

THERE IS NO PLAN B

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Negativity is all around us. Tragedy, at least the tragedy of *another* person's life, often fascinates us. Tragedy and mayhem sell papers and attract viewers.

While newscasters like to devote the final five minutes to a heart-warming story of compassion, that brief smile usually follows 55 minutes of competition, heartbreak, and outrage. Is that an accurate picture of the way life is?

Is life really 92% bitterness and 8% kindness? Are 22 hours of each and every day full of pain and grief? Not for most people.

Could this inequity of reporting negatively affect our outlook on life, or diminish our hopefulness for the future?

What if the percentages are actually the reverse?

But even if the reverse is true, and if you choose to concentrate on the 8% of sorrow and difficulty, *instead* of the 92% of peace and joy—will that still negatively affect your outlook? Likely it would.

So it has less to do with what actually happens, and more to do with where you choose to focus your thoughts. Where do *you* choose to focus your thoughts?

Paul, an apostle for Christ, emphasized this exercise.

We take every thought captive to make it obey Christ. (2 Corinthians 10:5)

This was not just a personal habit, but a common discipline among God's people; thus, he said, "We."

And it was forcefully intentional: "We take."

This exercise was more than occasional, for it encompassed "every thought."

And the act had a sense of demand or insistence: "take captive."

That's what it takes to obey Christ. For every one of His followers.

And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. (Philippians 4:8)

The importance of making practical choices like these is underscored by the fact that God has only one game plan for our universe.

There is no Plan B.

One and Only

“Only” is a word that defines someone or something that is alone in a class or category, especially in superiority or distinction; unique, peerless.

Here are five of God’s “onlys.”

1. God has only one Son, one Savior.

John, whom Jesus called from being a commercial fisherman to follow Him, and who also wrote five books of the New Testament, wrote this about God’s plan: *“God showed how much He loved us by sending His **one and only Son** into the world so that we might have eternal life through Him.”* (1 John 4:9)

Referring to Jesus Christ the Nazarene, Peter, another fisherman-become-apostle, proclaimed, *“There is salvation in no one else! God has given **no other name** under heaven by which we must be saved.”* (Acts 4:12)

2. God has only one target audience.

Jesus described His mission from the Father this way: *“The Son of Man came to seek and save **those who are lost.**”* (Luke 19:10)

And that includes *all* lost people. As one hymn writer put it:

*One new man is the Father’s plan;
He redeemed us from the sons of men.
Every kindred, tribe and tongue,
In Himself He called us to be one.*

Your sin, your brokenness is not a stumbling block to God; it is His very reason for choosing you!

3. God offers only one way to be saved.

Jesus patiently explained to Nicodemus, a Jewish elder and teacher, *“I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God. I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life. So don’t be surprised when I say, ‘You must be born again.’”* (John 3:3,5-7)

Neither right believing (sound doctrine) nor right behaving (righteous living) can get you to Heaven. Everyone must be born again.

4. God has only one Family, one Church (and it’s not the Assemblies of God or the Roman Catholic Church).

*“You have come to the assembly of **God’s firstborn children**, whose names are written in heaven.”* (Hebrews 12:23)

They are “firstborn,” for God has no grandchildren.

5. God has given us just one mission: make disciples from all peoples (each one tell one).

*Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, **go and make disciples** of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”* (Matthew 28:18-20)

God didn’t choose angels to deliver the Good News. See whom He chose: *“Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him.”* (1 Corinthians 1:26-29)

Look What the Lord Has Done!

It’s not what you may or may not have “brought to the table” when you were born again, that determines your fruitfulness. It is what Christ is able to do in you, to make of you, as you follow Him.

He has given each of us gifts—both natural and supernatural—which the Holy Spirit may tap in the course of our service. All He needs from us is our willingness and our courage to trust and obey.

Paul knew what it was to feel inadequate to the task he had been given, to feel hindered from achieving what he thought he must.

I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger from Satan to torment me and keep me from becoming proud.

Three different times I begged the Lord to take it away. Each time he said, "My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness." So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me. That's why I take pleasure in my weaknesses, and in the insults, hardships, persecutions, and troubles that I suffer for Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Corinthians 12:7-10)

Christ's strength is made complete in our weakness!

He does not wait for you to get it together, to get fixed up. He chooses you now. He uses you now. Your weakness is His opportunity. And He has no Plan B.

We are God's only option to go!

What Will You Do?

The following is a condensed version of a poem by Charles Osgood:

Everybody, Somebody, Anybody, and Nobody were members of a group.

There was an important job to do and Everybody was asked to do it.

Everybody was sure that Somebody would do it.

Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did it.

Somebody got angry because it was Everybody's job.

Everybody thought Anybody could do it, but Nobody realized that Anybody wouldn't do it.

It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody, when Nobody did what Anybody could have done.

Don't check out! Don't write yourself out of God's story. He chose you. He knows what He's doing. And He can use you.

Notice the "God Moments" that He arranges in your life and step into them, trusting the Lord. You probably won't know what to do or what to say as you take that first step. But He will give you what you need. Just trust and obey. And share Jesus in those moments. Each one tell one, is how He gets the work done.

The question is not “Who will you tell?” but will you be willing when presented with an opportunity?

If you will go, He will go with you—to the ends of the earth and to the end of the age!