

Watch Your Ambitions

"Are you seeking great things for yourself? Don't do it! But don't be discouraged. I will bring great disaster upon all these people, but I will protect you wherever you go. I, the LORD, have spoken." Jeremiah 45:5

We are living in an age when people believe that they can "shape their own destiny". We are encouraged to "follow our dreams" after all, if it's going to happen, we are the ones that must make it so! But what place does ambition have in the life of a fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ? Where does His will take supremacy over ours? Is it wrong or even sinful for a disciple of Christ to have ambition in life? How can we take "confident initiative" in the various facets of life and at the same time glorify the God who made us and saved us?

Over the next two weeks we will be seeking to answer these questions, as they are vital to a God-honoring life. Can you remember the last time you thought for sure that what you were doing was of God and you came to find out it was only sourced in you? Many times in life the plans of men rush actively ahead of the prevailing purposes of God, with no thought of who's in control. Nowhere do we read in the Scriptures that we are to dream our dreams or make our plans and then ask God to come alongside and bless them. In fact, it is just the opposite. Our lives are to be constantly conforming to likeness of Christ who lived His life reflecting His words – "not My will, but Thine be done".

Let's take a minute and define ambition: Ambition is an ardent desire for position, fame or power. It is a desire to achieve or arrive at a particular end. In today's society there are at least three main goals that come to mind – to build a reputation, to gain material wealth, and to wield power and influence. Take a few minutes right now and share some of the ambitions that each of you desires to achieve. Now, are these ambitions centered around and terminating upon you? If so, they are fatally flawed and unworthy of a child of God because at the core they are built on SELF. Ambition can bring momentary glory and eternal shame if not sourced in GOD.

How do we determine the true character of our ambitions? What are the underlying motives that make our ambitions either praiseworthy or deplorably self-centered? The Lord's message to Baruch in [Jer.45:5](#), is timely for us...*"Are you seeking great things for yourself? Don't do it!"*

Jesus said something in His first sermon that parallels this OT truth. In [Matthew 6:19](#), He said – *"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal."* You see, sometimes the wrong lies not in the ambition itself but in its inspiring motive.

Remember in Mark 10, when James and John requested to sit one on the right and the other on the left, when Jesus went to occupy His place in glory? They wanted to be "great", to hold a position of honor with their Lord. Then in verse 43, Jesus does not rebuke them for wanting to be great but rather radically redefines the path to getting there.

Paul had ambitions in life but everyone of them found their centre in Christ, so that in all things Christ would have first place! Listen to this intensely ambitious man of God:

- *"So our aim is to please Him always..." 2Cor.5:9*
 - *"Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life..." 1Thess.4:11*
 - *"It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known..." Rom.15:20*
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Identify some of the ambitions that you have in your YFC office. Is the glory of God the supreme objective or are you somehow wrapped up in this pursuit more than you realise? Will the fulfillment of these ambitions cause you to be more useful in devoted service to Christ and a greater blessing to your fellow man?

"All in CHRIST, by the HOLY SPIRIT, and for the glory of GOD."
