

On Mission With God

Henry T. Blackaby and Avery T. Willis, Jr.

God is on mission. He has been on mission throughout history to accomplish His purpose throughout the earth. Each time we see God in the Bible, He is acting in accordance with His purpose: to reveal Himself in order that His name would be glorified, that His Kingdom would be established and that some from every people would be reconciled to Himself.

God Reveals Himself to Reconcile the World To Himself

God has chosen to reveal Himself, His purpose and His ways, involving His people with Him as He invites all the world's peoples to know and worship Him.

- Through Abraham, God revealed Himself as the LORD, the Almighty and the Provider, who wants to bless all the peoples of the world through His people.
- Through Moses, God revealed Himself as the I AM THAT I AM, whose plan is to show His glory to the world through His people, who are to be a kingdom of priests to all peoples.
- Through David, God revealed that His Seed would rule all nations and His Kingdom would be for all peoples.
- Through Jesus, God revealed His love and His purpose to reconcile the world to Himself through Christ's incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection and ascension.
- Through Paul, God revealed that the mystery of the ages is that He includes all peoples in His redemption.
- Through John, God revealed that some from every nation, tribe, tongue and people will worship Him forever.

He is at work all the time, to the very end of time, bringing about this revelation, for all peoples' reconciliation. When this mission is fulfilled, it will not only be the fullest expression of earth's praise, it will be the fullest revelation of God's love.

God on Mission

Throughout History in order that...

- God's Name is Glorified
- God's Kingdom is Established
- the World is Reconciled to Himself



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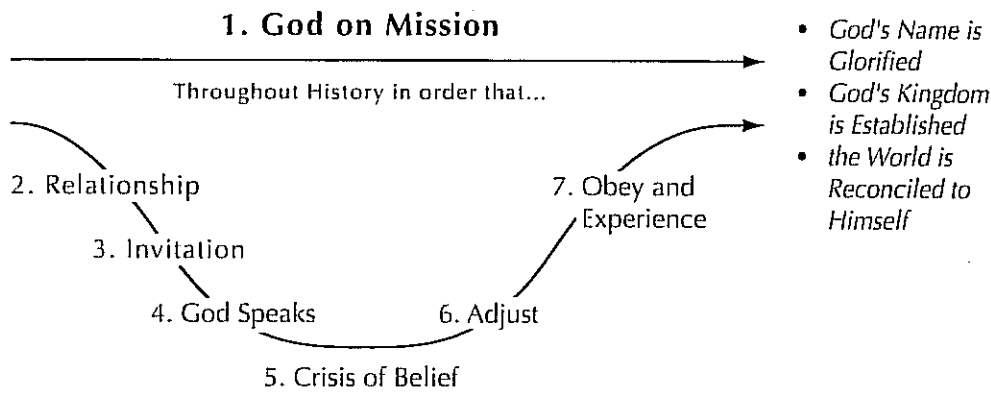
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God Initiates His Work Through His People

God has initiated every part of His work throughout history. Instead of carrying out His mission on His own, God chooses to accomplish His mission in a very personal way. He chooses to involve His people with Him, working through them to accomplish His purposes. When He is about to take a further step to advance His mission, He comes to one or more of His servants. He lets them know what He is about to do. He invites them to join Him, bidding them to adjust their lives to Him so that He can accomplish every aspect of His mission through them. The prophet Amos indicated that, "The Sovereign Lord does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7).

When God was ready to judge the world, He came to Noah. He intended to glorify Himself by preserving righteousness on the earth. He was going to do it through Noah. When God was ready to set apart a people for Himself, He came to Abraham. God was going to accomplish His will through Abraham. When God heard the cry of the children of Israel and decided to deliver them, He appeared to Moses. God came to Moses because of His purpose. He planned to deliver Israel through Moses and reveal His purpose for them. As He worked through Moses and Israel, God revealed Himself to the entire world.

Moses' experience is a good illustration of how God deals with His people. The diagram above shows seven realities that

Moses learned, that are true for all of God's people. This process can help you understand how God is welcoming you to be part of His mission.

Throughout the Old and New Testaments, God worked in the same way as He did with Moses, inviting His people to be on mission with Him. His ways are the same today. God reveals Himself to us so we can know Him personally. God initiates a relationship with us, and invites us to join Him. As God reveals Himself to us we often experience a crisis of belief that calls for major adjustments in our lives so that we can relate to Him and His mission. As we make the adjustments and obey Him, He moves us into the middle of His activity, in order to experience Him and to enjoy the astounding significance of being on mission with God.

Jesus: On Mission With His Father

God wants us to be like Jesus, who always obeyed Him. Jesus indicated through His life that He was joining the Father in His mission. He announced that He had come not to do His own will, but the will of the Father who had sent Him (Matt 26:42; John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38; 8:29; 17:4). To know the Father's will, Jesus said He watched to see what the Father was doing. Then Jesus joined Him in that work: "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does." (John 5:17,19). Jesus listened to the Father and whatever He heard the Father say, these are the things that He would say (John 14:10-11).

Jesus did not take the initiative but depended on the Father to reveal Himself and what He was doing (John 17:6-8) and He bore witness to the Father, and the Father worked through Him (John 14:10).

The Father loved the Son, and took the initiative to come to Him and reveal what He (the Father) was doing, or was about to do. Jesus kept on looking for the Father's activity around Him, so that He could unite His life with His Father's mission.

Knowing and Working in God's Ways

Even a casual reader of the Bible can see that God's ways and plans are so different from the ways that people accomplish their goals. God said, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways" (Isa 55:8). On their own, people achieve goals by their efficiency and ingenuity. With God on His mission, you must follow Kingdom principles to accomplish Kingdom purposes.

Our ways may seem good to us. We may succeed in moderate accomplishments. When we try to do the work of God in our own ways, however, we will never see the mighty power of God in what we do, and the world will not see God revealing Himself to them. It is only by God's power that people come to know and worship God. When God accomplishes His purposes in His ways through us, people will come to know God. They will recognize that what has happened can only be explained by God. He will receive the glory!

Learning to follow God's ways may be more important than making sincere attempts to do His will. God is eager to reveal His ways to us because they are the only way to accomplish His purposes. God wants to complete His work through you. He can only do that as you adjust your life to Him and to His ways. Start looking for how God welcomes you to join Him and to experience Him. He has involved His people on mission with Him in the same ways all through history:

1. God is always at work around you to accomplish His mission.	<i>Expect God to encounter you to reveal what He is doing near you or among distant peoples to reconcile a lost world to Himself.</i>
2. God pursues a continuing love relationship with you that is real and personal.	<i>Respond to God as He invites you into a - covenant relationship of promise and obedience. God wants to deepen His love relationship with you far more than He wants merely to utilize you for a task.</i>
3. God invites you to become involved in His work when He reveals Himself and His work to you.	<i>Respond when God calls you to Himself to be on mission with Him.</i>
4. God speaks to you by the Holy Spirit through the Bible, prayer, circumstances and the church, to reveal Himself, His purposes and His ways.	<i>Respond as God prepares you for His mission as you learn His ways with others.</i>
5. God's invitation for you to work with Him always leads you to a crisis of belief that requires faith and action.	<i>Obey as God sends you where He can best work through you to accomplish His mission.</i>
6. You must make major adjustments in your life to join God in what He is doing.	<i>Expect God to empower you as you make the life changes that open you to co-labor with God according to His ways.</i>
7. You come to know God by experience as you obey Him and He accomplishes His work through you.	<i>Expect God to guide you on His mission to reveal Himself and to reconcile a lost world to Himself.</i>

Knowing and Doing God's Will

How can you know God's will? Since all true mission is really God on His mission, there is not a different mission for you, for me, for the people who lived a thousand years ago, or for believers on the other side of the world. He has never been willing that any should perish. God's mission is to glorify His name, to establish His kingdom and to reconcile the world to Himself.

Within this immense global purpose, God does not leave you to guess His will. Since He is pursuing a love relationship with you, you cannot know His will without knowing Him better. As you come to know Him better, He reveals His will in a clearer way. And you are changed as well. You will find that you want to do His will more and more (Phil 2:13).

On mission with God, you will experience that God is love. His will is always best. He pursues a love relationship with you so you can join Him in His mission.

On mission with God, you will experience that God is all-knowing. His directions are always right. He reveals them when you are obedient to Him.

On mission with God, you will experience that God is all-powerful. He enables you to accomplish His will when you are totally dependent on Him.

Let God orient you to Himself and then you will be oriented to His will. The servant does not tell the Master what kind of assignment he needs. The servant waits on his Master for the assignment. As you obey Him, God will prepare you for the assignment that is just right for you.

On Mission With Jesus

Christians are Kingdom people and Christ Himself is the eternal King over His kingdom. He "has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father" (Rev. 1:6). You are called into a partnership with Christ the King. In this partnership, you will become involved in His mission to reconcile a lost world to God. To be related to Christ is to be on mission with Him. You cannot be in relationship with Jesus and not be on mission. Jesus said, "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you" (John 20:21).

Jesus was on mission with the Father, and He calls every one of His followers to join Him in that relationship of love, power and purpose. Never get over how amazing this really is. Nothing could be more precious than to follow God on mission in the same way that Jesus did.

Study Questions

1. "You must make major adjustments in your life to join God in What He is doing." What adjustments did each of these biblical servants have to make to obey God's call: Noah (Gen 6-7), Moses (Ex 3-4) and Paul (Acts 13:1-3; 16:6-10)?
2. What adjustments would you have to make in your life if God were to call you now into a different ministry or to live in a different place?
3. Do you agree that every Christian is being sent "on mission" by Jesus (John 20:21)? If you agree, discuss how every Christian can be taught and trained to be ready for mission.