

# God's Plan

RESCUE  
REFOCUS  
RELEASE

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## SERIES OVERVIEW

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Don't you wish your students could understand the importance and power of the gospel? Don't you wish they understood their importance in carrying out the message of the gospel? God's Plan will help students understand these truths. In this series, students will discover God's plan for humanity, God's plan for us, and how He will accomplish His plan.

WEEK 1 /

GOD'S PLAN IS TO **RESCUE**

WEEK 2 /

GOD'S PLAN IS TO **REFOCUS**

WEEK 3 /

GOD'S PLAN IS TO **RELEASE**

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## SCRIPTURE

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*"He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me."*

COLOSSIANS 1:28-29 NIV

# GOD'S PLAN IS TO **rescue** YOU.

## INTRO

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Have you ever looked around at all the struggles and troubles of the world and thought to yourself, "What is the plan here? Is there even a plan here?" You look up to heaven, shrug your shoulders, and think, "What is going on?"

I (Pastor Trey) grew up playing basketball, and I had two coaches in my middle and high school career. My first coach never had a game plan. Now, this team was TALENTED! We were such good individual players, but without a game plan, without a common strategy, we were lost out there on the court and didn't win many games. My other coach was the guy with the whiteboard in his hands, always coming up with different plans. This team was not nearly as talented, but we won almost every game we played because we all followed the plan he made (This is Pastor Trey's story as an example. Try to think of your own similar analogy to use while leading this lesson).

With the plan, we had a clear vision and goal. We were unified. I don't want us to think that God doesn't have a plan for humanity, for you and me, because He does! God always has a plan.

**Context:** Colossians. The author is Paul, who wrote to a church in Colossae from prison.

**Read:** Colossians 1:28-29

## TRUTH

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Jesus is the one we proclaim! What are we proclaiming? WE are proclaiming...

### **BOTTOM LINE: GOD'S PLAN IS TO RESCUE**

Why do I even need rescuing? Because of a problem called sin. Sin is something that we all fall into. Read Romans 3:23. Humanity is sinful. You look around in the world, and there is real brokenness and hurt. We see wounds, troubles, and struggles that we have no control over and can't do anything about. Why? Because of sin. Sin causes hurt and brokenness in our world. Why do we need rescuing from sin?

### **SIN SEPARATES**

Sin separates us from God! Let's go back to the beginning of humanity where God created everything! The Bible says, "Then God said, 'Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground'" (Genesis 1:26). Yet, there was one tree we could not eat from. Why? God always gives us a choice to obey or not.

So what does man do in this story? What does man always do? We want the one thing we can't have. Why? We're rebellious, and we're full of pride. Sin is man replacing himself with God.

Have you ever thought, "Why can't God just forgive sin and wink it all away like it never happened?" Let's pretend like Adam never sinned and neither have we. Then God would no longer be God. You see, God is both Holy and Just. One of the greatest definitions of holy is "perfect," and because God is also perfectly Just, or Fair, he cannot let sin go without punishment and without payment. Read Romans 6:23.

When we step into sin, we are separated from God and from an eternity in heaven. We can't solve life's unsolvable questions and look for healing and redemption in life's worst moments. Because we're separated by sin, we are unable to experience heaven on earth. Now we're stuck looking for the things our soul longs for: Purpose. Rest. Joy. Satisfaction.

## **WE NEED A RESCUER**

People try to fill that void by making their own plan and finding their own way to wherever ultimate fulfillment and hope can be found. You may find them for a season, but they won't last or give you peace. Some of the ways we seek fulfillment can be through:

- Moralism
- Religion
- Atheism
- Witchcraft

We know these things don't work, yet we pursue them anyway, unwilling to admit that we are not enough!

God looks down on broken humanity after we sin and sees that we are separated, stained with sin, and unable to be in relationship with him. God says, "I am going to send a rescuer for them!"

**Illustrate:** Story of me locking myself out of the house a lot. Only 1 key will let me in.

I will not be able to access what I need nor will I accomplish what I want to if I don't have the correct key. There is also only one key to satisfaction, joy, and love. The key that unlocks everything your soul desires and longs for is the Rescuer. That key to unlocking everything heaven has to offer is in JESUS!

## **JESUS IS OUR RESCUER**

We need a rescuer, so Jesus — God in the flesh, the son of the Father — stepped down into broken humanity to rescue us. There is no illustration to show how far God came for you and me! The example of you becoming an ant to save an anthill cannot even come close to describing how far He came. But He came for you.

He stepped down, walked among us, and told us, "I am THE way," and "I have come to

seek and to save.” Jesus came to rescue and redeem.

Jesus came. Why? Because if “sin is man substituting himself for God, then God said, I will substitute myself for man.” There has to be justice. There has to be a payment so he subjected himself to his own creation. He was bound by the soldiers he created and hung on a tree that he also created. He took on the wrath of God on the cross. If sin separates, Jesus had to be separated so that after Jesus rolled the stone away, we are never separated from God again.

Jesus won the battle for our souls and lives that we could never fight.

## LANDING

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This is the good news of the Gospel! We were lost. God saw us and sent his Son to rescue us. Now we have the answer to the unsolvable problem. God is able to redeem and heal our deepest hurts and pains. Our souls can rest knowing our eternity is settled. This message is the greatest message because it changes everything!

If your soul is longing for more and you have never stepped into God’s plan for you, talk to your leader tonight.

God’s plan is not only for us, but it is also for the entire world.

Right now, there are 7,063 unreached people groups which means less than 4% know Jesus. That’s 4.5 billion people. This means the harvest is plenty, but we need help reaching these people! There are 3,012 unengaged, unreached people groups. That’s 274 million people. NOBODY is delivering the gospel! They are all part of God’s Plan to rescue, but they don’t know! We are the messengers.

Would you consider ministry? Would you consider praying and going?

I was talking earlier about my basketball team, and you may be thinking, “I’m good. I’m just going to do my own thing.”

You’re never going to be aligned with God’s plan if you do your own thing. You will never feel part of the team and the mission. God saves and sends. It’s what He does. Stop fighting it. This is our message: God’s plan is to rescue.

Will you tell somebody? Will you go?

# GOD'S PLAN IS TO **refocus** YOU.

## INTRO

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**Read:** Colossians 1:25-29.

When I (Pastor Aaron) was younger, I was very athletic and very fast... and also very humble (just kidding)! Whenever I played football and had the ball, I would make people look silly. **(\*Note: This is Pastor Aaron's story as an example. Try to think of your own similar analogy to use while leading this lesson.)**

There was one particularly close football game where I made an interception and was running for a touchdown, but one of the linebackers, Gordon, was coming after me. I saw a big scary guy and ran away from him. I ran out of bounds, and I still got hit.

**Everyone was moving in one direction, but Gordon went in a completely different direction.**

Nothing is more threatening to the kingdom of darkness than a Christian who goes from trying to make themselves look good or living for themselves to jumping on the mission of God to save everyone around them. Nothing scares the devil more than a believer who is focused on the mission of God, seeking and saving the lost people all over the world.

## TRUTH

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**BOTTOM LINE: GOD'S PLAN TO SAVE THE WORLD IS TO REFOCUS YOU.**

His strategy to rescue the world is to refocus you on His mission.

Refocus: To change the emphasis or direction of something.

In simple terms, when you say yes to following Jesus, God is also calling you to help everyone else say yes to following Jesus. The direction of your life is no longer focused on yourself, but how to reach the world with the Gospel.

We see this exemplified all throughout scripture. After Jesus died on the cross and rescued the world, He refocused his disciples on His mission by telling them to go make disciples of the entire world. He tells us to go to the uttermost parts of the world too, not just your neighborhood or your best friends, but the entire world. Travel to the places you haven't thought about, the places where no one has ever heard the name of Jesus, the places you didn't even know existed. He wants to refocus you to think about and reach everyone.

This has been God's plan for a very long time. In fact, we see this principle laid out in Isaiah 6.

**Read:** Isaiah 6:7b-8.

As soon as Isaiah was rescued, God wanted him to change his focus to His mission. It was no longer about Isaiah, rather Isaiah needed to focus on God's mission.

Now, in this scripture I believe it lays out three characteristics of someone who is refocused on the mission of God. It gives us three characteristics we should all display for God to reach the world. God's plan for your life is to display all three of these characteristics and live them out.

Let's examine the first characteristic of a believer who is focused on the mission of God:

## **BE OBSERVANT**

Isaiah 6:8: "Then I heard...And I said."

Isaiah used descriptive words. He was describing and setting the scene. He was very observant and was paying attention.

Have you heard these sayings?

***"What gets your attention, gets your activity."***

***"What you focus on you follow."***

***"What gets your mind gets your hands."***

***"What you observe you serve."***

I know the different cries of my son.

I am observant, so I learned which cries described my son's needs and had a burden to meet those needs. It's the same with God. Similarly, the more we observe and the word of God, the more we become burdened by his cry to reach lost people.

And the same is true – the more you pay attention to God's word, the more active you become in it. If you read his words, you begin to see his heart to rescue all of humanity in verses like Luke 19:10, 2 Peter 3:9, and Matthew 9:37.

When you begin to read and observe verses like these, you start to hear the cry of God's mission to reach lost people and you won't be able to help but go to the world. Pay attention and see how He moves you.

**Read the book of Acts this month.**

When you see God move, you will become so burdened and on fire that you will have to go reach all people.

## **BE OPEN. “Here am I”:**

Be available. It means you are willing to go. It doesn't mean you are signing your life away or that you are a perfect person. It just means you will not say no to God. It means if He calls you to wherever or to whoever, you are willing and ready to be used by God.

In fact, all throughout scripture we see this phrase, “Here am I!” And every single time someone made themselves open to whatever God wanted, He used them to rescue the world in some shape, form, or fashion.

The “Here am I” people...

- Abraham (Genesis 22:1): God promised that all nations would be blessed through Him. This is prophetic of the fact that Jesus would be of his descent, and all nations would be rescued and blessed through Jesus.
- Moses (Exodus 3:4): God rescued the Israelites from slavery in Egypt.
- Samuel (1 Samuel 3:4): The one who anointed King David, the man who slayed Goliath, the man from whence Jesus was also part of the family.
- Ananias (Acts 9:10): Went and spoke to Paul, who was known as Saul, to lay hands on him and to accept him into the church. Paul then became the greatest missionary of all time and traveled all over, leading many to Jesus. He wrote the majority of the New Testament.

My question to you is this: Will you BE OPEN? Will you allow God to use you and send you wherever He wants? I challenge you to pray what all these great men and women of the Bible did. Right now, will you pray, *“God, I am open to whatever you want to do. Here I am. I am not perfect, but I am willing to go and do whatever You want me to?”*

## **BE ON MISSION**

**Explain:** Mission is a military term. It is an objective given to you by someone who is in charge of your life, and it is the only thing you think about, live for, or do until it is complete. Paul puts it this way:

**Read:** 2 Timothy 2:3-4.

**Illustrate:** Gordon's story - Everyone else was still observant. Everyone else was open to get me, but only Gordon was on a mission to stop me and to save his team. He looked around and saw that something needed to happen and he didn't go with the flow, he didn't remain quiet, he didn't remain still. He knew his mission and nothing was going to stop him.

**Apply:** Now I ask you, will you be on mission when everyone else is worried about other things? Will you be on mission for Christ? Will you be part of taking the gospel to the 274 million people who have never heard of Jesus?

# GOD'S PLAN IS TO **release** YOU.

## INTRO

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I am beyond blessed and thankful to share something with you that has changed my life forever and I believe and pray it changes yours as well. In Part 1, Pastor Trey talked about God's plan to rescue creation. In Part 2, Pastor Aaron looked at God's plan to refocus us after we have been rescued. Now we know we have been rescued by Jesus Christ from our sins that completely separated us from him and that God's plan is to refocus us. When you are rescued, you can never be the same. Being rescued changes and refocuses you forever. Suddenly your priorities aren't the same as they once were because you have been rescued and refocused. So what's next?

We've been in Colossians 1 during this series. Colossians is a letter written by Paul to the people of Colossae. It's important to note that Paul is sitting in prison as he writes this. Here is my favorite part...Colossae was a place where they believed in many gods. It was a place that practiced witchcraft and was completely unreached with the Good News of Christ. But someone came and shared this Good News with them. We know Paul was a master church planting missionary, and he went to a place very similar to Colossae in Ephesus and began a church there. He shared God's Plan with the Ephesians – that they were rescued and encouraged them to refocus, just as Pastor Trey and Pastor Aaron shared with you. Did you know Paul didn't actually start the church in Colossae? It was planted by a guy named Epaphras who heard the Good News from Paul in Ephesus and his life was completely changed!

The book of Colossians is the fruit of the Gospel movement...and so are you. I want you to think for a moment, do you know who started your church? I'm standing in my church that was planted over 100 years ago. This church has been part of God's plan by reproducing what Christ has done in them. So many have been rescued, refocused, and released. There have been more churches planted, more missionaries sent, more eternal impact in lives all around the world because one man stepped into God's Plan. So what about you?

## TRUTH

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**BOTTOM LINE: GOD'S PLAN TO REACH THE WORLD IS TO RELEASE YOU.**

*WHO are we released to?*



**Read:** Acts 1:8.

If God's plan to reach the world is to release you, where do you start? I'm sure the disciples asked the same thing back in Acts 1. At this point the disciples had been following Jesus for a few years. They saw him do miracles, learned from Him, and just did life with Him. They watched him innocently murdered on the cross but then saw Him raised from the dead victoriously, and now they stood in front of Him moments before He ascended into Heaven. They asked him a question that shows how they were still not focused on God's plan. They were assuming that Jesus was about to lead the Israelites into battle and restore Israel's freedom, but Jesus had to refocus them. You see, Jesus rescued the disciples, and then He refocused them on God's Plan. What was it?

Jesus showed them who to reach and then released them. This is a map for us as well.

- Jerusalem - Here
- Judea - Near
- Samaria - Different
- Ends of the Earth - Far

God's Plan to reach the world is to release you! It's important to note that this is not a question of where you're going to go. This is our one focus: we are to reach the unreached in our Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth.

**Illustrate:** Take me, for example. I live in Togo, West Africa now. That may be the end of the earth for some of you, but it's my Jerusalem. My job is to help plant churches and raise up leaders who will share God's plan with more people. Those people will then be responsible to reach their Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and ends of the earth. Now, just because I am on the other side of the world doesn't mean I also neglect my end of the earth. I get to reach back across the world by financially and prayerfully supporting one of my best friends who is starting a church in Florida that will reach the unreached in Orlando. You see, we aren't released to one area of the world. When we step into God's plan, our only focus, our one desire, is to reproduce in others what Christ has done in us. God's plan to reach the world is to release you!

## **YOU ARE RELEASED TO REPRODUCE IN OTHERS WHAT GOD DID IN YOU**

**Read:** Colossians 1:28.

What does this mean? How do I present someone mature in Christ?

**Illustrate:** I love soccer. I began playing soccer when I was four and continued until I graduated college. I've learned a lot along the way and I love coaching and teaching others how to get better. Every time it's as if I am coaching a new player and giving them

drills to work on. It takes practice and hard work. They won't be perfect at first, but they will have more knowledge than someone who has never played. Anyone can teach someone else what they have been taught.

Hey, listen to me, you don't need a Bible degree, and you don't need to be a Bible scholar. You have been rescued, refocused, and released to reproduce what Christ has done in you! The question is, *are you going to go?*

What if every one of you set out to see one of your friends who doesn't know Jesus, come to know Jesus? But don't stop there, because presenting someone who is mature in Christ means that person understands that they are rescued, refocused, and released. What if every one of you saw the person you led to Christ lead someone else to Christ? This is God's plan! Will you step into it today?

God's plan to reach the world is to release you!

## **HOW TO BE RELEASED**

It is hard. It is scary!

**Read:** Colossians 1:29.

Somebody who is released knows that they are stepping into the uncomfortable. See, when we step into a place that makes us feel uncomfortable, unqualified, and unworthy, we end up in the posture we should have been in all along—on our knees, with our hands open, crying out to God, “I need you! It is only through you that I can step into what is in front of me.” When you step into that posture you will see the Lord move in your life like never before. Paul is sitting in prison as he writes this sentence in Colossians.

Paul stepped into God's plan for him and it landed him in prison. Did you catch his language in this verse though? He said, “strenuously” and “with all my energy.” Paul was rescued, refocused, and released to reproduce in others what Christ did in him.

This is what a released person looks like. It's someone who steps into God's plan and is sustained by Him. You see, Paul goes and never stops because he's filled with God's power!

Stepping into God's plan doesn't mean you're strong enough, it means you're willing enough. Willing enough to dedicate your life to God's one plan and allow Him to rescue the unreached through you. Willing enough to allow God to use you as you help the rescued get refocused. Willing enough to go where no one is going because God's plan to reach the world is to release you! Will you go?

Do you realize that in this generation, we could see the world reached with the Good News of Christ? All you need to do, right now, is to step into God's plan! What if this

generation was known for the way they stepped into God's Plan and watched a Gospel Movement spread across the world? What if this was the generation that didn't try to fit God into their plans, but centered their lives around God's plan?

## **WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE TO BE RELEASED?**

Paul was released and he ended up in prison. Epaphras was rescued and went and told those at Colossae.

Charles, at 14 years old, came to know Jesus and stepped into God's plan. Now at age 20, he has witnessed over 200 people also come to know Jesus. He shared Jesus with everyone at his school, so he went to a new school so he could share Jesus with others. He has been rescued, refocused, and released. His whole life is about this one mission. We don't ask him if he shared Christ this week, rather what were the responses of the people he shared with.

Valerie fell asleep at kid's ministry when she was three years old. She was picked up by the Pastor's wife and carried home. When Valerie's mom saw this, she was blown away, leading the family to hear the gospel and come to church. They have been in the church for years. Valerie, 12 years old now, has already witnessed one of her best friends come to know Jesus. Why? Because she has been rescued, refocused, and released. She stepped into God's plan and everything changed.

## **LANDING** ---

What about you? What can you do?

Hands open, on your knees, dependent on God. You're never going to be strong enough; you just need to be willing enough. Pray for the unreached here and around the world three times a day. Pray for the unreached and the unengaged. Then, pray God would show you who is one person you can share God's plan with.

Would you consider giving a portion of your life to go and share the Good News with the unreached or unengaged around the world? If you would, you can talk to your leader. That's what I did. I only wanted to play soccer, but I realized I was rescued, refocused, released, and wanted others to know Jesus too. That led me to Togo, where now I help start churches and develop leaders. Soccer doesn't matter as much as being released to do in others what He did in me.

What if you stepped into God's plan today? Will you go?