

MOODY DISTANCE LEARNING

The Result of Following Satan's Plan, Part 1

Greg Wheatley:

Welcome to Radio School of the Bible. This program is a ministry of the Center for External Studies at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. This quarter we're studying God's will for your life, and if you're just joining us, you can rest assured that we've just started. This is session number four in this brand new quarter, so you really have –

Already in this quarter, as short as it is and as early as it is, we've gotten into some intriguing discussions about God's will. We're finding out that some of our problem is that we have a misconception of who God is. And Dr. Thrasher, I think that's sort of where we left off last session and where we pick up today.

Dr. Bill Thrasher:

That's exactly right. We've talked about a person who desired to know God's will must understand God's purpose for their life. And in understanding God's purpose for their life, they need to come to grips with and understand the answers to five basic questions.

The first basic question was: What is the major message of the Bible? What is the most basic thing that God wants me to know? And we said that the basic message of the Bible is a communication of what God is like.

The second thing was: What is the basic plan of Satan – Satan meaning adversary? His basic plan is to distort our understanding of God in such a way that makes his way of rebellion appear very attractive. He slanders God's name – that's the meaning of devil.

We looked at Genesis chapter 3 in regard to the first temptation of man, and we saw exactly that, where he slandered God's faithfulness and God's goodness. Scripture says that it is true that some men will despise God or think very little of Him. And that is because they've bought into Satan's lie. Scripture says that we begin to trust in our own heart and do our own thing when we attach very little value to Him. In fact, Scripture says it's foolish to trust in our own heart; "he who trusts in his own heart is not wise."

I think of that parable that Jesus told about a man who hid his talents – who didn't invest his life, but just hid his talents. And we'll say, "What caused that man to hide his talents and not invest his life?" We'd have to say maybe what's causing many Christians not to really invest their life. You know, Greg, I remember a statistic I heard a number of years ago that we have the resources, we have the money, we have the people to have evangelized the world hundreds of times over. But obviously that hasn't been done. And there's still a great need to be done, and I think largely it's because – what – people are not free to invest their life in the way and follow in a sense God's plan for their life.

This is what this one in this parable in Matthew 25, the one who had buried his talent. Here's his testimony. "Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping what you did not sow and gathering where you scattered no seed, and I was afraid and went away and hid my talent in the ground. See, what you have is yours." And so rather than investing their life, they were afraid. And so it's easy, certainly. We said that Satan wants to what? Distort our understanding of God and get us living out of fear.

Fear is a tremendous fiery dart that's thrown at every one of us. In fact, I remember asking God one time just to give me insight on things I say or don't say, or things I do or don't do, that had been motivated out of a fear of rejection. And I'd begin to see the incredible influence that is in my life.

Greg Wheatley: It's a demotivator, isn't it?

Dr. Bill Thrasher: Oh, it certainly is.

Greg Wheatley: Because it always has you sort of straight jacketed either into wondering what other people will do – they might reject me. Wondering if I might fail – there's a fear of failure –

Dr. Bill Thrasher: That's correct.

Greg Wheatley: That comes in there too, isn't there?

Dr. Bill Thrasher: Absolutely. And you know we'll talk about that, Lord willing, in more detail at a further session. But you know the encouraging news is that at our points of fear, we're to seek God. David says, "I sought the Lord, and he delivered me from my fears."

So even don't despair of your battle, because you're gonna be in a battle as long as you live. But God wants to even use that battle to lead us to God, and for him to disclose in an experiential way that we can begin to learn more of His truth.

Now what is the result of following Satan's plan? That's our third question. We said first that God wants to communicate Himself. That's the basic message of the Bible. We've said in regard to Satan his basic plan is to distort our understanding of God. Okay, what is the result of following Satan's plan?

Well, the result of it is this: the motivations of my life can be boiled down to two words. And they're such familiar words we need to take time, a couple of broadcasts, to talk about these two words. But the motivations of my life become pride and idolatry.

Now I say those are words that certainly all of us, we know that they're wrong and we know that we shouldn't do them. But let's talk a little bit about what is pride. If I were to ask you, Greg, to define pride, and if it could be a lot of different words that we could use, but how would you define pride?

Greg Wheatley: Well, I would say one thing it certainly is, is a self-centeredness.

Dr. Bill Thrasher: Okay; very good.

Greg Wheatley: It in some way is gonna relate and revolve around me. I can do this. I'm good enough. I don't really need you, or ultimately, God. It's me.

Dr. Bill Thrasher: Okay. That's the essence of it. Now that was – we're told that pride was the sin of Satan, so certainly it's clear that when one buys into his distortions of the character of God he will fall into that. One way of looking at it is just pride is living independent of God's authority – exactly what you're saying. It's self.

I can do what I want, when I want to, how I want to. Living independent of God's authority. Now God is very clear in regard to what he says about pride, and I'm just gonna read a few Proverbs in regard to that. "Haughty eyes" – I'm reading from Proverbs 6:17 – "Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, the hands that shed innocent blood." He tells us that God hates that.

"There are six things the Lord hates, yea, seven," and the first thing he mentions are "haughty eyes," which is one way Proverbs talks about the sin of pride. Proverbs 11:2: "When pride comes, then comes dishonor; but with the humble is wisdom." Proverbs 15:25: "The Lord will tear down the house of the proud; but he will establish the boundary of the widow."

Proverbs 16:5: "Everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord; assuredly he will not go unpunished." Proverbs 16:18: "Pride goes before destruction; and a haughty spirit before falling." And then Proverbs 21:4: "Haughty eyes and a proud heart; the lamp of the wicked is sin."

And then Proverbs 29:23, where we read this final proverb: "A man's pride will bring him low; but a humble spirit will obtain honor." "God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble," James tells us.

Well, certainly we know pride is wrong. But what would be some maybe helpful checks? Because we see when I'm operating out of a spirit of pride, I've bought into Satan's plan for my life. And I think one very helpful check is this: am I willing to express gratitude to God and to others? You see, the truth is that every accomplishment I have ever made, or anybody will ever make or ever has made, is due to God and some other person that has enabled me to do that. And it's the humble man – what – is able to express gratitude to God and to others.

I remember reading in a book one time; the person had visited a home of Thomas Edison in Florida. And he said, "I was fascinated by a path in his garden called 'The Walk of Friendship.' It was so named because each stone was given by a different close acquaintance of the inventor. And that path," this writer says, "is symbolic, because we all walk on stones of helpfulness provided by our friends."

There's nothing that I ever have accomplished or ever will accomplish that's not been due to God also through the help of somebody else. Probably all of us could walk through our lives and just think of what was this person who enabled me to learn this or to get to this point. Or this person was used to open up this opportunity, or whatever.

Greg Wheatley: And it's interesting, too, isn't it? We know which mode we're in.

Dr. Bill Thrasher: I think so.

Greg Wheatley: We can feel when we have a spirit of gratitude and we're able to say, "Boy, I'm really thankful for that." And then we know those times when we're sort of locked up in ourselves and feeling that tightness of not having gratitude as well, don't we?

Dr. Bill Thrasher: Yeah, I think that's a work of God. I think that's a work of God, not to allow us to be hopelessly deceived in living in that. The other, it's a great weight to lift. Scripture says, "Don't be wise in your own eyes." It'll bless you physically and psychologically, Proverbs 3 says. It'll be health to your body; healing to your bones.

So we don't have to walk around as if we know all the answers. Pride is very crippling, and so we welcome God to point out the points of pride in our life so that we can express appreciation. Obviously, the opposite of pride is humility, and what's humility is not having a certain personality or not looking a certain way or talking a certain way. But it's not pretending that a person doesn't have gifts that God has endowed them with. But it's being under his authority. It's seeing God as a source of everything; every good and perfect gift comes from above. It's seeing God the way Jesus described Him, as he being the vine and we the branch. And apart from him, we can do nothing. So that is the essence of it.

I would just give a couple of other checks in regard to am I willing to express gratitude to God and man. Also, am I willing to admit that I'm wrong? Am I willing to admit that I'm wrong? I mean probably to all of our shames we can talk about times that we've just had a hard time. Just didn't wanna make ourselves that vulnerable by saying, "You know, I was wrong."

And yet the great freedom that came into our souls when we admitted we were wrong. Am I willing to accept rebuke? I'm talking about these are just some helpful checks to get us off the pathway that Satan desires to put us upon in regard to following his thoughts and his distortions.

Greg Wheatley:

Well, thank you, Dr. Thrasher. Another very helpful class session in Radio School of the Bible as we continue to dig into this topic of God's will for your life.

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