

# It is Supposed to Work!

## Letting God's Plan Run Its Course Ephesians 3:8-12

Plans are wonderful when they are allowed to function properly. Trying to work a plan counter to its basic makeup is doomed to failure and destined to generate aggravation. God has a plan. His plan is supposed to work. If it is to work, however, we must understand its features and then we must serve its particular characteristics.

### The Nature of the Plan

- There is a particular contrast between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant illustrating our main point
  - *For you have not received a spirit of **slavery** leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father" (Rom. 8:15)!*
  - *Therefore the Law has become our **tutor** to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith (Gal. 3:24).*
- We have a "big boy and girl" plan (Gal. 4:1-7)
  - Our maturity in Christ (Eph. 4:15-16) allows us a level of trust reserved for the faithful (cf. II Kgs. 22:7)
  - Faithful men and women do not need the encumbrances of children.

### Aspects

- Simplicity of practice
  - The encumbrances of the Pharisees (Matt. 23, esp. vv 23-24; Mk. 7)
    - Pride instead of humility (Jn. 9:34; Mk. 6:3)
    - Controlling rather than trusting (Mk. 11:27-28; Matt. 10:15)
    - Authority misplaced (Lk. 20:46; Matt. 20:20-28)
  - *Religion* and Religion (Jas. 1:25)
    - Primarily *Institutional* or primarily *relational* (Matt. 9:13; 12:7)?
    - Primarily *shepherding* or *managing* (Lk. 15:1-7)?
    - Self-centered or God-centered (Jn. 5:39-44)?
    - Self-centered or others-centered (Matt. 23:1-12)?
- Depth of understanding
  - The deep things of God provide strong foundations for Christians (I Cor. 2:10; Eph. 3:14-19).
  - Such understandings allow us to look beyond ourselves to the amazing possibilities God puts before us (Eph. 3:20-21)

### The Mission in Practice

- Attract
- Inform
- Nurture
- Family-style growth

Christianity is supposed to work. It is designed to turn the world upside-down. The plan we have from God is just what we need. Are we prepared to work the plan?