

A Different Perspective
Living Life to the Full By Knowing Who I Am
09-42-3
A Plan Tailor-Made for Me

Now over the years something I've thought a lot about is weather the idea that God has a plan for my life, whether it's a good thing or a bad thing. I mean, on the one hand the idea that a good God would have a good plan for my life, well, that feels good.

On the other what if I don't like His plan. What if I want to make some changes and go my own way. Is the idea of God having a plan for our lives an awesome thing or is it just a crutch or worse still, a straight jacket?

Well today on the program that's what I would like to explore with you. To look at it from A Different Perspective, from God's perspective. Then it's up to each one of us to make up our own minds.

Do you remember the old Frank Sinatra song 'I Did it My Way'? Well Frank can sing it better than me. It was the time of the 1970's I think where every talent quest on television, some man, it was always a man, would get up and sing 'I Did it My Way'.

*And now the end is near
I face the final curtain,
My friend I'll say it clear,
I'll state my case of which I'm certain.
I lived life to the full,
I've travelled each and every highway
And more, much more than this
I did it my way.*

I don't know about you and your experiences of life but I've got to tell you I tried doing it my way, and as we talked early in the week on the program and what I discovered it didn't work so well. You know what I think? I think God designed it that way. Yesterday on the program we looked at the fact that we really are made in the image of God. We're made to have a relationship with Him.

I think there is something inside each one of us that God would enliven to get us to reach out to Him. It's like marriage in a sense. I mean, I was made to have a wife. I'm just not one to be on my own. I mean, I enjoy my own space, but I'm not one to be single.

Now I'm married to Jacqui and she's a wonderful wife and I enjoy marriage but you know, there's a cost to marriage. You have to lay things down, you have to sacrifice. The Bible talks about becoming one flesh. That's great. But the 'becoming' bit, coming to grips with being one rather than two ... well that requires sacrifice and it hurts some days.

But somehow even though I'm an individual, there's something there's something that makes me complete in my soul in my marriage relationship with Jacqui, my wife. It's how God made me to be.

When it comes to God, I don't think that I can be the me that I was meant to be, I don't think that I can live out the life that I was given to the full unless in the same way I have a close and dynamic relationship with Him. Lord knows, I spent 36 years trying to do it the other way. Money and recognition and career – I had it all I Did it My Way'. But there came a time when I had to admit that my way was kind of empty, that I needed more, I needed him and you know something, He knows that because He knows us.

The other day we looked at Psalm 139. We actually looked at the second half. I'd like to go back and have a look at the first half. Have a listen. The Psalmist, probably David, writes:

"Lord, you have searched me and you know me. You know when I sit down, when I rise up; you know my thoughts from a long way off. You discern my going out and my lying down; you're familiar with all of my ways. Before even a word is on my tongue you know it completely Lord. You hem me in - behind me before me; you've laid your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty to attain.

Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go to heaven, you're there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the farthest side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me and your right hand will hold me fast. If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light will become night around me, even the darkness won't be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, because darkness is as light to you."

That's profound; you know what David's saying here? (It's King David who probably wrote that Psalm) That God is on this journey with us.

We can flee, we can wrestle, we can fight, we can run, we can do what we like but He is on this journey with us. One of the things I wrestled with in the early days of being a Christian was jargon. Sin was one of them, repent was another.

I don't know. I must have seen an old western movie, black and white, when I was a kid and I remember some fire and brimstone preacher on one of those covered wagons standing on the top yelling, "Repent!" I thought 'Oh yuck'. But as I come to grips with that concept this is what it ended up meaning to me. Admitting somehow that my way and my choices as good as they looked at the time ended up being hollow, admitting somehow that my way was empty.

I remember buying this really expensive, I mean **really** expensive huge car, it had everything. It had this beautiful burgundy duco, this lustre and it was a lovely shape and it used to turn heads. It had four wheel steering, you know the front at the low speed would turn in a different direction to the back wheels so the whole thing would pivot on a pin head. And inside the smell of the new car and the leather and the look of the dashboard – I have to tell you, it was awesome.

And I remember sitting inside this car which cost me a bomb and looking at it and smelling the new leather smell and somehow that thing I wanted to be a real joy to me was empty and hollow and I had to come to grips with the fact that my way wasn't working for me. Repenting, turning back to God, meant admitting that. Turning and saying, "You know something God? I'm done trying my way, I want to get with your plan and yes, I know that there are some things I'll have to give up, I know that".

But you know there were actually very few things that we're asked to give up and they were really rubbish things. The pride, the selfishness, the backstabbing, the greed. It meant putting God into the drivers seat. And when I started doing that day after day, do you know what happened?

I'll tell you. This is what happened. I had this growing sense that I was becoming the person I was always meant to be. That I was starting to live my life to the full because my frame wasn't hidden from Him when I was made in that secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth, His eyes saw my unformed body. All the day ordained for me were written in His book before one of them yet came to be. And so now I can say how precious to me are your thoughts O God, how vast is the sum of them!

That turning, coming to that decision, coming to that conclusion in my life, no matter where we are, no matter what we say we believe, that turning can be a very hard thing to do because it's not just a single turning point, it's then living that new decision out in life. Living out the decision to have God as our Lord, as our Number One. That can be hard. But if we're going to do that, if we're going to be the person that God meant us to be that's where it's at.

And so tomorrow on the program we'll look at what it means actually to live that out. But when you think about it, it makes sense. Come back to that verse that we looked at the other day. It's in the New Testament written by the Apostle Paul. It's kind of an executive summary if you like of the whole long Psalm 139. Paul says this in Ephesians Chapter 2 Verse 10. He says:

"We are God's workmanship, created and crafter in Jesus Christ to do good works that God prepared beforehand for us to walk into."

And if that's true, doesn't it make an enormous amount of sense to discover who we are – who He created us to be and then to seek out, to hunt down the good works he prepared in advance for us to do? I mean, it's blindingly, glimpsingly obvious isn't it?