

1 – God’s Eternal Purpose

Pause *Arise and Build* this Sunday.

Starting in February, we are going through a devotional I wrote *The DNA of the End-Time Church*.

In February, we are focused on God’s eternal purpose.

If you are listening online, you can get a copy if you subscribe to our Lifeschool email list. Link is in the description.

1. The Eternal Blueprint

Core DNA trait: Aligned with God’s eternal purpose.

I. THE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION YOU CAN ASK

“What is God’s ultimate intention?”

A. Why This Question Matters

- Your answer shapes:
 - How you live
 - How you pray
 - What you build
 - What you measure as success
 - Whether you are aligned with God’s desires
- If you start in the wrong place, you build the wrong thing.

- We must begin behind the story (in Ephesians) rather than inside the story (in Genesis or even later).
- Examples of inside the story are below.

B. Common Answers — But They Don't Go Back Far Enough

1. **Kingdom advancement** (Genesis 1:28)
2. **Salvation** (Genesis 3)
3. **Blessing and prosperity** (Genesis 12)
4. **Revival and miracles** (Acts)

Each contains truth.

But each begins *inside* the story.

You must go **behind** the story.

II. YOU CAN'T START IN ACTS — OR EVEN GENESIS

A. Genesis tells us how the story begins.

B. Ephesians tells us what was in God's heart before the story began.

If you start in Acts, you'll think revival is the goal.

If you start in Genesis 3, you'll think salvation is the goal.

If you start in Genesis 1, you might think dominion is the goal.

But Ephesians takes us further back than all of that.

Ephesians takes us back:

- Before time
- Before creation

- Before sin
- Before redemption

Back to:

- The Father
- The Son
- The Spirit
- Perfect love
- Perfect fellowship

Before there was a universe to rule, there was a *relationship*.

Before there was sin to forgive, there was *delight*.

Before there was a kingdom to advance, there was *communion*.

Jesus said, “You loved Me before the foundation of the world” (John 17:24).

That means before there was light, matter, angels, or humanity:

- the Father loved the Son
- the Son delighted in the Father
- the Spirit shared and communicated that love.

Within the one divine essence existed three Persons in eternal fellowship — fullness of joy, intimacy and communion, passionate love, honor, and glory.

Our minds simply can’t comprehend this.

God has never been lonely.

He has never been incomplete.

He did not create because He needed something.

He created out of *overflowing delight*.

Eph. 1:5: “He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention [**good pleasure**] of His will.”

Eph. 1:9: “He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention [**good pleasure**] which He purposed in Him.”

God planned and acted from the overflow of His good pleasure.

The pleasures of God inspired Him to establish His eternal purpose.

God’s eternal purpose flows out of His eternal joy and pleasure within the Godhead.

His purpose is not man centered. His purpose is entirely God centered.

His eternal purpose flows from joy — not from reaction, not from recovery, not from crisis management, not from justice.

The Fall did not give birth to God’s purpose.

It interrupted humanity’s participation in it.

Salvation, therefore, is not the starting point of God’s plan — it is the rescue mission back to what was always in His heart.

And what was in His heart?

A breathtaking intention:

To extend, through Christ, the fellowship and love that the Father, Son, and Spirit have eternally shared.

Jesus prayed, “That they may be in Us” (John 17:21).

God’s ultimate intention is not merely to forgive sinners.

It is to bring redeemed humanity into participation in the life, love, and fellowship of the Trinity.

Not to make us divine.

Not to absorb us into the Godhead.

But to unite us to the Son so fully that we share in His relationship with the Father.

This is why you cannot start in Acts.

And you cannot even start in Genesis.

Because if you do, you will misdiagnose the goal.

Revival serves this purpose.

Salvation serves this purpose.

The kingdom serves this purpose.

But the purpose itself is older than all of them.

God’s purpose did not begin with the Fall.

Salvation is not the starting point — it is the restoration of participation in what existed before time.

Everything begins in the joy of the Trinity.

Everything moves toward full participation in that joy through Christ.

That is the blueprint from eternity.

III. THE FOUR COMPONENTS OF GOD’S ETERNAL BLUEPRINT (Ephesians)

The overflowing joy of the Godhead lead to four components of God’s eternal purpose—revealed in Ephesians.

This includes:

- 1. Jesus Christ at the center of everything**
- 2. A family of Christlike sons**
- 3. An equally yoked bride for the Son**
- 4. A temple/house/body filled with the Spirit**

Everything God does flows from these realities.

The Father eternally had one Son by nature.

Through redemption, He will have a multitude of sons formed into the Son’s nature.

The Son was eternally the Beloved who received and responded to the Father’s love.

Through redemption, He becomes the Lover and we become His beloved, who receives and responds to His love.

IV. WHAT “PREDESTINED” REALLY MEANS

Eph. 1:11: also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will,

A. Common Misunderstanding

Anna's Donald Trump prayer.

Many interpret predestination as:

- God preselecting individuals for salvation.

B. The Greek Word: *Proorizō*

- Means: to determine beforehand
- To set the destination in advance
- Like a blueprint

This is about:

- A predetermined purpose
- A defined end
- A destination set in advance

God predetermined the plan — not the people.

V. HISTORY IS MOVING TOWARD A DESTINATION

“...who works all things after the counsel of His will.”

A. History is not random.

B. Your life is not random.

C. The church is not random.

God is working all things toward:

- His eternal blueprint
- His eternal design

This is not:

- Divine micromanagement
- Meticulous determinism

God grants free will.

Yet He draws, persuades, softens hearts, and calls us into alignment.

VI. THE PLUMB LINE OF ETERNITY

Illustration: The plumb line

- String
- Weight
- Perfect vertical alignment
- Reveals what is straight and what is crooked

God measures success by:

- Alignment with His eternal blueprint

Not by:

- Buildings
- Budgets
- Baptisms
- Crowds
- Influence

The Lord never changes His standard.

VII. HOW WE MISMEASURE SUCCESS

The modern church often measures by:

- Size
- Activity
- Visibility
- Growth metrics
- Miracles and spiritual gifts

But heaven measures by:

- Christ at the center
- Sons formed into His likeness
- A bride prepared
- A Spirit-filled dwelling place

You can have revival and still lose first love.

(Ephesus: Revival under Paul → rebuke under Jesus)

Revival serves the blueprint.

It is not the blueprint.

VIII. ALIGNMENT MATTERS

This applies to:

- Churches
- Intercessors

- Missionaries
- Business people
- Parents
- Leaders
- Every believer

Before you build — study the blueprint.

Just like a homebuilder studies plans before construction,
We must study God's eternal design before building ministry, family,
or life.

IX. WHERE THIS BECOMES PERSONAL

Only when:

- God's eternal purpose becomes your life purpose

Will you experience:

- Meaning
- Significance
- Lasting satisfaction

Ask:

- "Father, am I aligned with Your blueprint?"
 - "Is Your eternal purpose my life purpose?"
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2. Jesus Christ at the Center

I. BEFORE CREATION — THERE WAS LOVE

“This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Eph. 3:11)

A. Before time, there was love.

- The Father delighting in the Son.
- Perfect fellowship within the Godhead.
- Creation flowed from affection, not necessity.

B. The Catalyst for Creation

- The Father’s love for His Son.
- John 17:24 — the Son loved before the foundation of the world.
- You exist because of divine love centered in Christ.

Big Idea:

God’s eternal purpose revolves around a Person.

II. THE SON AT THE CENTER OF EVERYTHING

A. God’s Purpose Is in Christ

- Eph. 1:9 — “purposed in Him”
- Eph. 1:10 — to sum up all things in Christ
- Eph. 3:11 — carried out in Christ

Paul repeats:

- “In Christ”
- “In Him”
- “With Christ”

At least 36 times in six chapters.

God’s purpose is not primarily a plan — it is a Person.

III. CHRIST DEFINES THE BOUNDARIES OF GOD’S PURPOSE

A. Jesus Is the Horizon of the Blueprint

- Acts 17:31
- Colossians 1:18 — first place in everything
- Romans 11:36 — from Him, through Him, to Him

Everything:

- Flows from Christ
- Reveals Christ
- Returns to Christ

B. The Headship of Christ Is Inevitable

- No nation can stop it.
- No demon can thwart it.
- No power structure can derail it.

All creation will come under His headship (Eph. 1:10).

IV. WHEN CHRIST IS CENTRAL — EVERYTHING IS REFRAMED

A. Salvation

Not just rescue from hell
→ Eternal union with Christ.

B. Growth

Not climbing spiritual ladders
Not going to the next level
→ Deeper participation in His life.

C. Maturity

Not knowledge accumulation
→ Conformity to Christ.

V. THE DANGER OF DRIFT — THE LESSON FROM COLOSSAE

The Colossians:

- Did not reject Christ.
- Still confessed Him as Lord.

But they drifted.

A. What Competed with Christ?

- Philosophy
- Religious practices
- Mystical experiences
- Ascetic disciplines

None denied Him.

But each competed with Him.

B. Paul's Correction

- Christ Himself is the treasure (Col. 2:2–3)
- All fullness dwells in Him (Col. 2:9)
- Head over every authority (Col. 2:10)
- First place in everything (Col. 1:18)

Paul didn't just confront error.

He re-centered Christ.

VI. THE MODERN DRIFT — WHEN GOOD THINGS REPLACE CHRIST

We haven't rejected Christ.

We've replaced Him with things.

We elevate:

- Revival
- Miracles
- Spiritual gifts
- Evangelism
- End-time prophecy
- Israel
- Social justice

- Leadership principles
- Church growth
- Even biblical truth itself

All biblical.

All important.

None are the center.

VII. WHEN GOOD THINGS BECOME IDOLS

- When revival becomes the pursuit rather than Christ → misplaced priorities.
- When power becomes the aim → miracles become idols.
- When end-time prophecy eclipses Christ → fascination replaces devotion.
- When prosperity replaces intimacy → blessings become god.

Christ becomes adjacent instead of central.

VIII. THE PROPER ORDER

“That in all things He may have the preeminence.” (Col. 1:18)

When Christ is central:

- Truth finds its place.
- Gifts find their place.
- Mission finds its place.

- Blessings find their place.

When He is not:

Even good things become disordered.

3. A Family of Sons

I. BEFORE SIN — THERE WAS A DESIRE

“He predestined us to adoption as sons...” (Eph. 1:5)

A. God’s Plan Did Not Begin with the Fall

- Before there was sin to forgive...
- Before there was a world to redeem...
- The Father had a desire.

B. The Father’s Delight in the Son

- In eternity past, the Father beheld His beloved Son.
- He chose to multiply His delight.
- Not by creating servants...
- But by forming a family.

Big Idea:

God’s eternal purpose includes a family of Christlike sons.

II. SONSHIP IS CENTRAL — NOT SECONDARY

Sonship is not a side theme.

It runs through Ephesians:

- 1:5 — adoption as sons
- 1:11 — inheritance
- 1:13–14 — sealing of the Spirit
- 2:18–19 — household of God
- 3:14–15 — Father from whom every family derives its name

God is after:

- A corporate son
- Millions conformed to Christ's image
- A mature family that reflects His Son

III. UNDERSTANDING ADOPTION — FIRST-CENTURY CONTEXT

Adoption in Roman culture:

- Not about infancy
- About son placement
- Public recognition of maturity
- Placement over inheritance

Adoption was:

- Earned trust
- Proven character

- Prepared responsibility

This background reveals:

Adoption unfolds in stages.

IV. THE THREE PHASES OF SONSHIP

PHASE 1: Placement into God's Family (Belonging)

A. New Birth

- Regenerated -> children of God (John 1:12–13)
- Romans 8:15 — “Abba! Father!”

You were:

- Orphaned
- Distant
- Outside

Now you are:

- Brought near
- Loved
- Belonging

This phase is about identity and intimacy.

Application:

Rest in your belonging.

PHASE 2: Placement Under the Spirit's Child Training (Formation)

Most believers stop at belonging.

But God doesn't.

A. The Pedagogue Model

- In Roman culture, sons underwent intense training.
- Discipline
- Character formation
- Loyalty
- Endurance

The goal:

To embody the father's character and steward inheritance.

B. Sanctification Is God's Training Process

At new birth, you are a *teknon* (child).

But God intends you to become a *huios* (mature son).

The Holy Spirit:

- Corrects
- Disciplines
- Trains
- Forms Christ's character

This is:

- Not surface change

- Not behavior management
 - Deep inward transformation
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C. Training for Reigning

God is not just preparing you for heaven.
He is preparing you for inheritance.

Sonship is:

- More than a title
- A sacred responsibility

The Father loves all His children.
But He entrusts inheritance to those He trusts.

When discipline feels painful:
It is proof of preparation.

PHASE 3: Placement Into Christ's Inheritance (Inheritance)

Romans 8:23 — We groan, waiting for adoption.

If adoption were complete,
There would be nothing left to wait for.

A. The Final Phase

- Corporate maturity (Eph. 4:13)
- First resurrection (Rev. 20:4–6)
- Shared throne and authority

What begins individually
Culminates corporately.

B. Corporate Sonship

Those who:

- Suffered with Christ
- Submitted to the Spirit's training

Will be:

- Placed as a corporate son
- Into Christ's inheritance
- To reign with Him

Revelation 21:7:

“He who overcomes will inherit...”

This is not favoritism.

It is formation proven faithful.

V. WHAT GOD IS REALLY AFTER

Not merely saved sinners.

But formed sons.

Not merely forgiven people.

But conformed people.

Not merely children.

But mature heirs.

God's eternal purpose:
A family that looks like His Son.

4. A Bride Made Ready

I. SALVATION IS A LOVE STORY

“Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her...” (Eph. 5:25)

A. Before the Cross — There Was a Desire

- Before time, the Father delighted in the Son.
- From that delight came a breathtaking purpose:
 - The Son would not remain alone.
 - He would have a bride.

B. Creation Flows from Love

- John 17:24 — “You loved Me before the foundation of the world.”
- The eternal love within the Godhead overflowed outward.

Big Idea:

God's eternal purpose includes giving His Son a worthy bride.

II. MARRIAGE WAS ALWAYS PROPHETIC

“This is a great mystery... I am speaking about Christ and the church.” (Eph. 5:32)

A. Genesis Was Foreshadowing

- Adam and Eve were prophetic.
- Earthly marriage previews eternal union.

Scripture:

- Begins with a marriage (Genesis 2)
- Ends with a marriage (Revelation 19)

The Bible is not merely history.

It is the romance of Christ and His church.

III. CHOSEN CORPORATELY — NOT ISOLATED INDIVIDUALS

“He chose us in Him...” (Eph. 1:4)

A. The Language Is Corporate

- “Us” in 1:4
- “She” in 5:27

The “we” chosen in Ephesians 1

Is the “she” presented in Ephesians 5.

Proven by the same language: “holy and blameless”

God chose:

- A people
- A church

- A bride

When someone believes:

- They are baptized into Christ's body
- Joined to the elect bride in Him

This shifts focus from:

Individual election debates

→ To corporate bridal identity.

IV. THE CROSS — WHERE THE BRIDE WAS FORMED

A. Adam and Christ

- Eve was in Adam before she was created.
- The church was in Christ before we were created (Eph. 1:4).
- Adam slept → Eve formed from his side.
- Christ “slept” in death → bride formed from His pierced side.

Blood and water flowed:

- Blood — cleansing from sin.
- Water — life-giving Spirit.

Now:

- Christ is the Lover.
- We are His beloved.

V. YOU ARE HIS BELOVED

“We love because He first loved us.” (1 John 4:19)

Your love is:

- Always a response.
- Never initiation.

Jesus said:

“As the Father has loved Me, I have loved you.” (John 15:9)

That means:

The same eternal love within the Trinity
Has been poured out upon you.

Pause here pastorally:

You are cherished.

Betrothed.

Deeply loved.

VI. WHAT IS AN “EQUALLY YOKED BRIDE”?

Not equality in deity.

But likeness in nature.

An equally yoked bride is:

- Conformed to the Lamb’s nature.
- Shaped into Christ’s likeness.
- Mature in love and obedience.

Ephesians 5:27:

- Holy

- Blameless
- Glorious

This happens:

In this age.

Before He returns.

VII. HOW THE BRIDE IS MADE READY

“Having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word...” (Eph. 5:26)

Two means:

1. The cross (He gave Himself)
2. The Word (He washes her)

Sanctification is not optional.

It is part of salvation’s unfolding.

2 Thess. 2:13 — sanctification by the Spirit.

VIII. THE BRIDE MAKES HERSELF READY

“His bride has made herself ready.” (Rev. 19:7)

This is not legalism.

This is love expressed through obedience.

A. First-Century Jewish Bride Imagery

- She prepared her garments.

- Inspected for stain or blemish.
- Lived in expectation.

Revelation 19:8:

Fine linen = righteous acts (plural)

This means:

Daily obedience.

Love-motivated surrender.

Grace-empowered holiness.

IX. THE DANGER OF UNPREPAREDNESS

Imagine:

A bridegroom arrives.

No garments.

No readiness.

No seriousness.

What message does that send?

Inaction speaks:

“I do not love you like you love me.”

This is not about perfection.

It is about maturity.

Alignment.

Devotion.

5. The Body of Christ

I. WHAT IS THE CHURCH — REALLY?

“Which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.” (Eph. 1:23)

A. Common Assumptions

When people hear “church,” they think:

- A building
- A Sunday service
- Music and a sermon

But biblically:

- The church is a body, not a building.
- An organism, not merely an organization.

The Greek word *ekklēsia*:

- “Called out ones” -> gathered
- A people, not a place.

II. THE CHURCH WAS NOT AN AFTERTHOUGHT

A. Conceived in Eternity

- Chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4).
- The mystery hidden for ages (Eph. 3:6).
- In accordance with God’s eternal purpose (Eph. 3:11).

The church:

- Was always central.
 - Always part of the blueprint.
-

III. THE MYSTERY: CHRIST IN YOU

“Christ in you, the hope of glory.” (Col. 1:27)

God did something unprecedented:

- He placed the Spirit of His Son into human beings.

Humans were created:

- To become God’s dwelling place.

This is staggering:

- No angel was designed for this.
 - No other creation carries this purpose.
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IV. GOD’S PURPOSE IS CORPORATE — NOT ISOLATED

A. One New Man

- Jew and Gentile together (Eph. 2:15).
- Fellow heirs, members, partakers (Eph. 3:6).

B. Living Stones

- 1 Peter 2:5 — fit together.
- Ephesians 2:22 — a dwelling place in the Spirit.

God's goal:
Not just Spirit-filled individuals,
But a Spirit-filled body.

V. THE FULLNESS OF CHRIST IS CORPORATE

“The fullness of Him who fills all in all.” (Eph. 1:23)

Individual fullness matters.
But corporate fullness is the goal.

Ephesians 4:13:

- A mature man.
- The measure of the stature of Christ.

God's eternal law:
Fullness is experienced corporately.

You cannot fulfill God's ultimate purpose alone.

VI. THE DANGER OF INDEPENDENT CHRISTIANITY

Many:

- Wounded by religion.
- Disillusioned with systems.
- Retreat into private spirituality.

But isolation:

- Contradicts God's eternal design.

- Undermines corporate fullness.

Independence may feel safe.

But it blocks maturity.

God's purpose is:

Interdependence, not isolation.

VII. CHRIST AND HIS BODY ARE INSEPARABLE

A. The Head and the Body

- A body cannot function without its head.
- A head cannot express itself without a body.

Christ in heaven:

Expresses Himself on earth through His body.

B. Acts 9 Revelation

When Saul persecuted believers:

Jesus said, "Why are you persecuting Me?"

To touch the church

Is to touch Christ Himself.

How we treat the body

Is how we treat Jesus.

VIII. THE CHURCH IS A NEW CREATION

Before the cross:

- Jew

- Gentile

After the cross:

- The church

1 Corinthians 12:12:

“So also is Christ.”

Not that we are divine.

But we are His vessel of expression.

We are:

- His hands
- His feet
- His visible presence on earth

IX. WHAT THIS MEANS FOR US

A. Church Is Not Attendance

It is:

Participation.

Integration.

Contribution.

B. Church Is Not Optional

If you want:

- The fullness of Christ
- The maturity of Christ

- The inheritance of Christ

You must embrace:

His body.
