

## 2019 MEN'S TRAINING CAMP SPLIT SERMON: FULFILLING OUR CREATOR'S INTENT

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Today we assemble as men in the presence of our Creators, with a desire to better understand and fulfill their intent for us.

To begin to do this, it's important:

- to place who and what we are *in context*
- to establish *a frame of reference*
- and to create *a framework* in which to function.

Context is important. It pulls us out of the trees to see the forest.

- For example: Someone can ask, "Can I watch TV on the Sabbath?" To properly answer the question, it's important to place the question in the context of the purpose of the Sabbath itself. *Context helps make the answer clearer.*

Similarly, when we as men ask "What can and should I do in order to understand and fulfill God's intent for me?" context helps make the answer clearer.

How then can we fulfill our Creators' intent for us? To fulfill our Creators' intent for us, we need to do *three things*:

### #1 We need to deeply grasp and internalize what our Creator is doing.

What is our *Father's* work? *Raising a family*. Mr. Armstrong put it well: "God is reproducing Himself." *This is our Father's primary pursuit*—creating one big happy family, in which every member finds his or her greatest joy.

**Rom 10:13–15** Six steps in the process (proclaiming the Good News is only step #2). Being saved is *ultimately* about becoming permanent members of God's Family. In other words, *the endgame is family*.

**Rom 8:29** God's ultimate desire is to bring "many sons to glory" (Heb 2:10).

**Mal 2:15a** In context here, this was about the children of the people Malachi addressed this to. But ultimately, *it's about all of us*. Paul told the Athenian philosophers that *we—all of us*—are God's offspring (Acts 17:28).

What is *Christ's* work? As a *husband*, He is dedicated to *bringing out the best in his wife, so that she can become all that she was meant to be* (Eph 5:25–27). As an *older Brother*, He is fully dedicated to *insuring that all of His brothers and sisters permanently take their place in the Family* (Jn 6:39).

We are the developing product of God's reproductive efforts, in which both our Father and older Brother are fully engaged.

David rhetorically asked God, "What is man, that you are mindful of him?" (Ps 8:4). The answer should be clear to us. But what must be clearer is how everything that **we** do should *further our Father's primary pursuit, as everything that He does furthers that primary pursuit*.

Everything God has created He uses as resources to raise His Family—the Family we are *all* part of now. Is this *our* pursuit? Is this how *we* use the time, resources and opportunities available to us? Do we have *God's* heart? Do we have *His* mind?

Satan's pursuit is the polar opposite—to *destroy the human family*, which pictures God's Family, and what God is doing. He is working:

- To destroy “male” and “female”
- To destroy the divine institution of marriage between one man and one woman
- To destroy proper reproduction within marriage and in a stable, loving environment
- To destroy proper parenting practices
- To destroy children's minds and bodies
- To destroy the proper way to relate to each other.

Life's resources and experiences are to be used to create loving, healthy, enjoyable family environments, all of which will someday become part of God's divine Family. But Satan has turned food, drink, sex, entertainment, toys and status *into an end in themselves*. **1 Jn 2:16** These are foolish pursuits that divert us from fulfilling God's creative intent for us—from experiencing what will *really* make us happy.

We need to see Satan's efforts for what they are and reject every one of them! **2 Cor 11:3** We need to *examine our own pursuits*. What are *we* pursuing—what our *Father* wants, or what *we* want?

### #2 [To fulfill our Creators' intent for us] We need to align with our design.

If we want to pursue the *right* things, we need to *consciously* and *deliberately* strive to align ourselves with what God is doing—as men, husbands, fathers and members of the developing Family of God. This is about the *choices* we make, big *and* small.

**Jas 4:13–15** Even after surrendering our lives to God, we can tend to retake the steering wheel. We need to remember that **God** is supposed to be in charge of our lives, not us. We vowed at baptism to align our life's pursuits with what God is doing. [career, job, family, etc.]

**1 Cor 11:3** Though we are male, *we have a head, Christ, who Himself has a head*, God the Father. We are under *their* authority, and *subject to their creative intent and will*. If any of us tries to “be our own man,” we inadvertently work against their creative intent and will. What kinds of choices are *we* making, both big and small?

Our hearts, thoughts, words and actions—our pursuits, our choices—need to be in *alignment* with our Creators' creative intent and will. **Rom 6:13, 19b**

When Christ took human form as a man, He lived as one bound to fulfill His Father's will (Phil 2:7). Consider the things that He said:

- “I am dedicated to what My *Father* wants, not what *I* want” (Jn 6:38).

- “I teach what My *Father* has taught Me . . . I say what My *Father* has told Me to say” (Jn 7:16; 8:28; 12:49).
- “I do what My *Father* has told Me to do” (Jn 14:31).
- “My life is dedicated to what My *Father* is doing” (Jn 5:17, 19).

We need to come to have this kind of heart, mind and lifestyle if we are going to fulfill our design as men, husbands and fathers.

### #3 [To fulfill our Creators' intent for us] We need to better understand ourselves.

To successfully align with our design, we need to better understand ourselves, our pursuits, and our choices, *and what they say about us*.

God wants our greatest satisfaction to be derived from *contributing to* and *experiencing* healthy, happy family environments. He wants us to find our greatest joy ***within our families***, more than in anything else we engage in, or achieve, in this life. That's what *God* wants in raising His *own* Family.

Where do we stand in light of that kind of thinking? *It may be difficult for us to comprehend this, let alone desire it*—perhaps because of the negative results of our formative years, ideas we've absorbed, or habits we've developed.

Consider this excerpt from the article “Rebuilding Happy Families,” by Mr. John Ogwyn, in the *Tomorrow's World Special Report: The Future of the Family* (pp.24–25):

As we look around our hurting world, we should recognize that no one comes from a perfect background. . . . millions have grown up in circumstances that have left particularly deep scars. These scars will, *if not addressed and healed*, simply perpetuate the sins of the fathers onto the children—even to the third and fourth generations.

The problem, of course, is not that people set out with a goal of being unhappy. They simply do not know how to do the things that produce happy results!

Much can be traced to the lessons and survival strategies we learn as children. The hurt, the fear and the resentments accumulated during childhood are carried into adulthood.

While we cannot choose our past, we ***can make choices about our future***. Before we can go forward, ***we must face where we are in life and how we got there***. By understanding the dynamics of our family system, we can come to understand things about ourselves—***why we think and feel the way we do***.

When a child grows up believing that his best will never be good enough, or that he must struggle to earn love, or that he is responsible for everyone else's happiness, he will have real problems in establishing healthy adult relationships.

Facing the past is not about blaming Mom and Dad—***it is about becoming honest with ourselves***. We can never work on a problem *that we do not see or will not admit*. Taking inventory of our own lives, *including our feelings and the beliefs that underlie them*, is crucial. If we want the future to be different from the past, we must specifically identify what we intend to do differently. . . . when we honestly face an issue, we can see it for what it is, *and we can make choices*.

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Understanding *why* we may be out of alignment with what God is doing requires us to better understand ourselves, which God can help us to do if we simply ask Him.

**Job 34:32a** Only God, who knows the heart, can help us to better understand ourselves:

- why we *are* the way we are
- why we *feel* the way we do
- why we *pursue* the things we pursue
- why we may be out of alignment with God's purpose and intent for us

**Jer 17:14** The greatest healing is the healing of the mind, so that we can come into alignment with God's creative intent, and experience the joy that is to be found in healthy, happy family relationships—relationships God intends for us to experience for eternity.

So to fulfill our Creators' intent for us, we need to:

- Deeply grasp and internalize what our Creator is doing
- Align with our design
- Better understand ourselves.

These things place who and what we are in context. They establish a frame of reference, and create a framework in which to function as men, husbands, fathers and members of the developing Family of God.