

## **What Now**

### **God's Great Plan**

In his writings to the churches, Paul said, *"Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father"* (Colossians 3:16-17). This statement reminds us that we are to grow in knowledge and wisdom to be able to train others as Paul told Timothy, *"The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also"* (2 Timothy 2:2). Application of the Word is also necessary to direct all aspects of our lives. Paul also admonishes the church to walk worthy. *"Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace"* (Ephesians 4:1-3).

God planned for the individual differences in people. *"For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Since we have gifts (talents and abilities) that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness"* (Romans 12:4-8).

In general, God planned for us to perform good works (Ephesians 2:10) openly before Him and all mankind. Solomon said, *"Sheol and Abaddon lie open before the LORD, How much more the hearts of men!"* (Proverbs 15:11). To God, even the thoughts and intentions of our planning and secret desires are open to His investigation. Jesus taught on the mountain, *"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; ...Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven"* (Matthew 5:14-16). Jesus also gave a warning about the motivation for showing our works before men. *"Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven"* (Matthew 6:1). We need to ask ourselves, do we desire to show off before people or reflect the glory of God through our worship?

To help keep our mind on God and our work acceptable to Him, we must continually refresh our knowledge of His Word. Each time we study or even read through the Bible, we should gain a better understanding of the Gospel of Christ. Paul told Titus, *"He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit"* (Titus 3:5). Through grace by faith (Ephesians 2:8), He saved us from the sins, the disobedient deeds we committed. And in writing to the Romans, Paul reminds us that continual refreshing is necessary. *"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect"* (Romans 12:2). Just like drinking water is necessary to keep the body alive, continually feasting on God's Word is essential to the health of the Spirit within us.

The apostle Peter wrote to Christians scattered over the Earth. That includes us. Peter mentioned God's Plan for us this way. *"May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure. Blessed be the God and*

*Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Peter 1:1-5). God plans for us to have an imperishable inheritance, a home, in heaven! The Hebrew writer said that "This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil" (Hebrews 6:19).*

We also have the promise Jesus made that He will return to get us and take us to His Father's home (John 14:1-3). Jesus also promised the church at Smyrna, *"Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life"* (Revelation 2:10). There may be times when following God's Plan may be difficult, but the reward is literally out of this world! Are you following God on the pathway to the heavenly home prepared for you?