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## **Fulfilling Your Destiny!**

**By David Wilkerson**

July 8, 1996 What is "destiny"? In simple terms, destiny is God's purpose for your life. It is your appointed or ordained future. Destiny is what God has predetermined you to be and to become, in His divine will.

I get sad when I read of the many godly men and women in Scripture who missed their destiny. God chose a destined work or ministry for each of them - but they ended up aborting His plan. They started out right, moving for a while in the power of their calling. But in the end, they died in shame and ruin - missing God's destiny for their lives!

So, tell me: Is it possible for such Christians to be so pressed down and troubled, to be in such despair and despondency, they become convinced they're not going to make it?

**Saul Was a Man Who Missed His Destiny!** God Himself chose Saul to lead Israel out of bondage to the Philistines. When the prophet Samuel first laid eyes on Saul, the Lord said, "Behold the man whom I spake to thee of! this same shall reign over my people" (1 Samuel 9:17). The Lord was saying, "Take a good look, Samuel. This is the man I have chosen to lead Israel!"

Samuel didn't choose Saul. Nor did Israel choose him at this time. Rather, God said, "I have appointed this man!" The Bible says of Saul: "And the Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy...and shalt be turned into another man" (10:6).

Indeed, Saul was transformed by God's touch on his life: "...God gave him another heart..." (verse 9). Then Samuel said something wonderful to him: "...God is with thee" (verse 7). In other words: "Go with confidence, Saul - for God is with you!"

Here was a man appointed by God, moved upon by the Holy Spirit, gifted with a spirit of prophecy, destined by God to lead Israel - and God was with him. What more wonderful things could be said about him?

And Saul started out right. For a while he lived his destiny, walking in the fear of God. He quickly won a great battle against the Ammonites. And the people came home praising God, saying: "...Who is he that said, Shall Saul reign over us? bring the men, that we may put them to death. And Saul said, There shall not a man be put to death this day: for to day the Lord hath wrought salvation in Israel" (11:12-13).

Saul was appointed king over Israel. Yet, one of the most tragic pictures in all of Scripture is when this man began to fall apart. He had walked in his destiny for only a short time - yet God fully intended that Saul live out his days with the Lord's blessing. He had desired that Saul be remembered as the man who delivered Israel from the bondage of the Philistines. But Saul missed his destiny! He began to disintegrate, caving in to his need for human applause and acceptance. He made compromises to attain these things - and he missed the plan God had for him.

It is so sad to see Saul toward the end of his life. As he faced one of Israel's greatest military battles, his heart smote him with fear. He ended up consulting with the evil witch of Endor! He told her, "...God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams..." (28:15).

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By Saul's own confession, God was no longer with him. What a chilling, frightful thought! A person can be called to a great, divine purpose, walking in God's blessing and anointing - and then suddenly go off on a tangent, serving himself and ending up abandoned by God.

That is the picture of Saul here. This king ended up prostrating himself before a witch. And he died in shame - forsaken by God. These words might easily have been written on his tombstone: "The man who missed his destiny."

Samson Was Another Man Destined to Greatness for God - But He Missed His Destiny!

Samson is yet another tragic figure in the Old Testament. His destiny was known before he was born. According to Scripture, "…he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines" (Judges 13:5).

Angels announced this man's birth, giving his parents detailed instructions on how to raise him. Samson was to be a Nazarite - meaning, he was to be given completely to God's service for his entire lifetime. He was never to drink wine or cut his hair. And he was never to touch anything dead. He couldn't even go to the funeral of a near relative.

Samson was raised under strict training. And at a young age he experienced the moving of God's Spirit upon him: "…the Spirit of the Lord began to move him at times…" (verse 25). I know what that is like. The Holy Spirit first moved on me at an old-fashioned camp meeting when I was eight years old. And He continued to move on me throughout my teenage years. I would go into my room and pray, and I would feel God's Spirit come upon me.

I ask you - what is the first thing the Holy Spirit does when He moves on us? He convicts of sin, righteousness and judgment. Then He guides, comforts and teaches us. And He prays through us with cries, groanings, supplications.

You can be sure God's Spirit convicted Samson. And the boy was also taught, guided and comforted by the Spirit. If you had met Samson when he was just nine or ten years old, he might have told you, "God said I am someone special. They say an angel announced my birth. I've had God's Spirit on me, and He has called me to be a Nazarite. One day I'm going to help Israel become a free country!"

Samson knew he had a destiny. He was born for a purpose - to begin Israel's deliverance from bondage to the Philistines! And for twenty years, Samson walked in the authority of his destiny. He judged Israel. And he harassed the Philistines, bringing a ray of hope to the nation.

You have to understand here - Samson's strength was not in his hair, but in the moving of God's Spirit upon him. Scripture says the Holy Spirit would come upon Samson, and he would do exploits. Without the Spirit, Samson would have been as weak as you or I.

God had fully intended to bless the rest of Samson's years with greater victories. His Spirit would remain upon him to his dying hour. History would say of Samson, "He was faithful to the end. He did all that God appointed for him - living and dying in honor to the Lord. He fulfilled his destiny!"

But not so! Samson aborted his destiny - because his heart was black with sin! He kept up an outward

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holiness, but he chased after harlots. When he went down to see Delilah, he knowingly flirted with danger. Although the Spirit moved upon him, this man never allowed the Spirit to touch his inner man. Samson had no truth dwelling within him.

Here is yet another tragic picture of a man who missed his destiny. After twenty years of walking in God's calling, Samson began to degenerate. He became a sensuous man - and he lost the respect of his own people.

Samson should have lived out his days in dignity, as a vessel of honor. There should have been one victory after another for this man and for Israel. We should be able to read of how Samson built strength upon strength, and grew in the power and anointing of God's Spirit.

Instead, we read of a man who ended up one of the most pitiful weaklings in biblical history. In the end, we see Samson strapped into a harness like a dumb ox, grinding away at a Philistine mill. His eyes are gouged out, and he has lost all his strength. He is the laughingstock of the heathen. And his own people have turned against him.

Even in his dying day, when Samson brought down the Philistine temple, it was not a great victory. Why? His desire was all about personal revenge. His prayer that day wasn't about avenging the name of God. Rather, he prayed, "God, give me strength one more time - that I may avenge my eyes!"

Samson died in utter deception, having missed his destiny. His tombstone also might have read, "The man who missed his destiny."

**Solomon Also Was a Man Who Missed His Destiny!**

If ever there appeared to be a man of destiny, it was Solomon. He was the wisest, richest, most respected man of his time. And his destiny was clearly laid out for him. He would be the king who once and for all rid Israel of idolatry! Solomon promised both his father and the Lord that he would bring down every idol in the land.

For a while, Solomon walked in his destiny. At one point, the visiting Queen of Sheba was breathless at the mere sight of Solomon's reverence as he ascended to the temple. But something happened in Solomon's life - and he too missed his destiny!

This man amassed some 900 wives and concubines, many from other nations. And to appease them, he built an "embassy row" of heathen temple after heathen temple. Soon, the man who had been called to rid Israel of idolatry had become an idolater. He accompanied one wife after another to their temples, bowing before heathen idols.

Solomon ended up missing his destiny - a disillusioned, decrepit, immoral man. He entered eternity crying, "All is vanity and vexation of spirit. It's worthless!"

Like Solomon before him, King Uzziah also missed his destiny. This man had come to the throne at age sixteen, destined to be one of the greatest kings of Judah. He received counsel from the prophet Zechariah. He received visions from the Lord. He was mightily blessed by God.

The Bible says Uzziah sought the Lord - and God caused him to prosper and become strong:

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"And God helped him..." (2 Chronicles 26:7). "...And his name spread far abroad; for he was marvellously helped, till he was strong" (verse 15).

Except for Solomon, Uzziah had the greatest reputation of any king over Judah. He was anointed of God. He brought about revival in the land, tearing down idols and walking according to God's Word. When this bold king rode his chariot down the streets, he was given awe and respect. He received gifts and tributes from all over the world.

But, Scripture says: "...when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the Lord his God, and went into the temple of the Lord to burn incense upon the altar of incense" (verse 16). Pride overcame this man of destiny. He wanted to be priest as well as king!

In disobedience, Uzziah entered the temple and began to wave the incense before the altar. He received a rebuke for this - and when he pointed an angry finger in response, his hand immediately began to wither. It suddenly became leprous. Uzziah had to be cast out of the temple of God!

Oh, the shame of it! One of the greatest, richest kings in Judah's history now had to be isolated. He was taken to a small house where he spent the rest of his days as a leper: "And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house, being a leper; for he was cut off from the house of the Lord..." (verse 21).

Uzziah died in isolation - cut off from every blessing of God!

When this once-great man died, multitudes should have been gathered around him. His passing should have been an honor to the Lord's name. Instead, he died a near-unknown man, his body eaten up with leprosy. Uzziah missed his destiny!

In the Old Testament, Every Person Had His Own Individual Destiny!

There were as many destinies in the Old Testament as there were kings, priests, prophets and even ordinary saints. Even the lowliest people - those called to be servants, worshipers, shepherds, tentmakers - had his or her own destiny. And as we look at their lives, we are to be convicted by them. We are to learn from the failures of these past saints who either missed or fulfilled their destinies.

But we cannot compare our destiny to that of any person in the Old Testament! You see, in the New Testament, God has done an entirely new thing. He no longer measures our destiny as He did those under the Old Covenant. Their lives have nothing to do with our destiny, since the Cross of Jesus Christ.

At the Cross, God gathered up all the individual destinies of humankind into one grand purpose - and He placed them all in His Son: "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him" (Ephesians 1:10). God gathered up all our destinies in Jesus - so that His Son would have preeminence!

Today, there are no more individual destinies, but one destiny for all believers. Yes, you do have a destiny - and it is the same as mine. It doesn't matter whether you're a waitress or the captain of an

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ocean liner. We have all the same fixed, predetermined destiny, given to us before the world was formed.

What is this single, grand and glorious destiny given to all last-day saints? The apostle Paul reveals it to us in the book of Ephesians: "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved" (verses 4-6).

God says, in essence: "In the last days, in the fullness of time, I have one divine purpose. And that is for every follower of Mine to come into adoption by Jesus Christ - and to live blameless, as a praise and glory to My name!"

"In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: that we should be to the praise of his glory" (verses 11-12).

Our destiny is to be an adopted child of God! We have been adopted by the heavenly Father - and the devil no longer has any claim on us. Now we are to live for our Lord, blameless and holy, by the power of God's Spirit. Our single purpose on this earth is to live our lives as a praise and glory to Him!

Do you get what Paul is saying here? No person's destiny is measured by his great works, his achievements and exploits, his special accomplishments. No one's destiny ultimately is to build successful ministries, institutions or churches.

You might say, "Wait a minute, Brother Dave. Do you mean it wasn't your destiny to raise up Teen Challenge, the worldwide ministry to drug addicts and alcoholics? Do you mean it wasn't your destiny to come to New York and start Times Square Church?"

I thank God He allowed me to be the father of these works. Today there are some 300 Teen Challenge rehab centers worldwide. And now there is also a center of praise for Jesus on Broadway, at the crossroads of the world. But neither of these things was my destiny!

My destiny has little to do with the things God has allowed me to do. My destiny has always been to reach lost souls and bring them into the fullness of Jesus, to the praise and glory of God. My destiny also was to walk as an adopted son of God - living before the world blameless, all to His praise and glory.

When I came to New York, nothing changed. My destiny had remained to build up the body of Christ - and to walk before the Lord as his adopted son! Some day, not a single building that our ministry has built will be standing - not the incorporated institutions, not the Bible schools, not the rehab houses. They all will decay and vanish. And when I stand on Judgment Day, I won't be able to take any of those things with me.

These ministries are simply "burdens of the Lord" that God has allowed us to share and undertake, while walking in our destiny of doing His perfect will. And I believe He has blessed these ministries because we have lived in our destiny.

Dear saint, God is not requiring some great accomplishment from you. The Bible makes this very

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clear: &quot;He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God...&quot; (Micah 6:8).

Paul was very certain about what his destiny was:&quot;...that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily&quot; (Colossians 1:28-29). This is my destiny as well, as a minister of the Lord. It is that I become conformed more and more to the image of Jesus - and that I also see you become more like Him!

I feel sorry for many of the young ministers who call, write and visit me from all over the country. Most are striving to live up to a destiny that is an invention of their own flesh. Some of them pastor small churches, pouring out their hearts in ministry to their congregations. But then another pastor may come to town and suddenly build a church of 1,000.

These young men compare themselves to the newcomer, thinking, &quot;Surely I'm destined to do great things, as he is doing. What's wrong with me? Why am I not blessed with greater results? He's attracting huge numbers of people - and I have only a handful each Sunday.&quot; They don't realize - that is not their destiny! Their destiny is to get to know Christ better - to have God's hand on them - to walk blameless before Him in their city. The man with true power is the one who has a personal knowledge of Christ!

I see many Christian musicians striving to find a little acclaim, hoping their destiny is to write that one hit song that will put them over the top. Likewise, many Christian writers want to produce that one, great book. And many Christian businesspeople look for the big break that will distinguish them in their field.

But, beloved, if you're going to walk in your destiny, the only thing that will set you apart is your desire to surpass all others in the knowledge of Jesus. No one will spend more time alone with Him than you; no one will accept his wonderful adoption more eagerly than you. That is greatness!

I Want to Talk Now About the Destiny of Wives and Mothers - and of Husbands and Fathers!

I am talking now not to ministers, but to lay people. I want to show you what it means to fulfill your fixed destiny!

Christian, it doesn't matter how successful you are outside your home. You are missing your destiny if you are not becoming more and more like Jesus in your household. If you are not becoming sweeter, more loving and considerate to your family - if you are not growing in the love and knowledge of Christ at home - you are not fulfilling your destiny!

Wives and mothers: Before the world existed, God foresaw you in this present place and time. He knew what your address would be. And He had a predetermined plan for your life!

At times you may say to yourself, &quot;I'm just a housewife. All I do is cook, clean the house and raise my kids. How can that be destiny?&quot; But you do not understand how important your place is in God. You are a great success in His eyes if you can stand before Him one day and present your children to Him in righteousness!

God has always known how many children He would loan you. He knew their names and

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personalities. He numbered their body members and hairs. And he destined you to raise them in a home filled with the power and presence of Jesus! Your children are not toys or live-in dolls. They are an investment God has entrusted to you. They are part of your destiny!

I ask you: Do your children say to your neighbor's kids, "My mother prays for me. She's sweet to me." Or do they say, "Oh, boy, there she goes again - yelling her head off!" Does your husband look at you with great respect? Does he tell you, "We may have our differences - but I always feel you want to heal, not divide. You always run to prayer!"

Your destiny is to raise your children in a home where prayer is commonplace - where your life and marriage are a praise and glory to the God!

Husbands and fathers: Can you imagine your wife saying of you, "My husband is human. He makes mistakes. But he is a praying man - and he is constantly becoming more like Jesus! He practices what he preaches. I know - because every day he's kinder to me, gentler, more considerate of my needs."

I am not boasting here. But it was one of the great thrills of my life to hear my wife say, "David has a temper, but he's working on it. I don't care what anybody says - I know he walks with God." I hope that can be said of me to my dying day. That is destiny!

Many preachers' wives have told Gwen and me, "It's all I can do to sit in church and listen to my husband preach. He's always smiling out at the congregation - but he's selfish and mean to me at home. Sometimes I just want to scream!"

I know of one minister who did great works for God. He wrote many wonderful books. He built institutions at home and overseas. He was in demand as a speaker all over the world. He was called a man of faith and vision - a man of destiny.

But one day his son, a young minister, called me, crestfallen. He said, "Brother David, I'm so hurt. My dad isn't what people think he is. He doesn't know how to tell the truth! Most of the stories he tells about miracles are lies. When I approached him about it, he admitted it to me. But he won't quit!"

I ended up talking to the father. He told me, "Yes, David, I'm a habitual liar. I don't even know what the truth is anymore." I prayed with the man - but there was no change. His son called me later to say things were only getting worse. His father apparently had committed himself to his sin.

This man is not a man of destiny. When he stands before the Lord at the judgment, all of his works will burn; all of his writings will judge him. None of those things was ever his destiny. Rather, his destiny was to become more like Jesus - to grow in holiness, righteousness, purity, with no lies. He may boast about being a "man of destiny." But he has missed his true destiny!

So many Christians are striving to accomplish wonderful things for God. But the Lord boils it all down to this simple thing: Are you changing from glory to glory? Are you becoming more like Jesus? "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren" (Romans 8:29).

On Judgment Day, not one word will be said of mighty works. There will be no notice of personal

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fame, success or human accomplishments. Instead, the question will be: Did you grow in Christ? Did you allow the Holy Spirit to teach you to serve others, to give up your rights? What were you like at home?

So, dear saint - are you fulfilling your destiny? Are you more like Jesus this year than you were last year? Is your marriage growing or deteriorating? Do your children see you as tender and kind, or as a grouch? Do the people who know you see the love of Christ in you?

What will be written on your tombstone: "The man who missed his destiny"? or, "The man who walked humbly with his God"?

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