

PUBLISHER'S MESSAGE

God Has A Special Calling For Each And Every One of Us. Do You Know What Plans He Has For You?

I was 13 when I first came to love the Lord.

Like everyone else on my mother's side of the family, I was attending a Presbyterian church (here in Norfolk at the time). I can remember how overwhelmed I was in my desire to minister to others.

Unlike my family and others at the church, I was deeply wrapped up in the prophetic, even before I knew what that was all about. I had multiple dreams and visions back then about the coming of the Lord. I knew I was somehow involved.

In my immaturity as a Christian, I even wondered if "I" was the Christ ... feeling that when the time was right, like a butterfly I would bloom into my end-times destiny role. Little did I know the path my life would take as the Father led me in my calling.

God has a plan for each and every one of us.

Jeremiah 29:11-14 says, *"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you," declares the Lord.*"

I'm here to testify that each and every word of that scripture applies(d) to me.

At thirteen, I was naïve, innocent, and so in love with the Lord. But the devil desires to kill, steal, and destroy everything that is precious to God, so the devil brought havoc to my life.

Perhaps this has happened to you. Was there a time that you loved the Lord, but something came into your life which caused you to turn your back on Christ. Maybe it was the church you were attending, maybe it was the loss of a loved one, maybe it was the idols of this world that stole away the joy of the Lord.

In my case, it was my parents separating and later divorcing. That one act crushed my little world and everything that was dear to me as a young teen.

Seeing my mother sobbing daily wrecked my resolve. My desires to attend Virginia Tech to study architecture were destroyed, as all savings went to cover expenses of a house divided.

Just like any other kid, I prayed to God that He would bring my parents back together, that He would comfort my mom and end the crying.

It didn't happen. I blamed God.

How many of you reading this have ever blamed God for something that He did

not cause? We tend to do that all the time when we are immature in our faith. It would be years before I grew up spiritually.

But God had a plan for me. In spite of the havoc, destruction to my world of dreams, and divorce of my parents ... and even without my knowing it ... my life continued inching its way towards God's plan for me.

I've shared previously in my commentaries, that God has a purpose for me and The Church Guide. It's an end-of-times calling. It began when I was 13.

When I was very young, I had a gift of design and I wanted to become an architect. God wanted me to publish a Christian newspaper reaching out to those who do not know Christ.

My path would not serve the Kingdom, so my life inched forward towards what God had planned for me.

My father worked the night shift at the local newspaper. Oh how he hated working for the newspaper.

When I was about eleven, I was working on a "printing" merit badge for the Boy Scouts. Part of what I had to do was visit a printing plant. My father took me to the composing room of the newspaper.

I remember distinctly in the tour my father gave me, he said "I hate this place and I would never have you work here."

A couple of years later my father was out of the picture. He was out of my life.

I graduated from high school, didn't go to college right away because there were no funds, so I tried to get meaningful work.

Nothing was available for a high school grad except working at fast food restaurants. I eventually got a job at Sears, where I met a girl that would one day become my wife (probably would not have happened if I went to Va Tech). But Sears laid me off, and I couldn't find work.

During this time, my mother was pulling her life back together, and had fallen in love with a man. I was about nineteen at the time they got married.

He was a printer, he worked the day shift at the newspaper. He and my father never knew one another. His name was Jesse. He would become God's tool to get me back on track.

While I was out of work, Jesse asked if I would be interested in applying for the printer apprenticeship program offered at the newspaper.

I remembered my father's words as we toured the paper years earlier, and really didn't want to go to work there. But I had been without work for a long time,

and decided I should take what ever kind of work I could get.

I got the job, and worked the next twenty years for the newspaper. Like my father, I hated it there. I had dreams of leaving. I worked my way through college, even to the point of obtaining my Masters degree in Industrial/Organizational Psychology from Old Dominion University.

That opened up new management opportunities at the newspaper. In just a few years I was overseeing hundreds and hundreds of employees and managing multi-million dollar budgets.

But there came a time the Lord wanted me to leave, and I did.

I opened a small copy and print shop in Virginia Beach near Regent University.

There are a lot of churches in the Kempsville area of Virginia Beach. With the hundreds of students from Regent and all the Christians from the area churches coming into my store, I began getting close to God again. God blessed the store with early success.

It was at this time that a pastor named Ted Fortenberry began frequenting the store utilizing my help in producing materials for The Church and Good Business Guide. Ted was pastoring a new church and needed to supplement his income. That was 1990. Our working relationship grew over the next eight years, up to the time I sold my store.

A few months later, Pastor Fortenberry called me saying he was selling the Church Guide. He had been praying about it and believed that God wanted him to ask me to buy it. I did.

There is so much more of this story I could tell. The point of this testimony is that God has a plan for you. You may not even know what it is, but if you get close to the Father, He'll share it with you.

I never knew that one day I would be the publisher of an important end-of-times newspaper. A media ministry that would reach out to a million people giving them hope in Christ.

God told me when I was only thirteen, but I thought I was supposed to be an architect. Like my father, I hated working for a newspaper, much less ever consider owning one. I spent twenty years trying to get out of the newspaper business, not knowing that God was equipping me and preparing me for my calling.

What is God calling you to do? Are you listening? Are you obedient? Are you fighting like I did? Surrender to God, His plans for you are far better than anything you could ever imagine.