

# **What is God's Stated Purpose for Christ's Church? The Long-Term Strategic Plan God Gave to Us**

Sometimes it is important to stop and take stock of where we are, where we are headed, and why. That is always especially important when we are adding staff, so this Sunday night is a time to gather as a family in Christ and talk about why we are here on Earth, and what God has left us to do for Him.

## **Our 1,3,5, 10-Year Plan is From God**

The pathway for each of Christ's local churches couldn't be clearer. God's Word expresses it in so many different places and by so many different combinations of words. Here are just a few:

- Jesus instructs me that I express my love to my Savior by obeying His Word. John 14:21. Christlike, sanctified believer prays much, gives much, serves much, witnesses and evangelizes much, because they are moved to do so by the love they have for Christ.
- God wants to sanctify us by His truth, because His Word is truth. John 17:17
- We glorify God most as we grow in Christlikeness. 1 Cor. 10:31
- We are being changed into Christ's image a little more each day. 2 Cor. 3:18
- Our growing in grace and the knowledge of Him is sanctification. 2 Peter 3:18
- When Jesus wrote back to His Church His Last Words, those words were exclusively focused upon their sanctification. Everything else was secondary in Revelation 2 and 3.

## **Our Purpose as a Church is From God**

The purpose of the church is to grow believers into the measure of the stature of Christ (Eph 4:11-24). That is why pastor teachers were given; and that is the task God has left for His church leaders: to gear everything around growing in Christlikeness, which is

sanctification. Everything else is secondary; and everything else is impacted by this Christlikeness through sanctification.

## **My Calling as a Pastor is From God**

So, as a pastor my primary duty is to challenge the gathered body of believers who have committed to be followers of Christ, about their surrender to the sanctifying power of the Spirit through God's Word.

That is why we studied ***What's Next for Planet Earth***. It says in 2 Peter 3 that when we see what God has planned, we will know what manner of life God expects us to live for Him.

That is why we studied ***Titus 2*** for so long. Paul wrote the only comprehensive curriculum for training men and women of all ages in how to live a Christlike life here on Earth until He comes.

That is why we studied the ***Life of David*** for so long. God said that David was a man who followed the heart of God, and that is exactly what we want to do.

That is what brought us to ***Revelation***. God sent the Church a book to help them understand what is expected of them, what God is looking for in our personal lives and in the gathering of His Church as a local Body.

So, just to make it clear, I am committed to the consistent teaching and preaching of God's Word to see each member of this local Body of Christ, grow into greater and greater Christlikeness. That process God has described in the doctrines of sanctification.

- Justification saves us, makes us alive, forgiven, and indwelt by God.
- Sanctification changes us a bit more each day into usefulness as we embrace Christlikeness in more areas of our lives.

Tonight, what is the status of our life together in personal daily worship and ministry, and in corporate weekly gathering as a local church?

## **Intentional Programming**

My personal purpose statement for my life, marriage, family, and ministry is that I want to: Please God as a man, husband, father, and pastor; and to be actively making disciples who follow Christ in every dimension of my life: personal, marital, family, and ministry.

***Pleasing God*** involves each of us living a life of daily worship in the Word and in prayer. It also involves each of us living in an atmosphere of other believers that consider how they can encourage us to be surrendering daily to our calling and giftedness. All of this is part of growing in sanctification.

***Making disciples*** is the calling God has given to each of us as believers. It involves being a part of evangelism (by prayer and sharing), and nurture (by seeking out and speaking to other believers). Making disciples was described by Paul in Titus 2 as well as in the many passages that we have been studying in the Discipleship & Counseling 101 course started this fall.

## **Prayer is Foundational**

That is why we are to give ourselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word. So the first ministry I started was the Prayer Corps. Then the next ministry was the Baptism Team that coached believers in giving a clear, Biblical defense of their hope in Christ as their salvation.

## **Bible Study is Vital**

Then I began to train men and husbands in how to study the Bible for themselves in the 12 x12 Program; then couples in the 2 x 12 program; and now the Biblical Discipleship & Counseling Classes to encourage every believer to be actively involved in admonishing others from the Word, while living a consistent life as a disciple who seeks to follow Christ on a daily basis.

## **Leadership Development is Crucial**

Along the way I have been slowly seeking to surround the elders with more and more insights into the needs and challenges of this local church. First we started meeting monthly as elders and deacons, then we began to study Systematic Theology together to better defend the faith, and guard the flock.

## **Quad Structure is Helpful**

Now we are organizing all ministries around a simple structure so that every ministry is represented with clear lines of communication and authority. This plan is called the Quad Structure, because most everything we do at Calvary falls under four broad headings: Worship (every gathering of the local church to be taught, sing, pray, celebrate communion and baptism), Outreach (all evangelism and witness locally and globally), Ministry (all training of all ages), and Stewardship (finances, buildings, staff).

## **Ministry Direction is Integral**

The 70-plus different current ministries at Calvary are all nested under one of these four areas. All of the staff pastors and directors are assigned by their ministry responsibilities to one of these areas. Now, we are slowly working towards having representatives of all those ministries know where their communication comes from and under what authority they operate in this local body. Each of our 14 elders and 20 deacons are part of one of the Quad Councils and meets together each month.