The Good is the Enemy of the Best

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Fulfilling God’s Purpose – Session IV
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Is there a “life” map?

You bet there is!!

God:
- tailor-made for you
- plan of excellence
- Romans 8:29
- make you like Jesus
- Perfect Love, Perfect Joy, Perfect Peace, etc.

Satan:
- tailor-made for you
- try to trap in sin
- if that fails, distract you from excellence
- so, rob you of even a little of that Love, Joy, Peace, etc.
“The Best of Both Worlds”?

The most miserable people in the world are half-hearted “Christians”!!

Revelation 3:15-16

God’s not happy with you, neither is the Devil

the “best of both worlds” is actually the worst

miserable on earth, regret in eternity
What’s so bad about the “good”? 

- the “good” becomes an enemy when it hinders you from attaining to the best

- II Kings 2: God tests us to see if we’re hungry for more of Him

- Spectrum: 
  
  WORSE < BAD < GOOD < BETTER < BEST
Why is this so important?

- God has set a destination of excellence
- Satan has convinced most Christians that they have reached, when they are far short of their destination
- analogy
- especially critical for young people
- Philippians 4:8: so vital that Paul urges that our hearts *permanently reside* at the “excellence” address

7 areas of excellence…
Area #1

**Good:** Having an initial repentance

**Best:** Having continual repentance

Matthew 3:11-12

Symbols:

- Baptism in water
- Baptism in the Holy Spirit (fire)

- initial repentance present even in the Old Covenant (John the Baptist)
- Jesus opened the “mightier” New Covenant way of continual repentance
Area #2

**Good:** Having forgiveness for past sin

**Best:** Experiencing victory over present sinfulness

Symbols:
- Liberation from Egypt (penalty of sin)
- Entering the Promised Land (fullness of Christ)

- forgiveness of sins available even in the Old Covenant through mercy (Psalm 79:9, 103:3)
- call of the New Covenant is to overcome through grace (I John 5:4, Romans 6:14, Revelations 2:7,17)
- many Christians are experiencing liberation from the penalty of sin, only to die in the “wilderness”
Area #3

**Good:** Keeping God’s Law

**Best:** Helping others as well

- Matthew 19:16-30: the call to the *young*
- Matthew 25: what about your talents?

- how will your epitaph read?
- I Corinthians 15:45: the difference between “a living soul” and a “life-giving spirit”

- if they won’t come to church, take church to them!
Area #4

**Good:** Forgiving outwardly

**Best:** Forgiving from the heart

- David and Shimei (II Samuel 16:5-8, 19:19-23, I Kings 2:8-10)
- God’s forgiveness is conditional (Matthew 18:35)

- the proof that you’ve forgiven from your heart is that you bless and pray for them (Luke 6:27-28)
**Area #5**

**Good:** Experiencing God’s **blessing**

**Best:** Receiving God’s **approval**

- many are blessed (Matthew 5:45), but few are approved
- Israelites were blessed more than any other nation, yet God was angry with them (Hebrews 3:17-19)
- God gives His approval to those who have faith (Hebrews 11:1-2, 6)
- Jesus too received this approval (Matthew 17:5)
- Paul urges *young* Timothy to be diligent to receive approval from the Master (II Timothy 2:15)
- the mark of serving and being approved by the Master is a life of faith, free from anxiety (Matthew 6:24-34)
Area #6

**Good:** Receiving spiritual gifts

**Best:** Bearing spiritual **fruit** – especially love

🌟 spiritual gifts are vital for the Body (I Corinthians 12:27-31a)

🌟 excellence is to practice the gifts in love (I Corinthians 12:31b - 13)

🌟 without spiritual gifts we won’t be effective

🌟 without spiritual fruit we will do more harm than good
Area #7

**Good:** Being a “Lone Ranger”

**Best:** Being united in fellowship in the Body

- Ecclesiastes 4:9-12: strength in numbers

- John 17:11,12,23: at the end of Jesus’ life on earth, His earnest desire was that the disciples would be one
How do I discern the excellent?

- Romans 12:2: renewing your mind by the Word of God
- Philippians 1:9: abounding in love

balance of truth and grace comes from examining the whole counsel of God (Matthew 4:7):
  - “it is written”
  - “it is also written”
So, when do I actually reach my destination?

- I Thessalonians 4:16-18: take comfort that Jesus, who Himself attained to this excellence ahead of us, will return
- I John 2:28: some will shrink away in shame
- I John 3:2-3: those who have walked this way, when they see Him, will be like Him – perfect!
- Matthew 25:21: we’ll get to hear those precious words, “Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful... enter into the joy of your Master!”