

## 86 - How to know whether you're at cross purposes or in lock-step with God

Tonight is a follow-up to last week's look into the sovereignty of God. It has to do with **HOW** God moves in our lives when we say either yes or no to what He's doing...to His purpose in our lives—even when we don't really know what that looks like! Hopefully we'll also look at how we know we're moving at cross purposes with Him or right in step with Him.

The sovereignty of God is declared all throughout the scriptures. We see it literally everywhere. For me, though, there is one defining scripture, against which every argument is slain. It is best seen in the Concordant Literal Version. We have looked at it many times before in our studies together. It also appears in a blog post at ScriptureDoc.com on November 29, titled "*For all my ways You have made provision.*"

Look at it with me again, tonight, on the eve of the Lord's birthday as a man...possibly the single greatest act of God's "cooperative sovereignty," or "joint sovereignty"—I'm making up these terms; I'm coining new words, I pray not presumptuously. I'm referring to what the Father did, together with the One in Whom He entrusts the all, namely Jesus Christ, His "Creative Original." The only begotten Son of God was, truly the firstborn of many brethren, as Paul wrote. Therefore, He was the first to be designated, called, justified, and glorified (**Romans 8:30**). The Lord's entire existence, let alone His life, death, resurrection, and ascension, is a living, continuous testimony to the sovereignty of God.

There is no other with Whom the Father shares so fully or entrusts His purpose completely, so that Jesus could say, "The Father and I are One." He was not speaking in the literal sense that humans have mistaken and so have perpetuated what of me is a myth—a sort of schizophrenic Deity, called the Trinity. Rather, I believe Jesus was speaking literally in the sense of will, purpose, direction, aspiration, goal, intention, and total agreement.

### Psalm 139:

O Yahweh [Lord], You have investigated me and are knowing me; You yourself know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought from afar; My path and my pallet You have measured off, And for all my ways You have made provision. For though there be no declaration on my tongue, Behold, O Yahweh, You know it all. Back and front, You have besieged me, And You set Your palm upon me. Such knowledge is marvelous beyond me; It is impregnable;

I cannot reach to it. Whither could I go from Your spirit, And whither could I run away from your presence? If I should climb to the heavens, You are there, And should I make my berth in the unseen, behold, You are there. Should I wear the wings of dawn, Should I tabernacle in the hindmost sea, Even there Your hand would guide me, And Your right hand, it would hold me. If I said, "Surely darkness, it snuffed me up, And night is belted about me," Even darkness, it is not darkening to You, And night, as the day, is giving light; Darkness is as light. For You Yourself achieved the making of my innermost being; You overshadowed me in my mother's belly. I shall acclaim You, for You are fearfully distinguished; Marvelous are Your works. You have known my soul very thoroughly; My skeleton was not suppressed from You, When I was made in concealment; I was woven together as in the nether parts of the earth. Your eyes saw my embryo, And my days, all of them were written upon Your scroll; The days were formed when there was not one of them. How precious are Your thoughts to me, O El [God], How plentiful are their sums: If I number them, they are more than the sand. I awake, and I am still with You.

Bible Gateway's verse of the day on Monday, December 19<sup>th</sup>, was **Luke 1:76-78, and I'm tacking on verses 79 & 80:**

76 Now you, also, little boy, a prophet of the Most High shall be called, For you shall be going before in the sight of the Lord To make ready His roads,  
77 To give the knowledge of salvation to His people In the pardon of their sins,  
78 Because of the merciful compassions of our God, In which the Dayspring from on high visits us,  
79 To make Its advent to those sitting in darkness and the shadow of death, To direct our feet into the path of peace."  
80 Now the little boy grows up and was staunch in spirit and was in the wilderness till **the day of his indication to Israel.**

This was Zechariah's prophecy about his son, John, at his circumcision 8 days after his birth. Look again at verse 80, because it forms the theme of our study tonight:

80 Now the little boy grows up and was staunch in spirit and was in the wilderness till **the day of his indication to Israel.**

It took John the Baptist 30 years to arrive at "the day of his indication—his showing up—to Israel." 30 years is a long time by our reckoning. Jesus had to turn 30 before He was ready to be baptized, tried by Satan in the desert, and to begin His ministry. Once John showed up—once he was indicated to Israel, however, Jesus showed up quickly after that. Remember, they weren't even a year apart in age, so if Jesus showed

up—if He was first indicated to Israel when John baptized Him at 30, John could only have been 31 at the most. Fast forward to the length of time occupied by Jesus complete ministry – during which He secured the salvation of the entire world: it was only 3½ years long.

Look at the speed with which God created the entire world and everything in it: 6 days...”The evening and the morning were the first day...the 2<sup>nd</sup> day...the 3<sup>rd</sup> day, and so on. I used to think that was all figurative language. Most people I know think of the creation story as figurative. It’s impossible for us to wrap our brains around 6 literal days with so much accomplished. It has to be figurative, right?

After all, Peter wrote this, in **2 Peter 3:**

8 Now of this one thing you are not to be oblivious, beloved, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day.

So, the logic goes, each day was 1,000 years long, and creation took God 6,000 years. OK, now that’s more believable. And I fell for it too.

But wait! **Genesis 1:5** says:

And coming is it to be evening and coming to be morning, day one.

“Evening and morning, Day one.” “Evening and morning” are very specific terms. The Jews still reckon days this way. Shabbat begins at sundown on Friday and goes until sundown Saturday—the evening and the morning, one day.”

What’s my point here? Simply this: When God’s on the move, and you’re in the flow of His movement, as was the creation, and as John and Jesus were—as the Lord is today!—He moves quickly. He’s always moving, always advancing His purpose of the eons, as Paul wrote, but when we step into His flow, our lives move quickly; they change fast; things happen quickly; there’s not a lot of time to think – that’s what gets us into trouble anyway.

Human beings, for most of our history, have **not** been in the flow of the Spirit of God. God isn’t the slow One – it’s been us! We’re the ones who are slow, simply because we’re hindered by the limitations of our own intellect!

**2 Peter 3 also says this:**

9 The Lord is **not tardy** [not behind] as to the promise, as some are deeming tardiness, but is patient because of you, not intending any to perish, but all to make room for repentance.

God is never slow. He only looks that way to us when we EXPECT Him to do things the way we picture them. When you and God are One, by the Spirit, you receive His word

and trust Him to carry it out when and how HE chooses, not necessarily when and how you expect.

God told Noah to build an ark and gave him the instructions. He told Noah what he was going to do, but He didn't tell him when or how. Noah heard the word of the Lord and simply obeyed. He didn't question God's choice or determine His timing.

God told Abraham that in his seed, the earth would be blessed. Abraham died without seeing any of that fulfilled, except for Isaac—one man. He received the word of the Lord and left it to Him to fulfill it in His own time and in His own way. His only expectation was that a son would be born to him by Sarah, and, in His case, a **certain** time was revealed:

**Genesis 17:21**

But my covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you by this time next year.”

Moses was told what to do and how to do it. He was told what role Pharaoh would play and that it wouldn't go easy. Moses was NOT told how long it would take...He wasn't given tons of specifics ahead of time...only as he went. He HAD to trust God to fulfill His word to deliver Israel from its slavery in Egypt and take them into the land promised to Abraham hundreds of years earlier. The Lord did NOT tell Moses how long it would all take, or what it would all look like on the way. Truth be told, Moses had no idea what to expect from God REALLY. He simply had to HEAR and HEED. He had to put one foot in front of the other every day, and trust God to do what He said.

Jesus probably had more specific information than anyone in history, and since He poured out the Holy Spirit on us, we have more to go on than most humans before then. And STILL, God's timing is His own. His methods are His own. His direction for our lives is His own...IF we will give them to Him. IF we will die to ourselves, or, as O.C. says, if we will give up the right to ourselves and let God help Himself to our lives, we can enjoy a relationship with Him and a flow within his purpose in and through our lives that may be unprecedented in human history, precisely BECAUSE He is in us and we are in Him.

I invite you tonight to evaluate your relationship to God in the context of the speed with which changes occur.

- Do things appear to move at a snail's pace, or does it seem like God has His foot firmly held down on the accelerator so that all you can do is stay grateful, hang on and, like Moses, put one foot in front of the other from waking to resting?

- Do circumstances and relationships take you by surprise in a frustrating, or in a thrilling and fulfilling way?
- Do you live in a sense of frenzied disruption, or a sense of peace and joy in the midst of seeming frenzied disruption swirling in the world around you?
- Are you living in a state of struggle, lack and striving, or are you living in **“The blessing of Yahweh, it encircles and He shall not add grief to it”**? (Proverbs 10:22)
- If you’re hearing the word of the Lord, either in your own spirit, or through others whom He has sent as messengers, does that word seem to be frustrated and your outlook shrouded in a kind of gray cloud; or can you see the hand of God, in every circumstance and relationship, moving toward its fulfillment word, perhaps even with almost blinding speed?
- Can you pick up God’s fingerprints, not just in the world at large, but in the daily, weekly, yearly course of your life’s events? Are you moving **across** or **with** His purpose?

It’s important to recognize that if any of the aspects we just listed on the negative side of the chart—the side none of us likes and would love to avoid if possible—are sometimes entirely necessary to grow up mature sons and daughters of God. There is the “learning of obedience through the things we suffer.” Jesus went through it, according to

#### **Hebrews 5:**

7 Who, in the days of His flesh, offering both petitions and supplications with strong clamor and tears to Him Who is able to save Him out of death, being hearkened to also for His piety,

8 even **He also, being a Son, learned obedience from that which He suffered.**

9 And **being perfected**, He became the cause of eonian salvation to all who are obeying Him

Jesus’ suffering taught Him obedience and resulted in His being perfected. We should not expect to skate through life, bathed in a never-ending shower of blessing, bounty and ease.

Remember that God’s first priority for us is our obedience, and that requires uncompromising, unflinching, determined, consistent trust in Him. So when things are going other than we expected, or slower than we expected, especially when we think we have a firm grasp on God’s timing, it’s not because He is unfaithful or, even worse, playing some kind of cruel game. Our first accountability, when we’re out of sorts with God or with His plan in our lives at any given moment, is to look at ourselves. What are we thinking about? Where are we putting our attention? It’s like Barbara’s 3-point God

check: Who gets your time, who gets your money, and who do you talk about. Are we seeking Him first, or are more consumed with ourselves and our immediate needs or challenges?

We are intimately involved in some people's lives, purely because God has ordered it. We have seen miraculous acts of God on their behalfs so long as they're moving with His purposes. He reveals, they obey and confirmation comes swiftly, sometimes instantly or within hours at most, and blessing follows and flows. This the cycle continues so long as revelation is met with obedience. The flow is also very specific – every area but one may be in order and in line with God's revelation. When that happens, the flow is constricted and labored. If the area in question isn't addressed and corrected, God can shut the whole fountain off and the person may feel completely abandoned.

Many examples appear in the scriptures: Saul, Jonah, Sampson, Moses, The whole nation of Israel, Adam, Lot, Reuben. I struggled to find New Testament examples, but the Apostles stayed true to the revelation they had.

If you can stand it, let me give you some examples from my own experience, and I pray that you'll see God's fingerprints in every case.

Barbara and I just celebrated 44 months together. We're coming up on the 4<sup>th</sup> anniversary of stepping knowingly into the flow of God's sovereign purpose for our lives, and for our life together. You have probably heard me relate the story of when God spoke to me for the first time in a very long time...like more than 15 years. He said, "Say yes to this, 'cause it's not coming around again." Barbara had already said yes to His leading..of course...because she usually **gets** it first and has so much less garbage to work through even to be able to hear His voice.

So, the first lesson is, when God speaks, you know it's His voice, and you know instantly that He's not waiting forever for you to decide to heed what you just heard. When you hear the Lord, heed Him. Do what He says. Act immediately, not later, and watch Him show up like He did after He ascended:

### **Mark 16:20**

17 Now these signs shall fully follow in those who believe: In My name they shall be casting out demons; they will be speaking in new languages;

18 they will be picking up serpents; and if they should be drinking anything deadly, it should under no circumstances be harming them; they will be placing hands on those who are ailing, and ideally will they be having it."

19 The Lord, indeed, then, after speaking with them, was taken up into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God.

20 Now they, coming away, herald everywhere, the Lord working together with them and confirming the word by the signs following them up.

The Lord will work together with you too, confirming His word with signs and wonders. The principle and pattern is alive today.

Here's an example of what happens when we delay acting on God's message. I learned of an upcoming marriage of a niece more 6 months before the date. No sooner did we get the news than Barbara said, "We're not going." Five months later, I was still waiting to hear from God about whether we were going. The Lord took us down to nothing during that time – I mean nothing. We had to move in with friends and I especially had to learn obedience through the things I suffered. I had visions of sleeping under a bridge in Dallas. One day, after we had sold every piece of gold jewelry we had to pay rent on an apartment we'd been in only a month, I had fielded multiple calls from family 17 Now these signs shall fully follow in those who believe: In My name they shall be casting out demons; they will be speaking in new languages;

18 they will be picking up serpents; and if they should be drinking anything deadly, it should under no circumstances be harming them; they will be placing hands on those who are ailing, and ideally will they be having it."

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members over a period of weeks,

Computer monitor -

In this example, the word of the Lord came through my wife, as it does often (and, it sometimes works the other way, thankfully)