CHAPTER TWO - GOD’S PURPOSE:

TO CONFORM US TO CHRIST

“To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory;”

Colossians 1:27 KJV

So I saw with no less clearness, that the essence of religion consisted in the soul’s conformity to God, and acting above all selfish views, for His glory, longing to be for Him, to live to Him, and please and honor Him in all things.

David Brainerd

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth (John 1:14). In the fullness of time, God sent His Son to show us His glory and to purchase our redemption. God’s heart, as our Father, is for us to come to Him through our acceptance of Jesus Christ as His Son and His death on the cross as purification of our sins. When we believe in Jesus Christ, we become new creations and Christ begins to live within us. Only as we are in Christ, can we hope to be what God intends. His purpose becomes real and transforming as we yield to the process He chooses for us to replicate His character. At great price God purchased our salvation and He continues His sanctifying work in us so that we will be transformed into His image and thereby glorify Him.

God’s Purpose: To Bring Us to Himself

1. God desires for us to come to Him and to know Him. He loves us and has fully provided for our union with Him. What do the following Scriptures reveal about how God has made it possible for us to be in relationship with Him?

   John 5:24

   Colossians 2:9-10

   1 Timothy 2:3-6

2. What is your understanding of what it means to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ?
The Lord Jesus Christ was eternally rich, glorious and exalted; but “though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor.” . . . Poverty must be enriched by Him in whom are infinite treasures before it can venture to commune; and guilt must lose itself in imputed and imparted righteousness ere the soul can walk in fellowship with purity. Jesus must clothe His people in His own garments, or He cannot admit them into His palace of glory; and He must wash them in His own blood, or else they will be too defiled for the embrace of His fellowship. O believer, herein is love! For your sake the Lord Jesus “became poor” that He might lift you up into communion with Himself.  

Charles H. Spurgeon

God’s Purpose: To Make Us Like Himself

3. Once we have accepted Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord, God’s Spirit immediately begins to live within us. He also begins to work in our lives, for He has a plan for us. Read the following verses and write down God’s purposes.

Romans 8:29

Ephesians 4:22-24

1 Thessalonians 4:3-7

4. What are your thoughts about what it means to be conformed to the image of Christ? (You might want to look up the word conform in a dictionary.)

The one marvelous secret of a holy life lies not in imitating Jesus, but in letting the perfections of Jesus manifest themselves in my mortal flesh. Sanctification is “Christ in you.” It is His wonderful life that is imparted by faith as a sovereign gift of God’s grace.  

Oswald Chambers

5. God takes responsibility for our growth and sanctification. What can you learn about God’s commitment to us from these Scriptures?
6. How does knowing God’s commitment to complete His work encourage you in your life of faith?

The spiritual life does not consist in the withdrawal of self, of initiative, or of the consciousness of responsibility. . . . Thus it is seen that the actual experience into which the believer is brought as a result of dependence upon the Holy Spirit is not a coercion of his will, but a larger and more effective exercise of it. It is not a matter of the Holy Spirit compelling the one whom He empowers to make a choice of right ideals whether that one wills to do so or not; it is the deeper, more effective, and more normal achievement by the Spirit of inclining the one who depends upon Him to will in the sense of desire, and to do in the sense of complete accomplishment of that which constitutes the will of God.

Lewis Sperry Chafer

AUTHOR’S REFLECTION – As a young teenager I accepted Christ as my personal Savior. I vividly remember our pastor asking me, “Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that He died for your sins?” That night I was baptized and ever since I have sensed the Lord’s presence in my life.

It wasn’t until I was an adult, though, that I began to understand that God wanted to conform me to the image of His Son. One of His major ways of sanctifying me was giving me three children in three years. Two of them were eleven months apart, and I’m not a real baby person! I think that God looked at me and said, “If I am ever going to begin to get any fruit of the Spirit into this woman, she needs to have all these children at once!” What better way for me to learn patience, self-control, gentleness, kindness, love, joy, faithfulness, and goodness. Notice I didn’t mention peace.) It was in the midst of
these child-raising years that I realized my great need to fully surrender my life to God and allow Him to begin to transform my life according to His plan.

This is what God is after – as our Father, He wants us to have a strong family resemblance to Him. He uses all sorts of ways to mold us and to bring us to dependence upon Him. For some, this sanctifying process may involve not having children, not being married. For others it is marriage, children, parents, and jobs that God will use to conform us to the image of Christ.

God has purchased us by the blood of His Son and as a faithful Father, He desires for us to grow in Christlikeness, which is the very best and the highest good for any of us.

There is always a tremendous battle before sanctification is realized – something within us pushing with resentment against the demands of Christ. . . . In the process of sanctification, the Spirit of God will strip me down until there is nothing left but myself, and that is the place of death. . . . Am I willing and determined to hand over my simple naked self to God? Once I am, He will immediately sanctify me completely, and my life will be free from being determined and persistent toward anything except God.

Oswald Chambers

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

7. Over the next few days, think about God’s desire to bring you to Himself and to work in you so that you can grow into the likeness of Christ. To help your reflection and application, carefully consider the following verse.

But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

2 Corinthians 3:18

Use the following questions to guide your meditation.

8. How might I be hindering God’s desire to make me like His Son?

9. In what way am I a “mirror” for the Lord?

SUGGESTED SCRIPTURE MEMORY: 2 Corinthians 3:18
CHAPTER TWO - SCRIPTURE VERSES

John 5:24
   Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

Colossians 2:9-10
   For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.

1 Timothy 2:3-6
   For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

Romans 8:29
   For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Ephesians 4:22-24
   That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

1 Thessalonians 4:3-7
   For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: That everyone of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor; Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God: That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarded you and testified. For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.

Ephesians 2:10
   For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Philippians 1:3-6
   I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now; 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 2:12-13
   Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.