



Family Values

Virtue Realities

Purposefulness

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We have all heard the saying, “The road to hell is paved with good intentions.” What this adage refers to is our natural tendency to procrastinate and put off doing things until an opportune time, like tomorrow which never comes. We might call it the “round to it” syndrome or more simply put, “later,” which is when a teenager intends to clean his/her room. Generally it is not because we do not want to do something, it is more a matter of waiting for a more convenient time to do it.

The Christian lifestyle, on the other hand, is not something that we can put on hold nor is it something we do out of convenience. Rather it is our continuing response to God’s grace. It is our testimony to the world about who it is we follow. It is God’s will at work in our lives. This quality is best described as purposefulness. It reflects a plan. It involves faith put into practice. It is discipleship at its best.

What makes it difficult for us is that God gives us room to do our own thing. We call it free will. God allows us to make plans that are contrary to His design. As a result, a reoccurring message of the prophets in the Old Testament is: *“Turn now all of you from your evil ways, and amend your ways and your doings.”* (Jer. 18:11). John the Baptist echoes this refrain when he announces: *“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.”*

Paul confesses to the Romans how difficult it is to do good. He states: *“For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do.”* (Rom.7:19) Fortunately, God has done through Christ what we cannot do and sends his Spirit to dwell in us and work through us.

What really counts is God’s plan for us, which would remain a mystery to us had He not revealed it. This plan is unchangeable

and existed from the foundation of the world. For as Paul tells the Ephesians, *“He has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time to gather up all things in him . . .”* (Eph. 1:9&10) For God’s intention and desire is *“for everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”* (I Tim. 2:4)

Luther in his explanation to the second petition of the Lord’s Prayer writes: *“God’s kingdom comes indeed without our praying for it, but we ask in this prayer that it may come also to us.”* In other words, we want in on the plan. In order to do this, we need to be purposeful in how we live our lives. This means letting the world know in word and deed “Whose” we are.

The following are ways to practice purposefulness:

1. **Review Luther’s explanation to the Lord’s Prayer.** Get in touch with how God’s plan unfolds.
2. **Pray for the Spirit to lead you.** Remember God not only has a plan, but also provides the means.
3. **Take control of your life.** Be deliberate. Take responsibility for putting your intentions into action. Don’t wait to let someone know you care or to perform acts of kindness.
4. **Live each day as your last.** Ask yourself what you would do differently if this were your last day. Then do it.

Affirmation: I will make today count

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