

## **Pursuing God's Plan For His Church**

Series: Following Jesus: Valuing God's Church

Ephesians 1, 4 NLT (0926)

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ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON *Went to church today, and was not greatly depressed.*

### **I. The plan every believer is called to pursue**

#### **a. The basics of the plan**

Ephesians 1:9-10 NLT <sup>9</sup>*God's secret plan has now been revealed to us; it is a plan centered on Christ, designed long ago according to his good pleasure.* <sup>10</sup>*And this is his plan: At the right time he will bring everything together under the authority of Christ—everything in heaven and on earth.*

Romans 14:11 NLT <sup>11</sup>*For the Scriptures say, "As surely as I live," says the Lord, "every knee will bow to me and every tongue will confess allegiance to God."*

Ephesians 1:22-23 Phillips Modern English *God has placed everything under the power of Christ and has set him up as supreme head to the Church. For the Church is his body, and in that body lives fully the One who fills the whole wide universe.*

#### **b. The call of servant leaders to servant leaders**

Ephesians 4:1 NLT <sup>1</sup>*Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God.*

#### **c. The call is the key to understanding life's meaning and purpose**

Ephesians 1:11 TM *It's in Christ that we find out who we are and what we are living for.*

### **II. The power to work God's plan**

#### **a. Learning to be everything we're not sure we really want to be**

Coach Tom Landry (Legendary coach of the Dallas Cowboys)—*Coaching is really a pretty simple task. It's my job to get these guys to do what they don't want to do so they can become what they've always wanted to become.*

Ephesians 4:2 NLT <sup>2</sup>*Be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love*

**b. Unlocking the possibilities of the impossible**

Ephesians 4:3-6 NLT <sup>3</sup>Always keep yourselves united in the Holy Spirit, and bind yourselves together with peace. <sup>4</sup>We are all one body, we have the same Spirit, and we have all been called to the same glorious future. <sup>5</sup>There is only one Lord, one faith, one baptism, <sup>6</sup>and there is only one God and Father, who is over us all and in us all and living through us all.

**III. Practical applications of God's plan**

**a. Celebrating our differences**

Ephesians 4:7 NLT <sup>7</sup>However, he has given each one of us a special gift according to the generosity of Christ.

Ephesians 4:7 TM But that doesn't mean you should all look and speak and act the same. Out of the generosity of Christ, each of us is given his own gift.

C. S. LEWIS The church is not a human society of people united by their natural affinities, but the body of Christ, in which all members, however different (and he rejoices in their differences and by no means wishes to iron them out) must share the common life, complementing and helping one another precisely by their differences.

**b. Laying down our weapons**

Romans 14:10-13 NLT <sup>10</sup>So why do you condemn another Christian? Why do you look down on another Christian? Remember, each of us will stand personally before the judgment seat of God. <sup>11</sup>For the Scriptures say, "'As surely as I live,' says the Lord, 'every knee will bow to me and every tongue will confess allegiance to God.'" <sup>12</sup>Yes, each of us will have to give a personal account to God. <sup>13</sup>So don't condemn each other anymore. Decide instead to live in such a way that you will not put an obstacle in another Christian's path.

**c. A practical step toward blessing other congregations**

Romans 14:13 NLT <sup>13</sup>So don't condemn each other anymore. Decide instead to live in such a way that you will not put an obstacle in another Christian's path.