

**GOD'S PLAN FOR YOU AND ME**  
**President's Message at the 2011 Convention**  
**Mary Ann Cole**

James 4:13-15 --- In these verses, James counsels us against the foolishness of making plans without consideration for the will of God in the matter. All James is saying is that you and I can make any plans we wish to make, but God always has the final say in the matter. When we learn His plans for the situation, and we make our plans based on His, we find out that He had the best plan all along!

But, we humans like to make our own plans don't we? I'm sure that all of you have had plans for what you wanted to do with your life. Some of those plans were realistic and then if you were like me some of our ideas were out of the question. We want things to go the way we want them to go. But, have you ever thought that God might have a better plan?

There are many examples in the Bible of persons who God had a better plan: When Goliath saw David coming to meet him in battle, he had plans to kill David and feed his carcass to the scavengers of the field, BUT you see when that stone sank deep into his forehead and he fell dead, God had the best plan.

When Peter and the others had fished all night without catching a single fish, they wanted to go home, BUT Jesus told them to go out into the deep water and they would catch fish, Peter found out that Jesus had a better plan.

When Jesus told His disciples that He was going to die, Peter rebuked the Lord. Peter thought he had a good plan, BUT God's plan was better, Jesus went to the cross and paid for our sins forever.

I could go on and on with these examples of God's plans for His people from His Word. We know that God has the best plan, it may not be the most popular plan, or the easiest plan; but it is the BEST PLAN! We know that God will always look out for our best interests.

God's plan is different than the one we many times have for ourselves. David was a shepherd, but God had a different plan. Job was a wealthy man, who just wanted to worship God, love his family and enjoy his wealth, but God had a different plan. Joseph and Mary were just a young couple who wanted to get married and raise a family and Saul just wanted to destroy Christians, but God had a different plan for all of them. If we are to live a life willing to serve

our God, we must be willing to submit to the plans of God, even when it is different than that we have planned for ourselves.

Corrie ten Boom, a brave Christian lady from the Netherlands who, because of her faith risked her life to help many Jews escape Hitler's death edict for the Jews during World War II once explained, "Picture a piece of embroidery placed between you and God, with the right side up toward God. Man sees the loose, frayed ends; but God sees the pattern." God is in control. God knows and sees the plan he has in store for us, even when we don't understand or know what that plan may be. You know God's plan for each of us starts at our very beginning. My beginning and God's plan for me started by being born to loving caring Christian parents, I was blessed with a wonderful sister, all who have been a wonderful example of God's love and service, I also have been blessed with a great supportive and loving Christian extended family, and of course a devoted, devout church family. My parents taught me no matter what was happening, the importance of attending church every Sunday, to participate in any and all church activities, and being willing serve in anyway we were asked. My sister has taught be how to be a faithful servant with genuine love and care of others. My church family taught me the love of God and of others and how to serve God by serving others. And if there was an obstacle in my life my family and church family were always there to support me and help me see God's way. Later, I met and married a wonderful man, who shared with me more about the love of family, I have four great step-children, that I love as if they were my own, and then we were blessed with a beautiful daughter, who has helped me to know the joy of motherhood and to know God's plan for me as a parent. And those of you who are mothers know the strength that God gives us each day as we set the example for our children, what an awesome responsibility! And I can truly say that whatever capacity I have served my God, it has been a glorious experience. Even though I see the loose frayed ends, I know that God sees the pattern for my life. Whatever comes into our lives, no matter wonderful, joyous, difficult or dangerous it may be, we can confidently say, "We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have be called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28

If we want to see the Lord's best plan for our lives, it will require obedience to His plan on our part. He never asks us to take a blind leap in the dark. He asks us to take a step of faith. We all have to start with faith in God and Jesus Christ, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We don't have to know everything, but we have to be diligent in seeking out the knowledge that God

wants us to have. We must have faith, God is going to ask us to take some steps along the path of life that will be difficult, and that we may be unsure of. But, the path to God's best plan is always the path of faith. God speaks to us through his Word, and the Spirit; he speaks to us through other believers, and circumstances of life that we see His plan. The bottom line is God will always direct our feet plainly. God is always with us, He walks in front of us to remove any roadblocks or obstacles that might get in our way, and He walks beside us to guide us, behind us to encourage us, when we become discouraged. And He walks beneath us to support us on our way to fulfill his plan.

Romans 12:6-8 (read scripture) in these verses, Paul lists several leadership functions needed in the church and for which God gave gifts to His people. We are to serve in accordance with the gifts we possess and not to run after other's gifts. We need to all work together for the glory of God. I believe that God's plan for you and I may include one or more of these gifts which God has graciously given. Let's look for an example at the gift of teaching-Probably if the truth be known we all have been or are all teachers. As a profession I was a middle school and high school teacher for twenty nine years, the last nine years I served as a director of an Alternate School. What a challenge! How many of you have been teachers? You may say, "Oh have not taught school like you did." But I bet you have taught Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, or have led a Bible Study for your women's circle, not to mention you have been a teacher in your home teaching your children about God and what it means to be a Christian. And then some of you may say, "I don't have any children to teach." But, you HAVE BEEN a teacher, by living your life as an example so that others can see Christ in you. Some of the best teachers in my life were men and women who had no earthly children, but taught me so many valuable lessons, just watching them live their lives, I hope that I can be that kind of example to someone.

The unity of our churches should result from not everyone thinking alike, but from Christ bringing the various parts together in service to Him. As our individual bodies have many parts serving various functions, so the church consists of people serving Christ in many varying ways according to the different gifts God has given.

As we look at Jesus' parables he tells the importance of using whatever we are given, as in the parable of the ten talents, we must use our talents and not bury them, and we all have skills, talents, and possessions entrusted to us by God. Our responsibility is to use these in a manner

that will accomplish God's purposes. We not responsible for the ways others use their talents, WE ARE responsible for the proper use of our own gifts. We must not be like the seeds in the parable of the sower, if we say, "I can't use the gift that God has given me," we are then like the seeds that fall by the side of the road, or those that fell on the rocks, or fell among the thorns, our gift will not serve God and we will not be doing what he has planned for us. But if we are like the seeds that fell on good soil, and we use those gifts to the glory of God, we will bloom where we are planted. God knows what we can do and we must trust in God's wisdom. We can always trust Him to look out for our best interests. If we put our complete trust in Him, God will make our lives significant-God will make something great out of our lives. He can take a person who feels that they cannot do anything, to a person who can carry out His plan for their life. We just need to cooperate with God and think of ourselves worthy to serve our Lord and Savior.

God wants good things to happen to us. God says only as we believe it will we ever see it. We've got to look through our eyes of faith and see it. We need a have a big vision for our lives. Luke 18:27 tells us, "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God." There are many examples in the Bible how God had a plan for someone-Sarah, who laughed at God, when at an older age she was told by God that she would give birth to a son for Abraham. And there was Rahab, who never knew anyone who believed in the one true God until she hid the Israelite spies on her rooftop, yet God, had a plan for her life. God chose Esther to help her people by being a fearless trusting queen. We all need to let God work within us. We don't have to figure out God's plan for us. We don't have to see how He's going to bring it to pass, that is God's responsibility and it ours to believe. We just need to turn everything over to God and trust Him to take care of us. Knowing His plan requires prayer, holiness, and patience, but be sure, in His time He will reveal His plan for us, and we will see it is the BEST plan. There are times when the Lord may lead us in directions we have never imagined. I would have never imagined, when my daughter and I started attending convention with our aunt that I would be here today, or when Mary Kirk and I were Co Mistresses of Ceremony at the banquet in Chattanooga would I have imagined that I would be here today. Yet when we go His way, we find out that He always has the BETTER plan. Show us your ways, O Lord.

As we study this year's theme, "Show Me Your Way, O Lord," may we open our hearts and minds to God and discern His way for us. As Christian women we have the opportunity to learn of His ways through Bible study, praying with and for other Christian women and

fellowshipping with one another. My prayer for all of us is that God will use us all in special ways so that we may share the gifts and wisdom we have been given and be living examples of God's love to others.

I would like to close with this poem by an unknown poet; I think this describes how God works in our lives and how we are to receive this plan.

### **God's Plan**

*I was once told that as time goes by  
Everything changes with no reason why  
Explanations we won't receive  
We're just told we must believe  
The Lord has a plan for each of us  
This I Believe – This I trust  
Doctor – Lawyer – Teacher – Wife  
Lord what's your plan for my life?  
Explanations I don't expect  
Just some guidance down the right track  
Show me Lord your plan for me  
I ask this of you while on my knees  
Praying to you helps me to see  
The wonderful plan you have for me  
The Lord has a plan for each of us  
This I Believe – This I trust*

Would everyone please stand and face the directions that you will be going to go home. May God show you His ways. (Give the direction of North, South, East, West)

### **An Irish Blessing**

*May the road rise up to meet you.  
May the wind always be at your back.  
May the sun shine warm upon your face,  
And rains fall softly upon your fields.  
And until we meet again,  
May God hold you in the palm of His hand.*

