



## PREPARATION

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Spend the week studying Romans 12:1-2, Psalm 16:11 and 34:8-9. Consult the commentary provided and any additional study tools to enhance your preparation.

**DETERMINE** | which discussion points and study questions will work best for your group

**PRAY** | for our pastors and this week's message, the upcoming group time, your group members and their openness to God's Word.

**LANDING POINT** | Your best life is found in surrendering your life to God. So, to experience God's best, trust God and surrender your living to Him.

### • Remember the 4 Rules for Small Group Discussion

1. **Confidentiality.** What's said in the group stays in the group.
2. **No cross-talk.** Be considerate of others as they share. Refrain from side conversations and texting during group time.
3. **No fixing.** We are not in the group to fix each other. Jesus does that part.
4. **Sharing.** Be sensitive to the amount of time you share. Don't talk too much or too little. Every person brings something valuable to the group.

## INTRODUCTION

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As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**Would you describe yourself as a planner, why or why not?**

**What are the essential components of a good plan? What makes them essential?**

Last week you discussed how God has a plan of renewal for your life. The purpose of God's work is to make you more like His Son. Jesus makes transformation possible and has brought you back into a love relationship with the Father.

Experiencing God's best begins with renewing your mind. You are a new creation in Christ and that means God wants to clean the "house" of your mind; He wants to replace thoughts and desires for things of this world with thoughts and desires for Him.

God's work is a process. It doesn't happen in an instant. But the Bible tells us God has a plan and purpose for each of our lives. All God asks us to do is surrender ourselves to Him and trust that His plan is for our good.



## LEARN

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Some of you may wonder, "Is it really possible to know God's plan for my life?" Paul believes it is. In Romans 12:2 he writes that a renewed mind lets you prove what God's "good, pleasing and perfect will" is. God is a loving Father and He makes His plans known to His children. He wants you to experience His best, and the Bible shows us a clear path to God's best for you.

If we were honest, we would admit that sometimes we doubt whether God has our best interest in mind. But sowing seeds of doubt is a classic tactic of the enemy. The enemy used doubt to deceive Adam and Eve in the garden, and he continues to use doubt today against God's children.

To combat this doubt, let's look at what the Bible says about God's plan for your life. God wants to replace doubt with trust; He wants you to see the truth that your best life is a life lived for Him.

Select 3-5 questions to discuss as a group.

### ◦ God's Plan is for Your Good

First, God's plan is for your good. The Bible tells us "all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." We live in a fallen world where sin and suffering still exist. Bad things happen to Christians all the time. However, God works even the bad things out for our good. Being a Christian doesn't mean the end of suffering. But it does mean that, even in the midst of suffering and trouble, you can have hope that God is working out a result for your good.

**Why is it sometimes difficult to believe God works out things for good in a world of sin and suffering?**

**Can you recall a time when God brought good out of a bad situation? If so, share your experience.**

### ◦ God's Plan Gives Him Pleasure

Second, God's plan gives Him pleasure. God wants you to experience His best, and it gives Him pleasure when you do. Do you see that God's plan doubles the pleasure experienced? God gets pleasure and you do, too.

Have you ever thought about how much God delights in you? Have you ever considered that, in every moment of your life, His joy and pleasures are available to you? David once sang to God that, "You [God] make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand." The wonderful thing is David's song can be yours' as well.

**How does your view of the Father change when you see that He takes great delight in you, His child?**

**What's one thing you could do this week to experience more pleasure in God? Be specific.**



## LEARN [Cont.'d]

### ◦ God's Plan is Perfect

Third, God's plan is perfect. Elsewhere in the Bible Paul says that he was "confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." God's plan is a complete plan; He never produces shoddy work and always finishes what He started. You are a work of God. In fact, you are God's masterpiece. And your life is a testament of His perfect plan at work for others to see.

So, when you are tempted to doubt God's goodness, remember that the Bible gives you every reason to trust Him—that He is good and His plan for you is good. If you've surrendered your life to God, you can look at your life and see the proof of His perfect plan in motion.

**Why do you think God "never produces shoddy work and always finishes what He started"? What does that say about His character?**

**What are good ways to respond to the enemy when he tries to tempt you to doubt God's goodness?**

## LIVE

Select 1 question from this section to answer.

### ◦ Living for God's Plan in the Everyday

Surrendering your life to God allows you to "taste and see that the Lord is good." You may experience trouble in your life, but it cannot possibly compare to the goodness of knowing the Father. As mentioned earlier, God's work is a process. Sometimes what happens in your life causes you to fear and doubt. These times test your faith and whether you will trust the Father's goodness, despite your situation or the feelings you experience.

Jesus said every day has troubles of its own. The point is not to avoid life's troubles, but to trust God in them. That requires a daily surrender to God's plan for your life. It means trusting that what He is doing will work out for your good no matter what. In things big and small, God wants you to trust His plan for your life.

**When was the last time you tasted the Lord's goodness? What happened? What did God teach you from the experience?**

**Respond to the statement, "The point is not to avoid life's troubles, but to trust God in them." How can you practically do this?**



## LEAD

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### ◦ Leading Others to See (and Experience) God's Plan

Surrendering your life to God allows you to see and prove God's will for your life. You really can experience God's best. But God's isn't just for your good. God sends us out into a world that doesn't experience God's best. He sends us to our family members that don't know Jesus. He sends us to our friends, our co-workers and our neighbors want true purpose and satisfaction that lasts.

Jesus came to show us how to experience God's best. The story of the Gospel says that God wants a relationship with us. He wants us to experience His best. In His perfect wisdom He knows that the best life imaginable is a life with Him. If we will share the good news of the Gospel with our words and lives, we will give others a taste of God's goodness. Lord willing, that taste will create a hunger for God.

Name one person that needs to see the Lord's goodness from you. How can you show it to them? When will you do this?

In what ways does your group share the goodness of God in the Gospel with others? What changes, if any, could make this more of a focus in your group?

## PRAY

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Pray and acknowledge that God's plan is for your good, brings Him pleasure and is perfect in every way. Thank God that even bad things work out for your good. Ask for faith to believe that the He, the Father, is good. May that lead you to surrender your living to Him. Pray for ways to show others how to experience God's best.

## FOLLOW UP

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Midway through this week, send a follow-up email to your group with some or all of the following:

Memorize Psalm 16:11 and reflect on what David's relationship with God mean to him.

Ask the group to share any situations where they experienced the Lord's goodness this week.



## COMMENTARY

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### ◦ God's will for your life.

"What's God's will for my life?" Chances are, you've asked this question. As humans, we want our life to have purpose and significance. That question reveals a longing to live out our design. That is, deep down we feel that we were made for something bigger than ourselves. C.S. Lewis put it this way: "If we find ourselves with a desire that nothing in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that we were made for another world."

We often try and ask this question with specifics. That is, we consider things like: what career to pursue, who to marry or where to live. But the Bible says God's will for your life has more to do with your relationship with the Father. In 1 Thessalonians 4:3 Paul says, "this is the will of God, your sanctification" (ESV). Is God concerned with your job, your marriage and where you live? Absolutely. But He is more concerned with how your life is leading you into a greater knowledge and experience of Him. Everything else takes a back seat to this all-important concern.

### ◦ The pleasures of God in Jesus.

If you want to see God's pleasure, look at how He delights in His Son and look how Jesus delighted in His Father. Jesus was perfectly obedient to the Father (John 12:49; 14:31; Heb. 10:7). He did what the Father sent Him to do. In response, the Father found great pleasure in His Son. Twice in Matthew's Gospel the Father declares His pleasure for the Son (3:17; 17:5).

John focused on the Father's love for the Son in his Gospel: "The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands" (3:35); "For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does" (5:20).

Do you see the intimacy between the Father and Son? They loved each other and their lives revolved around doing that which pleased the other. We bring God pleasure when we surrender to His will as Jesus did. We are children of God and, when we do God's will, He declares, "This is my son (or daughter) in whom I am well pleased."