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by David Wilkerson November 4, 2011

"I am a Father to Israel, and Ephraim is My firstborn" (Jeremiah 31:9).

The people of Ephraim, the largest tribe of Israel, were the closest to God's heart. The Lord had an eternal plan for this very blessed tribe but Ephraim kept backsliding and grieving God. The people sinned more than anyone in Israel! But did God abandon Ephraim? Just the opposite: The Lord said that they were to be a free and ransomed people! They would live among fatness, meaning, God's greatest blessings (see Jeremiah 31:14 KJV).

What did God see in Ephraim? They had a repentant heart—a shame for sin, a willingness to return to the Lord. And in spite of all their failures, this one trait attracted God's heart to them! When a strong, prophetic word came forth, they responded and when they were rebuked, they wept over their sin.

At the height of their backsliding, God said, "Is Ephraim my dear son? Is he a pleasant child? For though I spoke against him, I earnestly remember him still; therefore My heart yearns for him; I will surely have mercy on him" (Jeremiah 31:20). God was saying, "In spite of Ephraim's shortcomings and failures, I see a repentant spirit and I will not take away My tender love. My eternal purpose for Ephraim will go on as I have planned!"

Beloved, God has a plan for your life! He is going to accomplish all His purposes for you, no matter what you are going through or how severe your trial. God has put a lot of thought into planning your future!

I have a prophetic word for some who are reading this message right now: You cannot judge God's eternal purpose for you by what you are feeling or thinking. God wants to say to you, "Keep your heart humble before Me. Trust My Word about My nature—that I am a tender, loving Father who has invested much in you and I am not about to let you go. You are my delightful child and I will deliver you!"

"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope" (Jeremiah 29:11).