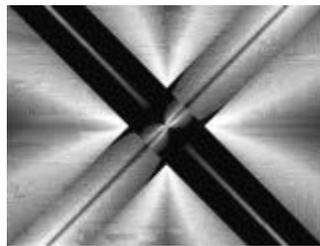


It's God's Plan. Not Yours.

Why is it so hard for us to “**Let Go and Let God**”?
Why do we still angst and grieve when “**God's Plan**” unfolds?

How we can discern God's Plan unfolding in our lives
Versus
Suffering that we have brought down upon ourselves



Unless the Lord builds the house...

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The Bible teaches us to pray to our Father in Heaven that our lives, would line up with His will while here on this earth. But many times, our will comes into conflict with Gods.

If indeed it is God's perfect will playing out in our lives, then how can we *possibly* grieve the outcome?

Our human condition is creating a conflict where one should not exist. Why is it so hard for us to be "OK" with what God has determined in our lives?

We can adjust our countenance in these matters if we can first determine if we're suffering for the sake of Christ or if we're suffering because we've heaped coals upon our own heads.

Knowing if we've brought grief upon ourselves at least allows us to consider a different course the next time. It also allows us to accept the consequences of our decision as "*reaping what we've sown*". It also allows us to enter into God's mercy and grace while we endure and bear under the burden of our lot.

But what if we're standing before God as blameless as we know how? What then? Why are we still conflicted when God's plan unfolds in our lives?

Let's look at a classic story in the Bible of one such event. Perhaps we can glean a larger lesson at play.

STANDING BLAMELESS BEFORE GOD:

[Matthew 11:1-19 • English Standard Version \(ESV\) • Messengers from John the Baptist](#)

When Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there to teach and preach in their cities.

Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?" And Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is the one who is not offended by me."

7 As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is he of whom it is written,

"Behold, I send my messenger before your face,
who will prepare your way before you."

[Malachi 3:1]

11 Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John, and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

16 “But to what shall I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their playmates,

“‘We played the flute for you, and you did not dance;
we sang a dirge, and you did not mourn.’

18 For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon.’ The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ Yet wisdom is justified by her deeds.”

So Jesus makes a clear point that it is heaven where our eyes need to be fixed. What goes on here on this earth is secondary to what really is important. The kingdom of God! We are chastised for our short sightedness. Jesus encourages us to stay focused on God’s plan and our home in heaven. All we do here on this earth should always have that thought at the forefront of everything that we do.

But even John the Baptist had a human moment of weakness and doubt. Remember, Jesus called him the greatest human on the face of the earth. So if the greatest can suffer doubt, what chance do we have to escape it?

We need to recognize that we are flawed in our flesh. At times it will get the best of us. But praise God for His mercy and grace in our lives! He will strengthen us and send us encouragement. Our soul will be strengthened.

Peter reminds us of this point to help shape our attitudes while we live here on this earth.

1 Peter 4:12-19 • English Standard Version (ESV) • Suffering as a Christian

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name. For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? And

“If the righteous is scarcely saved,
what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?”

Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.

Luke 17:7-10 • English Standard Version (ESV) • Unworthy Servants

“Will any one of you who has a servant plowing or keeping sheep say to him when he has come in from the field, ‘Come at once and recline at table’? Will he not rather say to him, ‘Prepare supper for me, and dress properly, and serve me while I eat and drink, and afterward you will eat and drink’? Does he thank the servant because he did what was commanded? So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, ‘We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.’”

HEAPING COALS UPON OUR OWN HEAD:

Peter reminds us *“But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler.”*

Should we grieve if we have brought it upon ourselves?

Perhaps, momentarily, if we can move away from the place of our poor decision, asking for God’s help all the while.

But what about the person who stays in a place that is grieving the Holy Spirit? Is this person’s grief constructive?

I would suggest, no.

God allows Satan to have at you from time to time. If by pulling back His hedge of protection that He’s got around you, allows Satan to attack you, this (grief) cycle will eventually force you to course correct your set path in life. This is God’s love at work in your life. You don’t know what’s best, but He does.

Remember, God is in control of everything, but your free will can at times be contrary to what God wants for your life. This is when God will allow difficulty to come your way. This difficulty will ultimately force you to change course, thus getting you back on the path God has determined for your life. Remember what James tells us?

James 1:2-4 • English Standard Version (ESV) • Testing of Your Faith

Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, 3 for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. 4 And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

Sometimes we become headstrong in our unwillingness to be obedient to what we know God’s word teaches us. I have found that God’s mercy will start to run out if we’re not doing what we should be doing.

The Bible is full of teachings that us men just plainly ignore for one reason or another. At some point, God’s love for us will look like chastisement. The author of Hebrews reminds us of this and reminds us of what Jesus endured for our sake, so that we can have the Holy Spirit in us, to strengthen us.

Hebrews 12:3-11 • English Standard Version (ESV) • Do Not Grow Weary

Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons?

“My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord,
nor be weary when reproved by him.

For the Lord disciplines the one he loves,
and chastises every son whom he receives.”

[Proverbs 3:11]

It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

So, how do I know which camp I might be falling into?

If you're not sure if you're suffering as a saint or sinner, the Bible has you covered here too with sound advice.

2nd Timothy 3:16-17 • English Standard Version (ESV) • All Scripture Is Breathed Out by God

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

This, in a nut shell, means... you need to know your Bible. Use it to reflect back upon yourself to see if you are living a life of obedience to Christ. Scripture and the Holy Spirit will teach you all the things that you need to know. John reminds us of that.

1st John 2:26-27 • English Standard Version (ESV) • Warning Concerning Antichrists

I write these things to you about those who are trying to deceive you. But the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone should teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie—just as it has taught you, abide in him.

Scripture gives us yet another remedy to the question of suffering as a saint or sinner.

James 5:16 • English Standard Version (ESV) • The Prayer of Faith

Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.

We're all "missing the mark" as it were. Saints of God should be fellowshiping with each other and confessing to one another our inability to get it right most of the time. We're all falling short of God's glory and we need to come alongside each other in true genuine fellowship. Encourage one another to be obedient to what scripture teaches.

If we're more concerned about offending our brother in the Lord than we are in helping them to see the error of their ways, then we are not really their friend. We're more concerned about our relationship than helping them see the blind spots in their lives. They're call blind spots for a reason..... right? Be willing to put it all on the line if God has given you the opportunity to speak truth into your brother's life. Let God's Spirit minister and convict your brother. You be a gentle vessel knowing that you both serve the same God.

So,... If you stand by and watch your brother suffer because of sin in their lives and say nothing, what's the big deal? What harm can become of that?

Scripture talks about this danger also...

Hebrews 10:26-31 • English Standard Version (ESV) • The Full Assurance of Faith

For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace? For we know him who said, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge his people." It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Brothers. God is good. His Plan for your life is better than anything that you can dream up for yourself. We live in a fallen world and we can't walk through it without getting mud on our feet. Live with one another showing the grace and mercy of Christ and you will finish the race well. What you do while here on this earth matters when you get to heaven. We are already eternal creations of God.

Ephesians 6:10-13 • English Standard Version (ESV) • The Whole Armor of God

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.

This passage reminds us that there is so much more going on around us that we are not plainly aware of. Actual forces of good and evil at work in the spirit realm. We need to be good soldiers for Christ, doing what we're told, least we cause ourselves and others around us irreparable damage in life.

We live in a fallen world. We have a loving God that see's the bigger picture that we do not. We have to trust God's plan for our lives. It is far better than the one we've dreamed up for ourselves.

We can't live life from a single focused view point of "SELF". That is a lie from Satan himself. We are God's loved children. God has the bigger picture in focus. We need to pray that God helps us line up with His will as it plays out in our lives. He is in control, we are not. He knows, we do not. He sees the big picture, we do not.

Trust God's plan for your life. Live your life as obediently to Christ as you can, reflecting the teachings of scripture in your journey, thus showing who God is to everyone around you.

Philippians 3:17-21 • English Standard Version (ESV) • Straining Toward the Goal

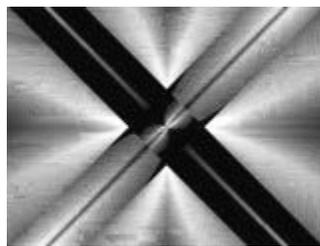
Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things.

But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

Let's keep our eyes on the real prize that awaits us. Our real home is in heaven. Let's have the mind set while on earth, to prepare for that!

Revelation 21:1-4 • English Standard Version (ESV) • The New Heaven and the New Earth

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."



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