

BUGGIN' OUT!

Newsletter

Applying Biblical Truth and Humor to the Struggle.

The Agreement

If you are a Christian who believes the Bible has some really great things to say, but that the particular circumstances in your life somehow exclude you from its promises of grace and only sentence you to its warnings of doom, I want you to **try again**.

I want to convince you that you are known by and super-important to God and that when the Bible declares in Jeremiah 29:11

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

that the "you" is actually YOU! Yes, YOU! God is talking to YOU, the respected church member who has been secretly practicing homosexuality since before and after your decision to follow Christ.. And to YOU, the young man who has tried and failed so many times to leave the gay lifestyle that you no longer see any point in it. And to YOU, the gentleman who can't get through a day without pornography and masturbation as a means to calm your nerves. And to YOU, who just got back an hour ago from another unsuccessful attempt to end your loneliness through anonymous hook-ups.

I have been each of you. And yet, here I am. I am certainly no pearl in the Gate, but I have discovered that, in spite of my filthy behaviors and my nonchalant attitude toward holiness, when God says:

For I know the plans I have for you. They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.

He means it.

I believe God uses Jeremiah 29:11 to point out that He knows the messes which we get ourselves into will lead to disaster, but that HE is control and He already has decided to give us a future and a hope....in spite of us.

I also believe wholeheartedly that God plants in us a "calling" early on in our relationship with Him. In my case, I wanted to be a writer for the

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Lord. The problem was I did not know how to go from chronic sexual-sinner to non-hypocritical Christian scribe.

Then, one day, it was placed on my heart to do something radical and uncharacteristic of me. I was challenged to take the Scriptures literally and seriously, as if it were a matter of life and death. And my life has not been the same since.

I started by reading and learning about people in Scripture whom God seemed to really be nuts about, and to then imitate the things they did.

I began with the "simple stuff" first. Paul seemed to be of the opinion that fellowship with other Christians is critical for success. So, I got past my shyness and my list of what's "wrong" with each denomination and got myself to church. For some reason, I ended up having lunch with a friend that Sunday afternoon instead of driving into Manhattan to play around in the adult video store. "Just an isolated incident", I said to myself. But it soon developed into a trend. However, the whole thing still seemed iffy.

Later on in my study, I noted that Jesus commanded "Feed my sheep". Ok, why not? I stopped at the Shop Rite and bought some things to give to those "dirty" homeless people who beg in front of the adult video store in Manhattan, and I fed them. This went on for weeks before I realized that **they** were receiving food and water, but **I** was receiving something far greater. I was starting to comprehend the incredible life-changing power of obedience. I had been sexually pure – though still very tempted – for three months now....a world record it was not but it was, for me, a miracle.

Several weeks later as I was saying goodbye to Mary, Sam and Abdul, after bringing them their weekly bags of food, I saw a man pacing back and forth in front of the video store. He was dressed in an executive business suit, but his indecision and guilt overpowered it. I watched as a gay hustler approached and propositioned him. The two then turned and headed to the man's car. I don't know what made me do it, but I ran up to them, took the businessman's hand in mine, and told him that he did not have to do this....that I used to do the same things and had felt

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the same desperation he was feeling and, if he wanted to talk, we could have coffee.

Needless to say, he ran to his car and sped off like I was contagious, leaving the hustler and me behind in one of those awkward, "shoot me now" moments.

The hustler, whose name was Josh, then made the mistake of saying to me, "I know you. I used to see you here all the time. Now I sometimes see you sitting with those drunks over there on the sidewalk. Why?" And I told him all about my past, my lesson of obedience, and my progress. Wow! God was honoring my obedience and actually using a sinful mess like me!

After that night, my interpretations of obedience became more literal and more strange. When I read that Noah and Abraham would consistently build altars to worship God, I knew what I had to do. I cleared out my dining room and converted it into a chapel and constructed an altar to the Lord. Being homosexual, I had no trouble adding candles and incense to the altar after reading that God really likes that kind of stuff.

I then scheduled a daily time slot for praise and worship in my chapel (if bouncing around like a Pentecostal with a hotfoot to Kathy Troccoli CDs qualifies as praise and worship) and a time slot for Bible study and prayer. I had even ordered a prayer bench off the Internet to place in front of the altar. It was all coming together.

My prayer life began to intensify, and I found myself receiving answers and guidance and developing an inner peace which was steadily replacing my chronic anxiety. Prayer and worship were now a real and important part of my life and not just something I told other Christians I always did but really didn't.

I could go on for pages about how obedience revolutionized my life but, out of compassion, I'll start to bring it home. Let's just say I did everything short of "be fruitful and multiply".

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And this is what I want you to know. I am no longer a helpless and chronic whore for one reason and one reason only: when all else failed, I, as a desperate and last resort, took God at His word and obeyed. I strove to obey even the stuff that seemed foolish and intellectually-unsophisticated from a modern point of view. God more than met me half-way by giving me tangible signs of recovery to encourage and sustain me. And when He romanced me with incredible surprises, I came to experience His presence as never before and I began to yearn for more of Him and less of the world.

Funny. I was so proud of my revelation about obedience that I ran to share it with Steve.

"You nit-wit", he said, "this is not some provocative, new discovery! Jesus talked to us about obedience all the time. Take for example, Matthew 5:20":

But I warn you- unless you obey God better than the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees, you can't enter the Kingdom of Heaven at all.

Steve went on, "And even way back in the Old Testament, obedience is touted as necessary. Take Genesis 17:9":

Your part of the agreement, God told Abraham, is to obey the terms of the covenant.

"So, Robert", Steve concluded, "Don't get a big head. Others beat you to it."

My point? If you invited Christ into your life, but are trapped in sexual sin...even uncontrollable, all out, addictive sexual sin, take it from somebody who made the woman at the well look sexually-inhibited and dull. Jesus did not give up on me and He has not given up on you.

To get things rolling, go out on a limb and take the Scriptures absolutely literally. Obey. Obey. Obey. Start with the "easier" things and watch God bless your decision.

Then try the "less-easy" things and watch God bless your effort.

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Soon, obedience will transform from a chore into a selfish joy, waiting to see in what way God is going to bless you next.

And then, when you wake up one morning, like I did, with a clear vision of the plan God has for you, follow Steve's advice and don't get a big head. For God already declared:

For I know the plans I have for you. They are plans for good and not for disaster, plans to give you a future and a hope. Your part of the agreement is to obey.

God has spoken.

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