



TRANSFORMED

DEVOTIONS CONNECTING TEENS TO CHRIST

Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.

Philippians 2:12-13

Thankful for the plan

“Aaaaachooooo!!”

He sneezed all over my lunch. Very gross. Not only did he ruin my appetite, he also spread some of his sickness my way. Getting a cold wasn't on my agenda that day.

Did you know that frowning and complaining does the same thing? Like a virus that's gone airborne and inhaled or ingested, our grouchiness and grumbling negatively impacts others.

We could talk about smiling more frequently, complimenting others consistently, or demonstrating our gratitude more gladly, but we should look deeper. How can we live so positively? What would make us want to live that way?

While in prison, the apostle Paul had many reasons to complain and give up. He thought he would die soon. Even so, he writes with gratitude and joy and even gives the reason why—God is working in us.

The God of heaven who has loved you from before the beginning, who has saved you through his Son, Jesus, who has claimed you in the waters of your baptism, is working in you. Think of it, the God of heaven who controls the stars is working in you for your good. The God over the earth who creates sunrises and sunsets with unrepeatably beauty is working in your life.

Consider all that went into today for you. The sun rose bringing warmth and light. God has ordered it all for us. And since his works are wonderful and his plans are always good, then you can know without a doubt that his plan for you is good. And just in case we need one more reason to thankfully trust God's plan, Jesus' tomb is still empty. Not only do we have eternal life, but our lives matter here and now.

You might want to know more about God's specific plan for you. What's next after high school? What does God want for you and your boyfriend or girlfriend? What does God seek to change through you? Whom does he want to help through you?

For all the things that we don't know, we do know this. God loves you. He does have a plan for you. And his purpose for you is good. Since that is the case, we have reason to smile with gratitude to God.

A study conducted by Duke University and Mayo Clinic uncovered that positivity and optimism generally adds time to life. Of course, we know that the Lord is in control of that. Unlike a viral negativity, our optimistic and hope-filled outlook on life is powerful. And since we have a God who's working in us according to his good pleasure and will, we have every reason to smile.

Prayer: Lord, please help me to trust that your plan for my life is good. Lead me to smile with joy so that my gratitude to you would lead others to know your grace as well. In the difficult days lift my eyes heavenward and remind me of the eternal hope that I have in you, all because of your great love in Jesus. Amen.