

THE MAN IN THE MIRROR A LOOK IN THE MIRROR

An equipping e-newsletter from Man in the Mirror to help you reach more men.



What Is God's Plan For You?

By Patrick Morley

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The following article is adapted from Chapter Four of Pat's new book, How to Survive the Economic Meltdown.

Over the last year, Mark has watched his small business teeter on the brink.

Sometimes when he can't sleep, he repeats the words of Jesus over and over, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). Eventually, he dozes off.

Mark said, "Sure, it's tough. But I've grown more spiritually in the last year than in the previous ten years combined. Yes, it's scary, but it's also exciting. Because I know that only God can make this right."

How God Sees You

Let me summarize what the Bible has to say about you. He knit you together in your mother's womb. He knows when you sit or stand. He knows every word before it forms on the tip of your tongue. He determined the exact times and places where you would live.

When Jesus looks at you He is filled with compassion, because you are harassed and helpless, like a sheep without a shepherd. God our Savior wants all men—including you—to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth. He takes no delight in the death of the wicked.

You are His "special possession." You are the full expression of God's creative genius. God was at His very best when He made you. His love is staggering.

God's Great Desire

The first time I had a kidney stone, I was afraid I was going to die. Then, after two hours of intense pain, I was afraid I wasn't going to die!

At the Emergency Room I was begging them for some relief. Finally, they gave me a shot of morphine. Praise God!

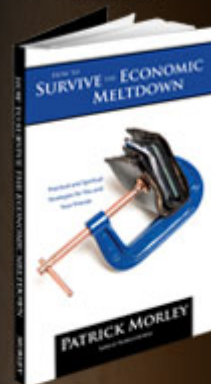
Next, an orderly wheeled me out to get an x-ray. My wife, Patsy, came too. When we arrived, there was a line, so the orderly pushed my gurney against the wall and left.

I began talking to Patsy in a loud voice. "I feel a love for God right now like I have never felt before. I feel the presence of Jesus! I can feel the Holy Spirit coursing through my veins!"

Patsy said, "Shut up, you dummy. That's the morphine."

Of course it was. But let me ask you. Wouldn't you like to have that kind of love for

Seeking answers
to getting through
these financial
times?



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God?

God's great desire is to have a *reciprocal love relationship* with you. He loves us, and the most important thing we can do is love Him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength—the totality of our being, every ounce of our energy, and the sum of our strength. We are to bring an intensity to the loving of God.

The Patience of God

The Bible makes it abundantly clear that God is not in any big hurry. "The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness." Why? "He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).

So God has a plan—to allow people to repent and love Him. But God is also patient. Ironically, His patience presents a problem. Because God doesn't quickly spank us, we tend to mistake His patience for permission. So what is God's plan when you've gotten off track?

The Removal of the Shakable Kingdom

At the zenith of my business career, I could tell what my religious friends were thinking: "Wow! He must really be under God's blessing."

But I wanted to shake them and say, "No! You don't understand. I'm 'gagging' here. I have everything I ever wanted, and I'm miserable! I hate my life."

That led to me surrendering my life to the Lordship of Christ. God must have believed me, because I soon found myself in "the meltdown." It's as though God said, "You know, Pat, I really believe you. But you've given me so little to work with that I'm going to have to start over with you."

God leveled me to the foundation. Fortunately, I had the foundation of Christ.

Then, when my economic meltdown hit, I could tell what those same friends were thinking: "Wow! He must really be under God's curse!"

And, again, I wanted to shake them and say, "No! You don't understand. This is a blessing, not a curse. God is faithfully removing the shakable kingdom I built so His unshakable kingdom may remain. I've never been so happy." Here's how the writer of Hebrews put it:

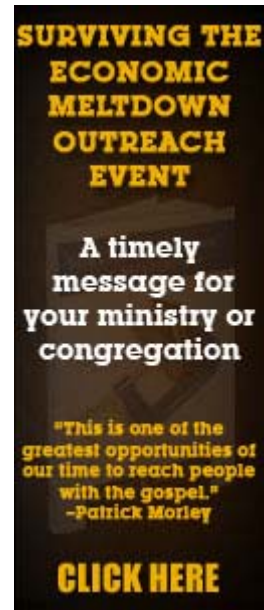
"At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens." The words "once more" indicate the removing of what can be shaken—that is, created things—so that what cannot be shaken may remain. (Hebrews 12:26-27)

A Blessing, or a Curse?

If you're in the meltdown now, you may be wondering, "How could losing so much be a blessing?" It's simple. You were rushing to your own destruction, and God intervened.

As Hebrews 12:7 says, "God disciplines us for our own good." Spiritual pundit Jamie Buckingham cleverly put it this way: "He whom God loveth, he beateth the hell out of!"

No one in their right mind would be thankful for a curse, right? Hebrews 12:28-29



says:

Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our “God is a consuming fire.”

God will not force you to revere Him, but He will make it impossible for you to be happy until you do.

“It Was Good For Me To Be Afflicted”

God called King David “a man after my own heart” (Acts 14:22). God loved David.

But David became proud and sinned. Because God loved David, He afflicted David’s life. He removed something David thought he could not live without. Listen to what David had to say after God melted him down.”

“Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I obey your word.... It was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn your decrees.... I know, O LORD, that your laws are righteous, and in faithfulness you have afflicted men.” (Psalm 119:67, 71, 75)

So What Is God’s Plan For You?

You may be in one of several situations.

First, you may be a Biblical Christian. You’re caught up in the economic meltdown through no fault of your own.

It happens. Daniel 11:35 says, “Some of the wise will stumble, so that they may be refined, purified and made spotless until the time of the end, for it will still come at the appointed time.”

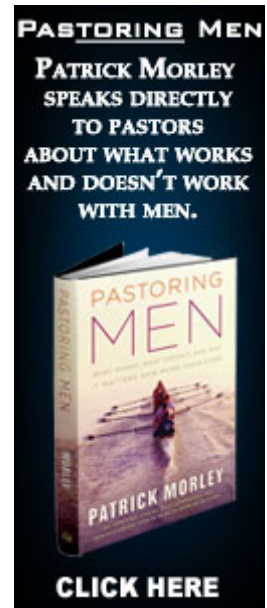
Continue to walk with Christ by faith, trusting that His promises are good and true.

Second, you may be a Cultural Christian. You’ve made a profession of faith in Christ, but you’ve gotten caught up in worldly ways. So your task is to come humbly to the foot of the Cross and there surrender your life to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

I suggest you do this right now. You can either pray in your own words, or this suggested prayer:

Lord Jesus, I need You in my life right now more than I ever have. I confess that I have been worshipping other gods. I have exchanged the truth for a lie. I have been seeking the god(s) I wanted, and not the God who is. And I am sorry. I earnestly and humble repent. I want to have a reciprocal love relationship with You. You’ve done Your part. Now please show me my part. Thank you for hearing my prayer and forgiving me. I invite You to do whatever it takes for me to be in right relationship with You. I surrender all. Amen.

Third, you are a *Seeker* who has yet to invite Christ into your life. Frankly, an economic meltdown is a small price to pay for eternal life. In this chapter I’ve explained how God sees you, His great desire to have a reciprocal love relationship with you—forever, and His patience. Isn’t it time for you to reach out to the One who is always reaching out to you?



Pray the prayer above, then find a pastor or mature man from your church – or find a church – and tell him you want to commit the rest of your life to Christ. He'll clarify any questions you have and help you make sure you've received Christ as your Savior and Lord. Do it as soon as possible. Experiencing how people respond will encourage you and bolster your faith in your decision.



Dr. Patrick Morley

After building one of Florida's 100 largest privately held companies, in 1991, Dr. Patrick Morley founded Man in the Mirror, a non-profit organization to help men find meaning and purpose in life. Dr. Morley is the bestselling author of *The Man in the Mirror*, *No Man Left Behind*, *Dad in the Mirror*, and *A Man's Guide to the Spiritual Disciplines*.

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