CHAPTER FIVE - GOD’S PURPOSE:

TO ACCOMPLISH HIS PLAN FOR GOOD

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. 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.”
Romans 8:28-29 KJV

When once you are rightly related to God by salvation and sanctification, remember that wherever you are, you are put there by God; and by the reaction of your life on the circumstances around you, you will fulfill God’s purpose, as long as you keep in the light as God is in the light.

*Oswald Chambers, My Utmost for His Highest*

The apostle Paul speaks with great confidence (“we know”) concerning God’s intention of working all things together for good for those called to His purpose. To begin to comprehend that God is at work weaving the events of our lives for our welfare is essential for my trust in Him. If I love God and have been called to His purpose, then I can be sure that He takes each circumstance of my life and causes it for good. David had been seized by the Philistines and this is his prayer: “Thou tellest my wanderings: put thou my tears into thy bottle: are they not in thy book? When I cry unto thee, then shall mine enemies turn back: this I know; for God is for me” (Psalms 56:8-9) God knew exactly what was happening to David, and David knew that God was for him.

**God’s Purpose: To Call Us to His Plan**

1. It is such an affirmation to be chosen by someone! It is important to understand God’s commitment to us in order to trust Him to work for our good. Read Ephesians 1:3-14 and write down the decisive statements that communicate how God has chosen us.

2. Choose one statement or image from Ephesians 1:3-14 that is especially striking to you. What is your response to this blessing that God has given you?

While there is very much in the doctrine of divine election which transcends the limitations of the finite understanding, it is true that man originates nothing - not even sin, since sin began with the angels of God. It is God who hath chosen His elect; and while this election is both sovereign and final, nevertheless not one human being who desires to be saved and who complies with the necessary terms of the gospel, will ever be lost.

*Lewis Sperry Chafer*
God’s Purpose: To Work for Good

God calls us, and He sovereignly begins to work all things for our good in order that we might “become conformed to the image of His Son.” The Greek word for “good,” agathos, “views the good as useful or profitable and is the word chosen when moral goodness is being considered.”

3. Based on the following Scriptures, how do you think God defines good?

Deuteronomy 10:12-13

Matthew 5:1-12

4. Contrast God’s idea of what is good with what people in our society today typically think is good for their lives.

5. What “good” do you want for your life?

The teaching of Jesus is out of all proportion to our natural way of looking at things and it comes with astonishing discomfort to begin with. We have slowly to form our walk and conversation on the line of the precepts of Jesus Christ as the Holy Spirit applied them to our circumstances. The Sermon on the Mount is not a set of rules and regulations: it is a statement of the life we will live when the Holy Spirit is getting His way with us.

Oswald Chambers

6. We are told in Romans 8:28 that all things work together for good. But what does “all” really mean? Study these passages and write in the columns what God uses in our lives and how it works for good.
There is nothing inherently good about birth defects, natural calamities, and the host of other adversities we may encounter. And when evil is perpetrated against us by someone else, there certainly is no inherent good in it. But in God’s infinite wisdom and love, He takes all the events of our lives – both good and bad – and blends them together so that they work together ultimately for our good, the good that He intends.

Jerry Bridges

7. Does realizing God’s faithfulness to work all things for good help you in trusting Him? Why, or why not?

Lord do not stay Your hand; cut away until I am brought out into the fair lines and lineaments of the image of God. . . . But rest assured that if you love God all things will work together for your good. . . . To love God is the only true evidence of being His “called” ones. To be His “called” ones is to secure the co-operation of all things for our good.

D.C. Hughes

AUTHOR’S REFLECTION – God’s choice of me is the basis of my view of myself. If the sovereign, majestic God of the universe lovingly and personally called me to Himself, then I am valuable, precious, and loved because of that calling. God paid the ultimate price in adopting me. Not to love Him with my whole heart, and trust Him with my whole life, is to be like an adopted child rebelling against the parents who, at great sacrifice, chose and gave their all for that child.

If I don’t truly grasp God’s vested interest in me, then it is easy to run or turn away from His discipline and His work to use all things that come into my life for good. It is necessary for me to be reminded that God’s perspective on what is good is different from mine. His goal is my conformity to Christ, whereas often my goal is
happiness and avoidance of anything that is unpleasant! To rest in God’s sovereignty and His ability to cause all things that come into my life to work for good is incredibly freeing. To be assured that the hard, hurtful parts of my life can be interwoven for good keeps me from despair and helps me accept life from the perspective that it all ultimately has meaning. I like what Philip Yancey says: “Faith means believing in advance what will only make sense in reverse.”

I do have a choice, though, in how I respond to God’s plan for my life. I think of the Israelites in the wilderness. God wanted them to go into Canaan, but they refused. They were still God’s children, but they did not experience all that God had planned for them.

It is enough for me to know that God has called me and that He is continually working everything for His good purposes in my life.

The providence of God so combines with human freedom that, though the ways of God are sure, it is in no sense fatalism. Likewise, the providence of God is the opposite of chance. The divine care reaches to the least detail of life as well as to its greater aspects. Certain attributes of God demand the exercise of His providence. His justice prompts Him to secure all moral good; His benevolence prompts Him to care for His own; His immutability insures that what He has begun He will complete; and His power is sufficient to execute all His desire. Lewis Sperry Chafer

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

8. Over the next few days, think about God’s calling of you and His work in you for good. To help your reflection and application, carefully consider the verses below.

I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Ephesians 4:1-2 KJV

Use these questions to guide your meditation.

9. In what ways do I seek to live a life worthy of God’s calling?

10. How is God working His good – humility, gentleness, patience, and forbearance – into my life?

SUGGESTED SCRIPTURE MEMORY: Ephesians 4:1-2
Ephesians 1:3-14

3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: 4. According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: 5. Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6. To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. 7. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; 8. Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; 9. Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: 10. That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: 11. In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: 12. That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. 13. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, 14. Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

Deuteronomy 10:12-13

12. And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, 13. To keep the commandments of the Lord, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good.

Matthew 5:1-12

1. And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: 2. And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying, 3. Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 4. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. 5. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. 6. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. 7. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. 8. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. 9. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. 10. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. 12. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

Genesis 45:1-15

1. Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, when Joseph made himself known unto his brethren. 2. And he wept aloud: and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard. 3. And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph; doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence. 4. And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. 5. Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life. 6. For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earring nor harvest. 7. And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. 8. So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt. 9. Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt: come down unto me, tarry not: 10. And thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, and thou shalt be near unto me, thou, and thy children, and thy children’s children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast: 11. And there will I nourish thee; for yet there are five years of famine; lest thou, and thy household, and all that thou hast, come
to poverty. 12. And, behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that it is my mouth that speaketh unto you. 13. And ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that ye have seen; and ye shall haste and bring down my father hither. 14. And he fell upon his brother Benjamin’s neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck. 15. Moreover he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them: and after that his brethren talked with him.

Genesis 50:16-21
16. And they sent a messenger unto Joseph, saying, Thy father did command before he died, saying, 17. So shall ye say unto Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin; for they did unto thee evil: and now, we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father. And Joseph wept when they spake unto him. 18. And his brethren also went and fell down before his face; and they said, Behold, we be thy servants. 19. And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God? 20. But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. 21. Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them.

John 9:1-12 & 35-38
1. And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. 2. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? 3. Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. 4. I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. 5. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. 6. When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, 7. And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing. 8. The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged? 9. Some said, This is he: others said, He is like him: but he said, I am he. 10. Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened? 11. He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight. 12. Then said they unto him, Where is he? He said, I know not. 35. Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? 36. He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? 37. And Jesus said unto him, hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. 38. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10
7. And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. 8. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. 9. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.