 3. (Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.) 4. And the Lord spake suddenly unto Moses, and unto Aaron, and unto Miriam, Come out ye three unto the tabernacle of the congregation. And they three came out. 5. And the Lord came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam: and they both came forth. 6. And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. 7. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. 8. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses? 9. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against them; and he departed. 10. And the cloud departed from off the tabernacle; and, behold, Miriam became leprous, white as snow: and Aaron looked upon Miriam, and, behold, she was leprous. 11. And Aaron said unto Moses, Alas, my lord, I beseech thee, lay not the sin upon us, wherein we have done foolishly, and wherein we have sinned. 12. Let her not be as one dead, of whom the flesh is half consumed when he cometh out of his mother's womb. 13. And Moses cried unto the Lord, saying, Heal her now, O God, I beseech thee. 14. And the Lord said unto Moses, If her father had but spit in her face, should she not be ashamed seven days? Let her be shut out from the camp seven days, and after that let her be received in again. 15. And Miriam was shut out from the camp seven days: and the people journeyed not till Miriam was brought in again.
Jeremiah 4:14-18

14. O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved. How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee? 15. For a voice declareth from Dan, and publisheth affliction from mount Ephraim. 16. Make ye mention to the nations; behold, publish against Jerusalem, that watchers come from a far country, and give out their voice against the cities of Judah. 17. As keepers of a field, are they against her round about; because she hath been rebellious against me, saith the Lord. 18. Thy way and thy doings have procured these things unto thee; this is thy wickedness, because it is bitter, because it reacheth unto thine heart.

Daniel 3:8-30

8. Wherefore at that time certain Chaldeans came near, and accused the Jews. 9. They spake and said to the king Nebuchadnezzar, O king, live for ever. 10. Thou, O king, hast made a decree, that every man that shall hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, shall fall down and worship the golden image: 11. And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth, that he should be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. 12. There are certain Jews whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego; these men, O king, have not regarded thee: they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up. 13. Then Nebuchadnezzar in his rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. Then they brought these men before the king. 14. Nebuchadnezzar spake and said unto them, Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up? 15. Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; well: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands? 16. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. 17. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. 18. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up. 19. Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego: therefore he spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated. 20. And he commanded the most mighty men that were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace. 21. Then these men were bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. 22. Therefore because the king’s commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. 23. And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. 24. Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said, to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, came forth of the midst of the fire. 27. And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king’s counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was there any hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them. 28. Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill: because there is no other God that can
deliver after this sort. 30. Then the kind promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, in the province of Babylon.

Acts 2:22-24

22. Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: 23. Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: 24. Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.

Philippians 1:12-14

12. But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel; 13. So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places: 14. And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

Genesis 22:1-14, 15-18

1. And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am. 2. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of. 3. And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. 4. Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off. 5. And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you. 6. And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together. 7. And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? 8. And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together. 9. And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. 10. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. 11. And the angel of the Lord called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen. 12. And the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven, the second time, 13. And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: 14. That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; 15. And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.

Job 1:1-12

1. There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil. 2. And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters. 3. His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east. 4. And his sons went and feasted in their houses, everyone his day; and sent and called for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them. 5. And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified
them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually. 6. Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them. 7. And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. 8. And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? 9. Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? 10. Hast thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. 11. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face. 12. And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord.

Job 42:1-17

1. Then Job answered the Lord, and said, 2. I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee. 3. Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? Therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not. 4. Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. 5. I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. 6. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes. 7. And it was so, that after the Lord had spoken these words unto Job, the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath. 8. Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept: lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job. 9. So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went, and did according as the Lord commanded them: the Lord also accepted Job. 10. And the Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before. 11. Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house: and they bemoaned him, and comforted him over all the evil that the Lord had brought upon him: every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an earring of gold. 12. So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses. 13. He had also seven sons and three daughters. 14. And he called the name of the first, Jemima; and the name of the second, Kezia; and the name of the third, Keren-happuch. 15. And in all the land were no women found so fair as the daughters of Job: and their father gave them inheritance among their brethren. 16. After this lived Job an hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons’ sons, even four generations. 17. So Job died, being old and full of days.