

Destiny Diverters

10 Areas to Watch Out For

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A Heart of Wisdom

'For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.' Jeremiah 29:11

God has amazing plans for all believers, all His thoughts and plans for us are always for good and He has an expected end point in mind for us – what we can call our destiny. However just because God has a plan for us does not automatically mean that plan will be fulfilled the way He wants – God will always do His part, but we also have a role to play.

In reality not everyone gets to know or fulfill God's plans to the extent that He has desired for us. Why is this so and what are the things we need to be mindful of so our destinies are not diverted?

Stay connected as we look at 10 areas we need to be mindful of as we partner with God to ensure we fulfil His plans for our lives.



Day 1 Ignorance

'My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge...' Hosea 4:6

One of the major sources of destiny diversion is ignorance – not knowing that there's even a plan God has for us. It's very easy to get caught up in the daily grind of life, going from day to day without being strategic on searching out God's plan, dealing with what's facing us rather than digging deeper. It's important we understand that the things of God require dedicating time to spend with Him to find out what His plan is in the first place.

'For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.' Jeremiah 29:11

'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; Before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations.' Jeremiah 1:5

'If they had stood before me and listened to me, they would have spoken my words...' Jeremiah 23:22 NLT

God already knows His plans for us – in fact He knew them before we were even born, so He's clearly got everything well mapped out. It's our responsibility is to spend time with Him to find out what those plans are. That's why we need to spend time in His counsel, which simply means spending time asking Him and not letting go until we get an answer from Him. Life will throw many answers at us – expectations from society, family, our own personal ambitions – but it's only the answer from the Lord that will transform us and keep us on His path.

If we don't know where we're headed any road will be fine: we can live in any country, hang out with anyone and do whatever we feel like with the resources and gifts God has given us. But that's not how we're supposed to live. Our lives are meant to be lived strategically and intentionally such that each season we grow and mature in our understanding of God, His ways and in the execution of our assignment. But we won't know all this if we don't ask and persist in the place of seeking Him until He answers us.

Prayer: Lord, I know You have a plan for me, please reveal this plan to me what it is so I can walk according to the path You've designed for me.

Day 2 Distractions

'Turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things, and revive me in Your way.' Psalms 119:37

A writer once said, "It's human nature, this propensity in the face of the profound to be distracted by the trivial". The potential every day offers us is indeed profound, yet we are distracted daily by so many things that in the final analysis are quite trivial when we place them against the backdrop of eternity. Yesterday we looked at ignorance as a derailer and we may be tempted to think all we need is to know God's plan and then all will be perfect. The truth is, knowing what to do without a plan to do it can be just as bad as not knowing at all.

"So be very careful to follow everything Moses wrote in the Book of Instruction. Do not deviate from it, turning either to the right or to the left.' Joshua 23:6 NLT

'Teach us to realize the brevity of life, so that we may grow in wisdom.' Psalms 90:12

Living a distracted life is easy, it simply means giving attention to everything that comes our way without weighing its importance and impact on our most valuable resource – Time! When we begin to value time and the fact that there's an allotted time for us to fulfil our assignment here in earth, it helps us become more discerning about how we use time. We begin to ration the time we spend on those activities that do not add to our achieving purpose and over time eliminate those that actively derail us. If we're honest we know where our potential rabbit holes exist – those friends, outings, TV programs, social media platforms etc. that take us away from what we know we're supposed to be doing.

'And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.'" Luke 10:41-42

Some distractions may appear very legitimate, which is why the help of the Holy Spirit is required to highlight the areas that are derailing us without our realization and employ the necessary strategies to get back on track.

Prayer: Lord I realize that I live a very distracted life, please help me focus on the one thing that is really needed and build my life around it as I trust You will bring everything into alignment as I do so.

Day 3 Social Circle

'Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits." I Corinthians 15:33

Who we spend time with plays a critical role in our staying on track or not. Do we surround ourselves with accountability partners who help us maintain our focus or with those who don't see the importance of the things we value? If it's the latter, it's simply a matter of time before we get derailed.

'Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful' Psalms 1:1

'As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend.' Proverbs 27:17 NLT

There's a direct correlation between who we choose to walk with and our ability to focus on fulfilling God's plans for our lives. This is because God designed us to be social and function in communities – no one is meant to be a lone ranger as no one can possibly know/do everything. There are those we choose to be closer to us than others and this is where we have to be very strategic and discerning. There will be times when we may be in tight spots, get weary or discouraged and it may not be easy to stand alone. When we have others we are accountable to who also encourage us, we are better able to surmount the challenges that life will throw at us.

'But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself... therefore he requested of the chief of the eunuchs... 'Please test your servants for ten days, and let them give us vegetables to eat and water to drink.'" Daniel 1:8,12

Daniel determined not to defile himself, but he also had three other friends backing him up so they could stand together and we see how his story turned out. Imagine if Daniel's friends had told him to align with the Joneses and do what everyone else was doing – destiny derailed. We see other examples of how Daniel's friends were a good support system for him and it made a difference in His life. Who is in your core circle? Are they helping you fulfil or derailing you from achieving God's best for your life?

Prayer: Lord please help me audit my social circle so the people that I give direct access to me are those that will help me fulfil destiny.

Day 4

People Pleasers

'Obviously, I'm not trying to win the approval of people, but of God. If pleasing people were my goal, I would not be Christ's servant.' Gal 1:10

Focusing on what people say and pleasing people unfortunately sets us up for massive derailment. God's ways are not man's ways and when he starts a project, it's with the end in sight (Isa 46:10). This is very different from the way we look at things which is largely based on the limited information available at the time. Even if we have all the information, the truth is it's impossible to please everyone all the time.

'Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.' Col 3:2

'It was by faith that Noah built a large boat to save his family from the flood. He obeyed God, who warned him about things that had never happened before...' Hebrews 11:7 NLT

The fear of men is dangerous because it leads us to compromise on what's really important – obeying God. Picture Noah building an ark at a time when no one knew what a flood was, he must have looked strange to his neighbours, etc. it would have been so easy to be discouraged – after all how can you expect people to understand that you're preparing for something that's never happened before? He would have been mocked, maybe even insulted, but he stayed the course.

'Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you...' Rom 12:2 NLT

What about when people actively encourage you to do what's wrong so you can fit in? It's easy to go with crowd – everyone's doing it so why should you be different? Child of God, we must be different, that's how we stand out and glorify Jesus in our lives. This is why we need to be focused and also have the right circle to help us. We can't do it in our own strength and thank God the Holy Spirit is available, but we must ask for His help and determine in our hearts that we will obey whatever He says.

Prayer: Holy Spirit please help me focus on pleasing and obeying God and not men. Help me fix my mind on eternal value rather than instant gratification and applause of men.

Day 5 Under Development

'Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and all the people.' Luke 2:52

Jesus gave us a template for us to follow in every area and one thing we should note is that Jesus grew – not just physically but He also developed Himself spiritually. He invested in spiritual development so He would achieve all that He was meant to: knowing what the word said concerning Him and living it out, studying and learning what the Word said concerning God's mind. This why at the end of it all He could confidently say: "It is finished."

'...they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions.' Luke 2:46

'Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.' Mark 1:35

"Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord." 2 Peter 1:2

In order to walk in the fullness of what God has for us, there's a need for continuous spiritual development on our part and for this we need God's grace. The Bible tells us that grace is multiplied through the knowledge of our Lord and knowledge comes from investment in time spent in fellowshiping with God and obeying whatever instructions He gives us. It's like someone whose potential is to carry a 50kg weight – if the person doesn't go to the gym to build capacity over time from a current level of say 10kg, that potential will not be reached. Likewise with our spiritual capacity – it must be consistently developed over time in God's presence.

Jesus prioritized this over everything else and in spite of His constant hectic schedule, He always made time to pray and go through the Word. No matter how busy we may be, it's doubtful many of us are as busy as Jesus was, yet we may not be as focused on spiritual development as He was. There's a direct correlation between growing in the full stature of Christ and the amount of time we invest with Him.

Reflection: What is your spiritual development plan?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, help me prioritize growing in the knowledge of You and help me develop consistency in my spiritual growth so I can mature in the areas that matter.

Day 6 Laziness

'...His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.' I Corinthians 15:10

Apostle Paul was without doubt extremely productive, writing majority of the New Testament and also actively responsible for spreading the gospel across vast geographies. He was clearly anointed and grace was extended, but more importantly he noted something critical above – he labored abundantly. Fulfilling destiny requires our active participation, determination and hard work. It's possible to be anointed and still not fulfil potential if we don't partner with God in rolling up our sleeves to get the work done to His satisfaction.

'The desire of the lazy man kills him, for his hands refuse to labor.' Proverbs 21:25

The soul of a lazy man desires, and has nothing; but the soul of the diligent shall be made rich. Proverbs 13:4

'And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men' Colossians 3:23

It's not enough to just desire fulfilling purpose, that desire must be backed up by action. Anyone that's ever amounted to anything has been hard working – laziness is always a sure way to be derailed. The truth is fulfilling destiny won't always be easy or convenient. It may involve periods of being stretched and will always involve hard work on our part. Looking at the example of Jesus, it couldn't have been easy to go to city after city attending to the needs of people. It couldn't have been convenient for Paul to travel by foot and sea – sometimes on very perilous journeys – to get the job done. While in Corinth Paul was also a tentmaker (Acts 18:1-4) yet he made the time to work on God's agenda. For some of us the place we work may be our platform, for others it may be full time ministry – whatever the case, hard work is required on our part. You'll be amazed at the capacity you carry IF you are willing to let God stretch you.

Prayer: Lord, I realize I may not have backed up my desires with the hard work needed. Help me on this journey, strengthen me and keep me focused on you so I don't rest on my oars. Help me to partner with You so that all You've planned for me will be my reality.

Day 7 Carelessness

'But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say?' Luke 6:46

An area we need to be mindful of when it comes to fulfilling destiny is carelessness. As opposed to laziness which involves not doing anything at all, carelessness is not paying enough attention to what we do. Why is this a diverter? Issues of destiny will always involve following instructions and taking specific steps. Carelessness means not paying enough attention to the details of what we're supposed to do or may even deciding to cherry pick what we will and will not do. And that's not how the Lord designed for our destiny to be fulfilled because every instruction has a purpose.

'Be sure that you make everything according to the pattern I have shown you here on the mountain.' Exodus 25:40

'The Lord says, "I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you.' Psalms 32:8

Instructions from the Bible or directly from the Lord are to equip us to guide us along the best pathway for our lives. Which means there are several pathways we can take. God will advise us, but He will not force us. At each point in time, we make choices in either taking the time to pay attention to the details and obeying Him fully or glossing over and doing what we feel like. God has a pattern for our lives and it's important we build according to His template. When we pick and choose what we will or will not do we're essentially telling Him that we would rather build our lives according to our own pattern and that automatically takes us off track.

'If you fully obey the Lord your God and carefully keep all his ... the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations of the world.' Deuteronomy 28:1

'But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves.' James 1:22 NLT

Carelessness in handling the things of God will cost us and unfortunately we may not realize the price until we get to the end of our journey. Let's ask the Lord for help to take ALL of His words seriously.

Prayer: Lord please help me to pay careful attention not just to hearing your word, but to doing what it says in full.

Day 8 Procrastination

'We must quickly carry out the tasks assigned us by the one who sent us...' John 9:4

Procrastination means to intentionally and habitually delay or put off doing something till a later time. Edward Young wrote, "Procrastination is the thief of time", and we can add that it's also the thief of destiny. We may procrastinate for a number of reasons. It could be that the task at hand appears too long and isn't enjoyable so we'd rather do something more pleasurable. It could also be the result of over-confidence and a wrong belief that there's enough time or capacity to complete the task. It may be result of pure carelessness and laziness. Whatever the reason, time passes, and important things are left undone.

The king's matter requires urgency 1 Samuel 21:8

We may not realize it at the time we're procrastinating but leaving things until later (and possibly not doing them at all in the end) will have a major impact on our successfully arriving at the end point God has in mind for us. Sometimes believers practice selective procrastination in that we can be very organized at school, work etc, but major procrastinators when it comes to the things of God. Forgetting that our relationship with God forms the foundation of our lives and if we get that wrong, it's just a matter of time before other areas begin to unravel. God looks at the totality of us and our faithfulness in all areas, not just those that we feel like doing.

'For everything there is a season, a time for every activity under heaven.' Ecclesiastes 3:1

In our journey of fulfilling destiny, there's a time assigned to activities and oftentimes we don't respond with the required urgency because we do not understand what God is drawing out or putting in us by our completing that task. God doesn't just look at the end state, but how we handle the process, so when we treat His things casually, what we're signaling is that He cannot trust us with greater responsibility in the kingdom.

Prayer: Lord help me to stop procrastinating as I see now how it's affecting my destiny. Help me to prioritize the things that are important to you and not treat them as an afterthought.

Day 9 Negative Thoughts

'For as he thinks in his heart, so is he...' Proverbs 23:7

Our thoughts are powerful, because thoughts lead to actions, actions to habits and habits to lifestyle. Our lifestyle determines how we live and what we prioritize. This is why one of the key areas the enemy attacks is our mind. He knows better than we do the critical role our thoughts play in shaping our destiny.

'...We capture their rebellious thoughts and teach them to obey Christ.' 2 Corinthians 10:5

Our thoughts can be taught to obey Christ. It won't come automatically which is why we have to 'capture' them and then introduce a higher alternative for the mind to grasp. Have you ever spoken to someone who kept doing what clearly wasn't good for them? Even if the person says he/she would like or change, until they see a way out of their current limiting thought pattern nothing will change. Self-help can bring motivation but only the Holy Spirit can bring transformation.

'...Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.' Philippians 4:8

'...for we have the mind of Christ.' 1 Corinthians 2:16

So how does change come? By actively inviting the help of the Holy Spirit to alter our thought patterns so we can think about the right things that will move us ahead. We can't allow our thoughts to run wild; we have the power to control them. When we observe a negative thought, we must immediately 'capture' that thought and rebuke it, then ask the Holy Spirit to help us to replace that thought with one that is pleasing to Him. It's a thought-by-thought process of replanting negative thoughts with those that build us up and honour God.

We should also declare that we have the mind of Christ and so we think and reason the way Christ reasons.

Prayer: Lord I recognize that the enemy actively targets my thoughts to derail my destiny. Precious Holy Spirit help me take charge of my thoughts and submit them all to You for filtering. Help me to deny negative thoughts the opportunity to settle in my mind and help me function with the mind of Jesus.

Day 10

Demonic Detours

'Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift each of you like wheat. But I have pleaded in prayer for you, Simon, that your faith should not fail...' Luke 22:31-32

The devil and his cohorts do not want us to succeed in fulfilling destiny because our success automatically means their failure. Consequently, there are some detours in life instigated directly by the enemy to try to get us off track. We see that Satan planned to derail Simon (Peter) but Jesus interceded in prayer. If the enemy could plan to derail people who walked directly with Jesus daily, how much more us?

'Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour.' 1 Peter 5:8

The Bible tells us that the enemy is like a lion looking for someone to devour, but the fact that he is looking does not mean that he will be successful and even if he is successful with others, it does not mean that he will be with you. The Bible gives us a clear strategy to counter the enemy's derailment plans.

'Keep watch and pray, so that you will not give in to temptation...' Matthew 26:41

'Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil.' Ephesians 6:11

'Praise the Lord, who is my rock. He trains my hands for war and gives my fingers skill for battle.' Psalms 144:1

The enemy's strategy to derail us may not look bad initially, but unknown to us there's a hidden agenda that's being put into motion. It could be a relationship, a job opportunity, something that initially appears appealing, but takes us off God's plan for our lives. We will be severely short changed if we rely only on what we see or think we know.

Where the detour is due to negative reasons, we can still counter such using our spiritual tools. There will be battles to fight on this journey, but we fight from the position of defending and enforcing the victory Jesus already won for us. Your destiny's too important to accept defeat.

Prayer: Lord please give me spiritual perception and a heightened sense of discernment so I know the source of every situation and give me the skill necessary to win every battle.

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