

Bible Study - Restored Truth #5 - The Purpose of God
June 1, 2013

This Bible study will examine Restored Truth #5: The Purpose of God. The order of these restored truths have been placed in a specific order to create a better step-by-step understanding of God's great plan of salvation. Putting these topics together in a certain order should create a very clear picture of the meaning of God's Word. A nice foundation has been laid by going through restored truths 1-4 in preparation for the study of Restored Truth #5.

Here is a quick review of restored truths 1-4.

Restored truth #1: 'Who and What Is God'. God is a family. Currently the God family consists of two beings, God the Father and His son Jesus Christ. These two God beings are composed of spirit and have eternal life. They are perfect beings who live in harmony with one another with God the Father being supreme and in charge. Jesus Christ, as the Son, is subordinate to the Father carries out the instructions and directions of the Father.

Restored truth #2: 'What and Why Man Is'. Man is the only part of God's creation created in the image and likeness of God. The first man Adam was composed from the ground or the dust of the earth. While being created in the image and likeness of God, man was not created with all of God's attributes. Man was created with a temporary physiochemical existence which ends with death.

Restored truth #3: 'the Holy Spirit'. The Bible identifies the Holy Spirit as "power from on high." The Holy Spirit is God's power through which He performs His work. The Holy Spirit can dwell within a person only after a person repents of their sins, been baptized, and had the hands of God's ministry laid on them. The Holy Spirit is not a being like God the Father or Jesus Christ. It is not a person. It is the power of God.

Restored truth #4: 'the Spirit in Man'. The spirit in man powers the intellectual capacity of man. It is not the life of man, which is in the air man breathes and the blood which circulates through man's body. The spirit in man is the personal data-file which records every detail about a person and their life experiences. The spirit in man is the link within a person that connects with the Holy Spirit thus enabling the growth and development of perfect righteous character, leading to eternal life.

This quick review is good preparation for the study of Restored Truth #5: The Purpose of God.

Understanding the purpose of God requires study of foundational scriptures already covered in this Restored Truths series.

John 1:1 is very beginning of Bible. *In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God...*[John is speaking of two personages, two beings] *All things were made through him...*[the Word] *and without him nothing was made that was made.* The very beginning of the Bible starts out with two beings in existence before the physical creation was ever created. These two beings were God and the Word.

Angels were the first thing in the created order. Ezekiel 28 deals with one of those created angels. Ezek. 28:12 *Son of man, take up a lamentation for the King of Tyre and say to him, thus says the Lord God, you were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. (vs 13) The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes was prepared for you on the day you were created...*[The King of Tyre is representative of Satan the Devil. Notice, Satan is a created being, magnificent in all his ways] (vs 15) *You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created.* This speaks to God's creative ability. When God does something it's good. It's perfect.

Compare now the timing of the original creation with the existence of angels. When the physical universe, including earth were created, angels had already been created. Ezekiel 28 only shows they were created. The book of Job reveals angels were created before the earth was created. Notice a question Job is ask by God. Job 38:4 *Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?...*[God is asking: 'when I created the earth Job where were you?' Of course, Job was nowhere to be found because Job did not yet exist] *Tell me if you have understanding. (vs 7) Or who laid its cornerstone when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy...*[God makes clear the angels ("morning stars") were in existence and present when God created originally created the earth. This was an exciting event which made the angels happy. They sang together. This shows unity and harmony among the angels with God, who shouted for joy at what God had done.

Remember, the previous verses dealt with events through the original creation of the universe.

Gen. 1:1 *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth...*[This speaks to the original creation described in Job] (vs 2) *The earth was without form and void...*[Remember, when God originally created the earth, the angels shouted for joy. It was beautiful, something to be happy about. But notice, something changed in the condition of the earth. The words 'form' and 'void' in verse 2 mean waste and emptiness in the Hebrew language. Verse 2 describes the earth in a condition of waste and emptiness] *and the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.* Gen. 1:2 describes the earth in a state of decay. How did it get this way? The Bible is clear it was not created in this condition.

Between the original creation of Gen. 1:1 and the earth's state of decay in Gen. 1:2, the Bible reveals a gap of time. Something occurred between these 2 verses which destroyed God's original creation. What was it?

God placed Satan in charge over the Earth (Luke 4:5-6). Satan became unhappy with his position. He wanted the 'bigger' position. Isa. 14:12 *How you are fallen from heaven, oh Lucifer, son of the morning. (vs 13) For you have said in your heart I will ascend into heaven. I will exalt my throne...[Rulership of the earth] above the stars (angels) of God. Satan wanted to increase his position of rulership over earth to encompass the whole angelic creation of God. Again this shows angels had already been created] I will also sit in the mount of congregation in the farther sides of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds. I will be like the Most High.*

Everybody wants to be number one. Satan tried and remove God from His sovereign throne. His rebellion was decisively defeated, but not without a cost. The cost was the destruction of God's original creation.

Gen. 1:3 *And God said let there be light and there was light...[Earth was in a state of darkness and God brought light to it] (vs 4) And God saw the light that it was good, and God divided the light from the darkness. God called the light day and darkness he called night. So the evening and the morning were the first day.*

This is the first day of God's re-creation of the earth. The earth was already in existence. A better way of stating what is being described is the re-creation of the surface of the earth. Gen. 1:2 describes the earth in a state of decay, much like pictures of planets sent back to earth through NASA spacecraft. That's the state of decay earth was in, except, earth was covered in water. Scientists would love to find water on Mars. They say there was water on Mars and there probably was before Satan rebelled against his Creator.

Go now to the sixth day of creation. Part of God's recreation of the earth was the creation mankind. Gen. 1:26 *Then God said...[Elohim, the uni-plural noun for God in Hebrew] let us make man in our image according to our likeness. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, birds of the air, over the cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing. (vs 27) So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them...[Men and women are created in the image of God. Though men and women have vast differences, there are similarities such as having a head, two arms and two legs, toes and fingers. Men and women have many of the same internal organs performing the same bodily functions. Yet created within men and within women are vast differences. Nevertheless, both men and women are created in the image of God. Human beings look like God. They are physical representations of what God looks like. If God were to come to this earth now, He would appear as human beings with the same form and the same shape. (vs 31) And God saw everything that he had made...[All that God had recreated and created on earth. He saw all of that -] and indeed it was very good...[Again, everything God does is good] So the evening and the morning were the sixth day.*

Chapter 2 of Genesis gives more detail about the creation of man. Gen. 2:7 *The eternal God formed man of the dust of the ground...[Here is the material God used to create mankind] and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. Adam did not have immortality created with in him. He was created a mortal living*

being, a being that could die. His life consisted in the air he breathed and the oxidized blood flowing through his veins. At this point, what was God's purpose for creating man and putting him in charge of the earth?

God has a purpose for every action He takes. In 1 Corinthians 14:33, Paul writes, "*God is not the author of confusion.*" God always operates with a distinct purpose in mind. He carries out His purpose decently and in order.

Genesis 1:31 declares when God looked at everything He created, including man, it was "very good." This is why the spirit of man is not evil. God did not create man with carnal human nature. It was a nature that was acquired, as will be explained shortly.

Why did God recreate the earth and put man on it? God had to have a purpose behind His actions. Why did He do it?

Gen. 2:8 The eternal God planted a garden eastward in Eden and there he put the man whom he had formed. (vs 9) And out of the ground the Eternal God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil...[God gave Adam specific life and death instruction concerning these two trees] (vs 15) The Eternal God took the man and put him in the garden to tend and keep it...[To cultivate, to take care of] (vs 16) And the Eternal God commanded the man...[Notice, God commanded the man] saying of every tree of the garden you may freely eat...[God gave Adam access to all the trees He created and planted in the garden of Eden. Adam freely had access to all the trees, except one] (vs 17) But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat...[Out of all these trees there's only one tree, Adam, was commanded not to eat from for a very good reason] because in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.

If man was an immortal being, God would not tell Adam he could die. If man were an immortal being, God's command would carry no weight. This is similar to a parent telling a child there will be a punishment for committing a certain behavior and not following through. The threat is not real, if it is not certain to happen. God says, if you eat of this one tree, you shall surely die. There is teeth in that statement.

What do these two trees represent? They are key to understanding the purpose of God. Look at an agricultural principle Christ used in regard to trees. He uses this principle to make a spiritual point about human beings. Luke 6:43 *For a good tree does not bear bad fruit; nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. (vs 44) For every tree is known by its own fruit. Men do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they gather grapes from a bramble bush. (vs 45) A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil: out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.* Go back to Genesis 2 and apply this principle to the two trees.

The tree of life, defines the type of fruit this tree produces, life. On the other hand the tree of the knowledge of good and evil produces fruit that leads to death. These two trees produce two distinctly different results in the lives of the people who eat from them. Understanding this agricultural principle of fruit production provides a critical element to understanding the purpose of God.

Consider first, the tree of life. Gen.2:16 is where God commands Adam, saying: *Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat...*[Nothing is off-limits. Grasp the significance of God's statement] *You may freely eat.* This is not some type of government entitlement. It demonstrates God's goodness toward man.

Gen. 3:22 explains exactly what the tree of life does. These comments were made after Adam and Eve had already made their decision to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. (v22) *Then the Lord God said because the man has become like one of us to know good and evil...*[Chose to decide for themselves what was good and evil. God determines good and evil. His law defines what is right. It also defines what is wrong. Adam and Eve took to themselves the prerogative to decide what is good and what is evil instead of listening to God. They made the same choice Satan made in Isaiah 14:14, *"I will be like the Most High."* They decided they knew what was best for their lives. They did not want God telling them what to do. This is really the bottom line of all human history] *...man has become like one of us to know good and evil, and now lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life indeed and live forever.* The tree of life produced fruit that would lead to the receiving of eternal life.

In partaking of the tree of life Adam and Eve would have had the opportunity to receive eternal life. The tree of life represented the way which leads to eternal life. At the end of verse 22, it says, "lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat and live forever." After Adam and Eve's rejected the tree of life, God closed off access to it because He would not allow them to live forever in sin. This why He created mankind with the ability to die. The tree of life leads to eternal life. There is an important criteria human beings must meet in choosing to live by the tree of life.

In Rev. 22:14, at the very end of the Bible, Christ says: *Blessed are those who do his commandments that they may have right to the tree of life and may enter through the gates into the city.* Part of choosing to live by the tree of life involves keeping the 10 Commandments.

This connection is clearly evident in an answer Christ's answer gave to a question He was ask. Matt. 19:16 *Now, behold, one came and said to him, good teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?...*[Another way to ask this question based on Revelation 22 is: How can I be a partaker of the tree of life? Notice Christ's answer in verse 17 *but if you want to enter into life...[want to eat from the tree of life] keep the Commandments.*

These commandments are the Ten Commandments God thundered out from Mount Sinai. They were written on tablets of stone, twice. Keeping the Ten Commandments spoken of in Matthew and Revelation are what lead people to eternal life. People in the world of traditional Christianity would take issue with such a statement because they believe the Ten Commandments have been done away with.

God's Church is the only organization of people on earth today which reads the Bible and does what it says. The commandments Christ is referring to are the Ten Commandments. The rest of Christ's conversation with this young person is very clear on this point. If people are truly interested in receiving eternal life, they will begin keeping all ten of the Ten Commandments. This is what your Bible says!

The Church of God is promised access to the tree of life if it overcomes. Rev. 2:7 *He who has an ear let him hear what the spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes...*[Overcoming is utilizes God's Holy Spirit with the spirit of man, to overcome the carnal nature which has developed because of living by the tree of the knowledge of good and evil] *To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.*

The tree of life will benefit the whole world one day as it was initially intended to in the Garden of Eden. Rev. 22:1 *And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clearest crystal proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb...*[reference to the Holy Spirit] (vs 2) *In the middle of its street and on either side of the river was the tree of life which bore 12 fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.* Eventually, the world will have the opportunity to partake of the tree of life.

Let examine this other tree, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If Adam partook of the tree of life, he would have been given eternal life. Gen. 2:17 God says very clearly: *If you eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, in the day that you eat of it, you shall surely die.* The tree of the knowledge of good and evil was the tree of death. It was a bad tree. It produced bad fruit.

Gen. 3 explains how Adam and Eve came to their decision of rejecting the tree of life. *The serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the eternal God had made. And he said to the woman, has God indeed said you shall not eat of every tree of the garden?...*[No! God said just the opposite. Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat except one. Recognize how Satan twists God's command to Adam. Remember this technique and how it was used by the Tkach administration to bring false doctrine into God's Church] (vs 2) *And the woman said to the serpent, we may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden...*[Eve knew what God's instructions were] (vs 3) *but the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God said you shall not eat of it, nor shall you touch it lest you die.* Eve adds further clarity to what God said. Not only were they not to eat from the tree of good and evil, they were not touch it either. That is good instruction, which goes back to what Paul said in 1 Thes. 5:22 to "*abstain from every form of evil.*" Sin is to be avoided at all costs.

Gen. 3:4 *Then the serpent said to the woman you will not surely die...*[This a bald face lie. Satan the Devil is a liar, the father of lies. 'You will not surely die.' Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong pointed out on many occasions that this verse is the origin of the immortal soul doctrine. Satan injected the idea into human beings that they were created with immortality] (vs 5) *For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened...*[Notice] *and you will be like God, knowing good and evil...*[In other words, you don't have to listen to God. You can determine for yourself what is good and evil and will not die] (vs 6) *When the woman saw the tree was good for food...*[Eve rationalized in her mind based upon what she saw and heard] *that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her and he ate.* Adam failed to stand up to his wife. That's been the problem with men down through the ages. Many men have a hard time standing up and leading. Adam was not deceived and should have told his wife, no, I am not eating that fruit. This is true leadership.

After making their decision, God confronted them about it, Gen. 3:17: *To Adam he said, because you have heeded the voice of your wife and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you saying you shall not eat of it (vs 19) In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground; for out of it you were taken: for dust you are and to dust you shall return.*

Gen. 5:5 What God told Adam about the outcome of eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil came to pass. *All the days that Adam lived were 930 years and he died.* God means what He says. The Bible means what it says.

In Rom. 6:21 Paul provides a good summary of the two trees and how their fruit is connected with the agricultural principle Christ used in Luke 6. *What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death...*[Paul is speaking of all the sins God's people committed before becoming members of the Church. All those actions produced the fruit of death] (vs 22) *but now having been set free...*[liberated] *from sin...*[from the penalty of sin, death] *and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end everlasting life...*[Right here is a great summary of the two trees. Paul puts an exclamation mark on his thoughts in verse 23:] *For the wages of sin is death...*[sin leads to (eternal) death] *but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.* Understanding God's purpose requires understanding of the meaning of the two trees.

Did God create mankind for the express purpose of experiencing suffering and death? Remember when God created mankind He said it was good. But the reality is when the course of human history is examined, the vast majority of the history is dominated by evil. History records the destruction and death of untold numbers of human beings. Is what God intended when He created mankind? No, it absolutely was not His purpose!

In Eze.18:32, God says: *for I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies*. Another way of saying this is: I have no pleasure in the death of a sinner. The reason for death is sin, which comes the breaking of God's law. God didn't create mankind for mankind to die.

Notice after Adam and Eve made their decision to eat from the tree of good and evil, God cut them off from access to the tree of life. By doing this, God removed the opportunity for human beings to receive eternal life. Gen. 3:24 *So he drove out the man and placed cherubim at the east of the Garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life*. God decision place man in quite a dilemma. Remember, the wages of sin is death, eternal death. Man at this point was confined to the grave forever. Yet God, in His great wisdom, anticipating such a decision might be made by Adam and Eve, already had a plan in place to deal with man's problem. What is that plan?

Heb. 9:22 *According to the law almost all things are purified...[cleansed] with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission*. [forgiveness of sin] The shedding of blood is required to deal with the problem of mankind being eternally confined to the grave.

The importance of blood is why the forgiveness of sin to be possible when it is shed. The importance of blood is found in the context of the sacrificial system. Lev.17:11 *For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul*. [human being] Blood is the atonement, or payment for sin. Blood covers the sins of all human beings, or nepheshes. During the time of the ancient Israelites, God used the sacrificial system to represent the future. It represented the real sacrifice that would pay the penalty for mankind's sins.

John 3:16 *For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life...*[perish means dead forever] (vs 17) *For God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved*. Christ came to this Earth to save the world from the penalty of eternal death.

Heb. 9:27 *And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment...*

What does this verse mean? It will be covered in greater detail in Restored Truth Bible study #6. Basically, when people die, they will not stay in the grave. It is God's plan to resurrect human beings cut off from the tree of life, back to physical life to be judged. The vast majority of people who lived on this earth prior to Jesus Christ's 2nd coming are going to be judged. These people will learn their previous life was not how God intended for them to live. They will be taught from the tree of life and have the same opportunity to choose it or reject it as Adam and Eve

were given. The tree of life or the tree of death, except this time, the tree of death will be eternal death, with no second opportunity to be resurrected again.

Heb. 9:27 *It is appointed once for men to die, but after this the judgment. (vs 28) Christ was offered once...[crucified once] to bear the sins of many...[to bear the sins of all mankind] To those who eagerly wait for him he will appear a second time apart from sin for salvation...[Christ's second coming will not be as a physical human being. He is coming as King of kings in the power and glory of the office He will hold as the Son of God, perfect and righteous] and to those who eagerly wait for him.*

Those who eagerly wait will be a very small number of human beings, physically alive on the earth when the 7th trumpet sounds. In Revelation 11, the nations of the earth are very angry when Jesus Christ returns. Christ's 1st coming as a human being allowed for the shedding His blood as payment for the sins of mankind.

Again, why did God create man? There a principle God established when He re-created the earth. This principle applies to both animals and human things. Gen. 1:22 *And God blessed them [animals] saying be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters of the seas and let the birds multiply on the earth...[God intended for animals to reproduce themselves, or re-create themselves. Notice His intent for human beings was the same] (vs 28) And God blessed them...[Adam and Eve] and God said to them be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it. God wanted human beings and animals to reproduce. God designed within His creation for human beings and animals to multiply on the face of the earth. But in this design mankind's creation was incomplete. God had a deeper purpose for creating mankind in His image and likeness.*

Again, consider what God's purpose is. 1 Cor. 15:46 *However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; and afterward the spiritual...*

This verse defines the principle of duality. God, in His method of operation, works on the principle of duality. This principle has a forerunner event, which is given first to learn from and points to an actual event to occur in the future. It points to or encapsulates what God wants done. Paul shows the spiritual aspects of God's creation did not come first, but the natural or physical part came first.

(vs 47) *The first man was of the earth, made of dust...[Adam] The second man is the Lord from heaven...[Jesus Christ] (vs 48) As was the man of dust so also are those who are made of dust...[human beings are made of dust just like Adam] And as is the heavenly man so also are those who are heavenly. (vs 49) And as we have borne the image of the man of dust...[image of Adam] we shall also bear the image of the heavenly man. " [Image of Jesus Christ] The latter part of this verse is future tense.*

In applying the principle of duality, Adam was the forerunner, Christ is the fulfillment of what God intended to accomplish. Human beings were created with capacity to take on spiritual image and likeness of Jesus Christ. The word image in Greek means a likeness, a statue, or a profile, representation or a resemblance. Man is a physical representation, a physical icon right now. In the near future, those in God's Church will be the first to actually take on the spiritual image of Christ. The purpose of man was to go from being a physical representation of God to being born as a member of God's family. Not only would man look like God, but man would have the mind and the character of God. Man would have eternal life, no longer subject to the confines of the grave.

Becoming literally like Christ carries an important distinction with it. What is that distinction? 1 John 3:1: *Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us that we should be called children of God. Therefore the world does not know us because it did not know him. (vs 2) Beloved, now we are the children of God...["we" = the Church] It has not yet been revealed what we shall be like, but we know that when he is revealed we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is...*[This is exactly what Paul is talking about in 1 Corinthians 15:46. We are now the children of God. In other words, God created mankind to become eventually become the God-kind] (vs 10) *In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest...*[Clearly, in this there are those who are the children of God and those who are children of the devil. The children of Satan far outnumber the children of God. God's children need to keep this in mind each day when walking out the door into this world] *whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God nor is he who does not love his brother.*

John is saying is that if you don't keep the commandments you are not a child of God. Keeping the commandments is eating from the tree of life.

1 John 3:16 *By this we know love, because he laid down his life for us...[Christ] and we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.* Christ literally laid down His life, giving it up for the benefit of every sinner. God's people may be called on to literally lay down their lives at some point, but John is not solely speaking of being crucified. To lay down one's life means serving, helping, cooperating, getting along with and assisting one another in God's Church.

1 John 3:23 *And this is his commandment that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another as he gave us commandment. (vs 24) Now he who keeps his commandments abides in him and he in him and by this we know that he abides in us by the Spirit which he has given us. [God's Holy Spirit] This shows God's Church is involved with eating from the tree of life now.*

Paul explains in Romans what God's purpose is and what happens to a person who fulfills that purpose.

Rom. 8:9 *But you are not in the flesh but in the spirit...*[God's people are not to live according to fleshly carnal desires. They are to demonstrate the fruits of God's spirit] *if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not*

have the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his...[This is the definition of a true Christian. One who has the Holy Spirit in them, lives by the spirit] (vs 10) *and if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.* (vs 11) *but if the Spirit of him...*[of God the Father] *who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he...*[God the Father] *who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit which dwells in you...*[This is all part of becoming a member of God's family] (vs 12) *Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh to live according to the flesh* (vs 13) *For if you live according to the flesh you will die...*[If one continues to eat, to partake of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, that person will receive the penalty of eternal death] *but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live...*[receive eternal life] (vs 14) *for as many as are led by the Spirit of God...*[Here's the distinction] *these are sons of God.* Sons of God - Right there, is God's purpose for creating mankind: to reproduce Himself in humankind so that members of His human creation, may become full-fledged members, or sons, in His family.

Rom. 8:15 *For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear; but you received the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry out, Abba, Father...*[Adoption in the Greek means placing as a son, adoption. figuratively it refers to Christian son-ship in respect to God. The world of traditional Christianity does not believe God is a family. There is no belief that human beings can become part of God's family. But this is not what the Bible teaches. For if a person is led by the Spirit of God, that person is a son of God. This will be further discussed in a later Bible study on being begotten by God. Nevertheless, it says of those who are led by the Spirit of God, will cry out Abba, Father] (vs 16) *The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit...*[Notice] *that we are children of God...*[The Bible is very specific, on this point] (vs 17) *and if children...*[children] *then heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ; if indeed we suffer with him, that we may also be glorified together.*

In Gal. 4:4 Paul says: *but when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law...*[under the penalty of the law, death] (vs 5) *to redeem those who were under the law...*[Again, the penalty of the law, death] *that we might receive the adoption as sons...*[sonship] (vs 6) *and because you are sons...*[There is no adoption. Paul said God's people are children, in Romans 8] *God has sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your heart crying out, Abba, Father.* (vs 7) *Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son then an heir of God through Christ.*

In Eph. 1:3, Paul explains how becoming sons is possible through Jesus Christ. *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ* (vs 4) *just as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.* (vs 5) *Having predestined us as sons, by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.* (vs 6) *To the praise of the glory of his grace, by which he made it acceptable in the beloved...*[How are people made acceptable in Jesus Christ? Through Christ in paying the death penalty for sin. Recognizing the meaning of His sacrifice, acknowledging personal sins, realizing the need for God's spirit and the need to have that sacrifice applied. This is

how people become acceptable to God the Father] (vs 7) *In him [Christ] we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sin according to the riches of his grace.*

Heb. 2:9 clearly spells out God's purpose for creating human beings. *But we see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels...[as a human being] for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that he by the grace of God might taste death for everyone...[all sinners] For it was fitting for him...[God the Father] for whom are all things, and by whom are all things in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation [Jesus Christ] perfect through sufferings. (vs 11) For both he who sanctifies...[God the Father] and those who are being sanctified...[for now only, God's Church] are all one...[one family] for which reason Christ is not ashamed to call them brethren.*

In the Greek the word for 'brethren' means a brother. God created mankind to become sons in His family. As sons of God the Father we will become brothers of Jesus Christ in the family of God. God's purpose for creating mankind was for the reproduction of the God family. Created from the dust of the earth, with a temporary existence, God created in man the potential of becoming a full-fledged members of His family. Every human being has this potential within them. God's plan is designed to help every human being achieve their potential. As will be seen in Restored Truth #6, opportunity to achieve this potential will occur at certain times within God's plan.

Now examine what God's purpose is not. Again, reading from the catechism of the Catholic Church, which is really the foundation of belief for all of traditional Christianity. The catechism does not have a specific section on the purpose of God. The reason for this is because the Catholic Church doesn't understand the purpose of God. This can be seen by comparing certain sections of the catechism with the Bible.

What God's purpose is not can be found in section 293 of the catechism of the Catholic Church. Which states:

Scripture and tradition never cease to teach and celebrate this fundamental truth: The world was made for the glory of God. Saint Bonaventure explains that God created all things not to increase His glory, but to show it forth and communicate it. For God has no other reason for creating than his love and goodness. Creatures came into existence when the key of love opened his hands. The first Vatican Council explains: "This one true God, of his own goodness and almighty power, not for increasing his own beauty, nor for attaining his perfection, but in order to manifest this perfection through the benefits which he bestows on creatures, with absolute freedom of counsel, and from the beginning of time, made out of nothing both orders of creatures, the spiritual and corporeal." Or the physical.

Section 294, says:

The glory of God consists in the realization of this manifestation, in communication of his goodness, for which the world was created. God made us to be his sons through Jesus Christ according to the purpose of his will to the praise of his glorious grace. For the glory of God is man fully alive. Moreover, man's life is the vision of God. If God's revelation through creation has already obtained life for all the beings that dwell on earth, how much more will the Word's manifestation of the Father obtain life for those who see God? The ultimate purpose of creation is that God who is the creator of all things may at last become all-in-all, thus simultaneously assuring his glory and our beatitude.

Notice the last statement of section 294, which speaks to God's purpose of creating mankind as the Catholic Church believes.

The ultimate purpose of creation is that God, who is the creator of all things, may at last become all-in-all, thus simultaneously assuring his glory and our beatitude.

This statement does not encapsulate the real purpose for why God created mankind. Though the mention of becoming sons of God is made, nothing references becoming members of the God family. The catechism relies of the explanations from Church fathers, instead of accepting the Bible for what is actually says. Many of the phrases that you heard in those two sections of the catechism come from church leaders. Their quotes are all footnoted in the catechism.

Section 306 says:

God is the sovereign master of his plan, but to carry it out he also makes use of his creatures' cooperation. This use is not a sign of weakness, but rather a token of Almighty God's greatness and goodness. For God grants his creatures not only their existence, but also the dignity of acting on their own, of being causes and principles for each other, and thus, of cooperating in the accomplishment of his plan.

In the Garden of Eden, human beings didn't cooperate very well with God. In fact, Adam and Eve rejected God and His plan for created them. And ever since human beings continue not to cooperate with God.

One final section is 314, which says:

We firmly believe that God is master of the world and of its history, but the ways of his providence are often unknown to us. Only at the end when our partial knowledge ceases, when we see God face

to face, will we fully know the ways by which, even through the dramas of evil and sin, God has guided his creation to that definitive Sabbath rest for which he created heaven and earth.

What is the importance of these Restored Truths bible studies? There are three elements, which need to be understood before going any further.

- 1st: To provide a detailed explanation of these restored truths from God's Word, the Holy Bible.
- 2nd: To expose Satan's counterfeit teaching of those restored truths, which is done by highlighting the catechism of the Catholic Church.
- 3rd: To demonstrate how God's Truth was compromised with these counterfeit teachings, allowing Satan to subtly weave them into the fabric of God's Church to deceive people.

When this is understood, these restored truths can be defended and protected these. It cannot be emphasized enough - the importance of knowing what God's word says.

Now consider some concerns Paul expressed for the brethren in Ephesus. He was meeting with the leadership of Ephesus in Miletus. He would not be coming back to Ephesus to see these ministers again. Notice Paul's concern is not a concern shared by the majority of God's Church today. Acts 20:29: *For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. (vs 30) Also from among yourselves men will rise up speaking perverse things to draw away the disciples after themselves...*[Paul was concerned on two fronts: false ministers from outside of God's Church and false ministers from within God's Church] (vs 31) *Therefore watch, and remember, that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears...*[Paul is saying to remember the truths that have been imparted to you because they're going to be attacked by false ministers. These ministers are going to teach falsely about these truths] (vs 32) *So now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and give you an inheritance among all those who were sanctified.*

Paul tells these ministers of Ephesus to maintain these truths - hold onto them. These truths will lead to salvation. But be aware that efforts will be made to undermine them.

No one can take these truths away from God's people, if God's people understand what God's Word says.

Now examine the maze of false doctrine and misrepresentation of God's Word about God's purpose, which came in to God's Church following the death of God's servant, Herbert W. Armstrong.

In addressing God being a family the following was written in a booklet published by the Worldwide Church of God (WCG) in the early 1990s entitled "*God Is*" on pages 49-50.

The Bible tells us that upon conversion the Christian is born again into the kingdom of God as one of the children of God. (1 John 3:3, 2) Thus we learned God has a family. It is not biblically accurate however to say that God is a family. For lack of clear language, and human language falls short when we try to describe God, some Bible students have explained that the Hebrew term Elohim, translated God, describes a family group of more than one being. Most scholarship contradicts this interpretation of the word Elohim. Thus, while God has a family, the word Elohim does not define God as being a family.

Does this quote match with what the Bible says? Does it match with the scriptures covered in this Bible study with regards to God's purpose? No, it does not! It is the scholars who are in contradiction with the Word of God. This is where the problem lies.

In a letter from the Personal Correspondence Office of the WCG, David Hunsberger in response to a question, writes the following:

Yes, the church once believed that God is a family and that the saved would enter that family upon being glorified. This belief is no longer held and was repudiated in our member newspaper the Worldwide News in 1991.

Mr. Hunsberger's response is an outright human repudiation of the Bible.

In another quote from the booklet "God Is" in regards to God's family, it says:

Much of the Bible was written in poetry, analogy, simile, metaphor, and symbols. Therefore we should not always interpret every word of the Bible literally. The Bible also describes how God wants us to relate to him, often using familial language. Jesus taught us to pray to our Father in heaven. (Matthew 6:9) Yes, what Christians enjoy with God is a family relationship, but in analogy.

Today, many in the world of traditional Christianity are taught the Bible cannot be taken literally. In an earlier Bible study, the need for understanding biblical terminology was emphasized. When talk about the Bible being understood in the context of poetry, analogy, simile, metaphor and symbols, spiritual red flags should be going up.

A little time in this study was spent on the word and meaning of 'adoption.' Compare this previous information with an article entitled "The One Who Loves You," by Gene Hogberg in The Plain Truth Magazine, September 1993, Mr. Hogberg writes:

We should note that we become the children of God through a birth experience. (John 3:3) Paul also uses a metaphor of adoption. We become God's children through adoption when we are given the Holy Spirit. (Romans 8:15-17)

The next comment comes from Joseph W. Tkach, Sr. and was quoted in an earlier Bible study. But it is important to quote it again. It comes from the Pastor General's Report, July 27, 1993, where Mr. Tkach writes:

The teaching we once held that the destiny of human beings is to become gods is not one we can support theologically.

Was this teaching supported in this Bible study biblically? Yes, it was!

Why were these people in God's Church? Their teachings are biblically wrong. These men taught false doctrine. These teachings ripped God's Church apart. It's obvious these men did not prove and believe what Mr. Armstrong taught from the Bible.

The reason these men were in God's Church was because they were useful idiots in Satan's ongoing attempts to undermine and destroy God's restored truths. Any member of God's Church can be a useful idiot if these truths are not fully understood and lived by.

The final word on this topic comes from a Mr. Armstrong's sermon entitled *The Mission of the Philadelphia Church Era*, December 17, 1983. In this sermon, Mr. Armstrong states with absolute clarity what the purpose of God is. It is appropriate to give Mr. Armstrong the last word based on the fact God used him to restore this truth back into His Church.

The second thing to be restored is the purpose of God. The gospel has to do with that - that God is reproducing us and that man can become god. No other church on earth believes that, brethren. Now let me tell you, I'm going to reveal to you now things that have been restored in this church; and let me tell you these are all things that some of those who have been ministers in this church in high office have gone out and are now saying, and saying publicly, that we are departing from the faith and that we're going farther and farther into error, because they will not receive the truths that God has been restoring into the Church. God's purpose is that He is reproducing himself and that we ultimately become god.