

The Church, God's "Strategy"?? WHAT???

May 24, 2026

DAY 1: God's master plan from Genesis thru the book of Revelation

Creation

1. What was there before creation? The curtain opens...

*Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ² Now the earth was **formless** and **empty**, **darkness** was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.*

2. Into this formless, empty, dark existence God spoke all that is purposeful, adding fullness and life-giving light. The metaphors of Genesis 1 are instructive to life without God and life with God!

3. Notice the repeated celebration: "it was good" and the finale: "it was very good."

Genesis 1:3 God saw that the light was good, ... ¹⁰ ...And God saw that it was good.... ¹² ...And God saw that it was good.... ¹⁷ ...And God saw that it was good.... ²¹ ...And God saw that it was good..... ²⁵ ...And God saw that it was good.... ³¹ God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.

4. Adam and Eve were created in a perfect setting, with God, and everything they would need to create real personal life and relational life with each other and with God.

Fall

Genesis 3:1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"

5. Satan enters the picture to undermine the goodness of what God had done for Adam and Eve personally and relationally.

*Ephesians 2:1 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ² in which you used to live when you **followed the ways of this world** and **of the ruler of the kingdom of the air**, the **spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient**.*

6. While Satan will create havoc, brokenness, and misery in people, God's plan will mean the ultimate defeat of Satan! That prophetic word is spoken to Satan right after the fall!

*Genesis 3:15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; **he will crush your head**, and **you will strike his heel**."*

7. Satan will think he's won when Jesus is crucified ("You will strike his heel"), but the resurrection of Christ will be the crushing blow to Satan.

8. Our redeemer God is also a saving God. The war against Satan is also a rescue mission to all rebels of God, people who are committed to being self-focused people.

9. What strikes you from today's devotional?

DAY 2: Redemption, God's unintuitive strategy

1. The cosmic war against Satan finds the main battlefield on planet Earth. Satan has untold numbers of fallen angels (demons) in his army. While God has a host of angels at His disposal, God's shocking strategy is completely unintuitive to human beings, and to Satan!

- a. The crucifixion of Christ is the key component in God's strategy, as we saw in the prophecy written in Genesis 3:15.
- b. God's "ground troops" are you and me!!!

2. We get pictures of God's stunning strategy in Jesus' instructions to the disciples prior to their two mission trips.

*Luke 10:3 Go your way; behold, **I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves.** ⁴ Carry no moneybag, no knapsack, no sandals...*

*Matt. 10:16 Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as **innocent as doves.***

3. This is hardly the stuff of a world at war. What thoughts run through your mind as you ponder this completely unintuitive strategy, from a human point of view?

4. One might think that the real "shock troops" are the Christian "superstars," like the apostle Paul. But by Paul's own humble admission, he is not what we might call a "superstar!"

*1 Timothy 1:15 ... Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—**of whom I am the worst.***

*2 Cor. 12:9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my **weaknesses**, so that Christ's power may rest on me. ¹⁰ That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*

Romans 7:21 So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. ²² For in my inner being I delight in God's law; ²³ but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. ²⁴ What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death.

5. And yet, God's strategy is pinned to His people!

*Eph. 3:10 His intent was that now, **through the church**, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, ¹¹ according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. ¹² In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence...*

6. You may have felt unworthy of being one of God's "shock" troops. If so, welcome to the club! What strikes you from today's devotional?

DAY 3: Putting Jesus on display—the Bride of Christ; the body of Christ

1. God’s strategy to save the lost is His church. Our role in His army coincides with His sanctifying work in us!

2. God’s sanctifying work in the believer involves:

- a. Personal holiness—we are growing in the character of Christ.
- b. Relational holiness—we are learning to love and relate to people as Jesus did.
- c. Mission holiness—we are servants of the King and God’s kingdom mission.

3. All three of these great endeavors serve to give light to a dark world!

Matthew 5:14 You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light so shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

4. The church is to reflect Jesus Christ. Two metaphors are helpful

- a. We are the **bride of Christ**.
- b. We are the **body of Christ**.

5. As the bride of Christ, we put Jesus on display to a lost world by our personal holiness and relational holiness with one another and with lost people (how we treat people).

*Ephesians 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, just as **Christ loved the church** and gave himself up for her ²⁶ **to make her holy**, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, ²⁷ and to **present her to himself as a radiant church**, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless*

6. As the body of Christ, we put Jesus on display through our service to God and people and by how we serve together! We are not just the “hands and feet of Jesus.” We are also the “face and attitudes” of Jesus.

*Eph. 5:30 ... for we are members of **His body**.*

7. When the people of the church serve and love people, and serve and love each other, the light of Christ is a light that shines on the beauty and strength of Christ.

8. We become “audio-visuals” of who Jesus is, how He loves people, and what transforming work He can do in people.

9. What strikes you from today’s devotional?

DAY 4: The battle is engaged: the battle for a better love

1. God's epic story of redemption involves saving lost people and redeeming them, transforming them into the image of Christ. Satan opposes all of this worldwide, every day.

*2 Corinthians 4:4 The **god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers**, so that they cannot **see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ**, who is the image of God. ⁵ For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.*

2. Notice what Paul teaches as the battle plan for Christians engaged in this epic struggle! What connections do you see between v. 4 and v. 5?

1 John 2:9 Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates a brother or sister is still in the darkness. ¹⁰ Anyone who loves their brother and sister lives in the light, and there is nothing in them to make them stumble. ¹¹ But anyone who hates a brother or sister is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness. They do not know where they are going, because the darkness has blinded them.

3. Here, the difference between light and darkness is seen in our relationships.

4. The church is given over 60 "one-another" commands that define how we are to treat each other. The church is a laboratory giving us the opportunity to practice these "one anothers" with each other. As we do, and these character traits shape our relationships, the light shines brighter for lost people.

Ephesians 5:25 Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her.

5. When a husband learns to sacrificially love his wife with Christ as our model, lost people have an opportunity to get a glimpse of who Jesus Christ is!

Eph. 5:22 Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. ²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

6. When a wife learns to submit to her husband, lost people have an opportunity to get a glimpse of Jesus' invitational love, and the benefit of submitting to Jesus.

7. God's people have multiple opportunities to be a light to a dark world, while at the same time, allowing Jesus to continue to transform our character, and how we relate to people!

8. What strikes you from today's devotional?

DAY 5: The ministry of “little”

1. Our culture loves to celebrate bigness, stardom, the impressive. But God’s ways are again counter-intuitive to how man thinks.

2. God is fascinated with little!

*Luke 16:10 He who is faithful **in a very little** is faithful in much, and he who is dishonest in a **very little** is dishonest also in much.*

Luke 16:11 And if you have not been faithful with money, who will entrust true riches to you? And if you have not been faithful in that which is another’s, who will entrust to you what is yours?

*Matthew 10:42 And if anyone gives **even** a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will **certainly not lose their reward**.*

*Matt. 18:4 Whoever **humbles himself** like this child is the **greatest** in the kingdom of heaven.*

*Philippians 2:20 I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you. ²⁰ **I have no one else like him**, who will **show genuine concern for your welfare**. ²¹ For **everyone looks out for their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ**. ²² But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel.*

3. Timothy! Of all the men Paul trained he could only name one man “who had a genuine interest in your affairs....” (Phil. 2:20-21)

4. Even the twelve disciples were nothing to write home about! Judas tubed out. Peter, James, and John fell asleep at Gethsemane at the most grievous night of Jesus’ human life. Ten of His disciples would flee into the darkness at His arrest. Peter would deny that he even knew Jesus, while the two were within eyeshot of each other. You can’t read the gospels without wondering, “You mean to tell me that You entrusted the future of your worldwide plan to overthrow Satan and his forces with men like THAT??? With people like **us???** ...

...and yet He does!!!!

5. What strikes you from today’s devotional?