



WHY AM I HERE?

Unlocking the Door to True Success

By Bruce Edwards

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What I am Here?



Forward

Through out history everyone has asked themselves the question, Why am I here? People want to live a life that is fulfilling and successful. The people I meet and speak with are all looking for purpose in life and how they can maximize their potential and live a life of destiny. That's probably why your reading this book. You want to live out your purpose with great success. So, what is the secret to success in life? Is there a key to success in life?

Many great men and women have shared insights and strategies for success. Much has been written on the principles of success and laws of success, that's why I write this book with great apprehension and reservation. I do not presume to have all the answers of how to succeed in every specific endeavor or venture you embark upon but rather I believe there is a "key" foundational secret needed for true success in life

There are ways to become a better teacher, sales person, business owner, etc. There are issues of character, organization, and management that are needed to help you succeed. There are strategies and techniques to help you overcome challenges and setbacks. I love the quote of Thomas Edison who when asked about his thousands of failures at inventing the light bulb replied, "***I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work***". Thomas Edison's attitude was important to his success in life but it was **not** the key to his success.

JC Penny built his retail empire on the principles of integrity, treating people right and serving the customer. He is quoted as saying, ***“When this business was founded, it sought to win public confidence through service, for it was my conviction, as it is now, that nothing else than right service to the public results in mutual understanding and satisfaction between customer and merchant. It was for this reason that our business was founded upon the eternal principle the Golden Rule.”*** While these were important they were **not** the key to JC Penny’s success.

There is a golden key to success. This key will open the door for true success in every area of life; business, work, school, relationships, hobbies, health, fitness, etc. It is not the only key to success, but it is the GREATEST key to success in life. I am not only going to reveal what that key is but, I am going to share how to use the key to unlock real success in your life. I want to see you step into your destiny and experience true success in your life.

“Always remember what is written in the Book of the Teachings. Study it day and night to be sure to obey everything that is written there. If you do this, you will be successful in everything.”

Joshua 1:8 (NCV)

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Introduction

Do you know most people never experience the satisfaction of real success. According to several different studies - ONLY FIVE OUT OF EVERY ONE HUNDRED PEOPLE ACHIEVE TRUE SUCCESS IN LIFE. Many accomplish great things some amass great wealth yet, they are unhappy and unfilled. The reason so many do not experience success in life is because they don't understand what the biggest key to true success is. Many don't even know what true success is?

How do you define success, what does it mean to have a successful life? The answer to that question is at the center of this book.

Success is not how much money or stuff you have amassed, nor is it the goals you achieve. While these can be an important part of a persons life they are not the sole ingredient to success. Too often we equate a successful life with material possessions and accomplishments. You can read stories of countless people through out history who have made millions and achieved incredible fame yet their lives are unfilled. On the other hand, there are millions of people out there who lead successful, fulfilled lives who may be of modest means. They may not be rich in the financial sense, but they achieve real success in life. Why?

Success is not about being like somebody else. It's not about having Bill Gates' wealth, Albert Einstein's brains, Walt Disney's creative genius, Brad

Pitt or Angelina Jolie's looks. When you try being someone else you just end up an imitation and you miss reaching your potential and true success.

There are many different and good definitions of success. According to Stephen Covey, success is when the response meets the challenge. John Wooden defines success as "peace of mind which is a direct result of self-satisfaction in knowing you made the effort to become the best of which you are capable."

Achieving personal success does not have to be difficult. Success is not an impossible dream. You can become successful in life, but it begins with knowing what real success is.

So what are the things we should strive for to make our lives successful and have a positive impact on those around us? What is the key to achieving real success? Why do so many people work hard without achieving anything, while others seem to be working with minimal effort, but seem to get everything? Do they have the golden touch? The answer is that they know and apply the greatest secret of true success to their life.

Are you ready to discover the greatest key for true success in life and how to implement it in your life?

The greatest key for success in life is discovering the life you were born to live - discovering "WHY YOU ARE HERE! Finding the purpose of your life and living out that purpose.

True success is only achieved when you are living a life of purpose, the purpose you were created for.

That is it, that is the greatest key to success in life. Do you know how many people go through life never knowing why they are here? They may accomplish great things and acquire many things, but if they are not contributing to fulfilling their purpose and destiny they are empty and unfulfilled.

So, are you ready to find your life purpose & create a plan that will guarantee fulfillment & success? If you are I challenge you to read and study this book and use it to as launching pad and blue print into a life of purpose and true success.

Living a life of purpose is a journey and this short book is designed to help you get started on that journey. Learning and applying the simple yet powerful ideas in this book will help you discover and define the purpose of your life and develop a plan to follow.

Your life journey in this world began the moment you were born and will continue as long as you live. You had no choice in the start of your life, but you do have the power to choose what you do with your life. It is up to you whether you wander through life aimlessly and unfulfilled or with clear purpose and direction that brings fulfillment and success. This book was written with that goal in mind to **help you** discover your life purpose and chart a plan to help you fulfill your destiny. It is never too late if you're willing to invest the time and effort.

There are many good things you can do with your life, but there is only one God-thing. The ultimate life of purpose is the life that God has created for you. Living out God's plan for your life will bring the

greatest amount of fulfillment possible to your life because God “wired” you specifically for your purpose. Your purpose is within you!

Your purpose is **not**___ your occupation, calling, talents, giftings, position, etc. In other words, if you are educated to be a doctor or teacher that is not your purpose. If you are gifted as a singer or musician, that is not your purpose. These are talents and gifts given to you by God to help fulfill your purpose. God’s purpose will require you to use the talents and gifts you have, but your purpose will always be about reaching, encouraging, helping, exhorting, teaching, etc. people. So, if you are a doctor you will have the opportunity to impact people not only by helping them with their medical needs, but you will also be able to minister the love and power of God into their life. If you’re a singer you will not only be able to entertain people, but be able to encourage, motivate and bless them.

There’s no time like the present to start living the life God has for you; an abundant life filled with joy, peace and success. Make the decision to start living a life of purpose rich in hope, faith and love. It is time to stop putting your dreams on hold and break through the barriers that keep you from living the life God has for you. You have exactly the right stuff on the inside of you right now to fulfill your destiny! So let’s get started discovering your purpose!

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"The secret of getting ahead is getting started."

- Mark Twain

"Just like the hardest part of peeling an orange is getting it started, the hardest of living a life of purpose is getting started"

- Bruce Edwards

"You don't have to be a success to get started you have to get started to be a success."

- Bruce Edwards

"The hardest part of starting a new journey is taking that first step of faith"

- Bruce Edwards



What's Your Purpose?

"Destiny is not a matter of chance, it is a matter of choice. It is not a thing to be waited for, it is a thing to be achieved"

—William Jennings Bryan

"Many plans are in a man's mind, but it is the Lord's purpose for him that will stand"

Proverbs 19:21

You Have A Purpose

Everything on this planet has a purpose. Think about it for a minute. Everything ever invented by man was created for some purpose. The wheel, the light bulb, the automobile, toilet tissue, the computer, can opener, and telephone all were designed to solve a problem, meet a need, or improve life. And just like every thing made by man has a purpose, everything created by God has a purpose, and that includes YOU. Even spiders have a purpose - if there weren't any spiders, the world would be overrun with other annoying insects like flies, mosquitoes, gnats, etc. Snakes have a purpose, they control the rodent population. Everything has a purpose and it is important for each to fulfill their purpose.

You have a purpose. God has given you life and made you unique and special for your purpose! No one can fulfill your purpose exactly like you can. Ephesians 2:10 tells us, “***we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them***”. Are you walking in your purpose?

When you fulfill your purpose it will impact the lives of others around you. Your purpose will always be focused on people. Unfortunately, many live a self-centered life with no specific direction, passion or purpose and wander through life. They develop an attitude of “It's my life, I will do with what I want”, they do as they please and take things as they come. The result is a life that is empty and unfulfilled. Most become bitter, critical and cynical. This is not God's plan!

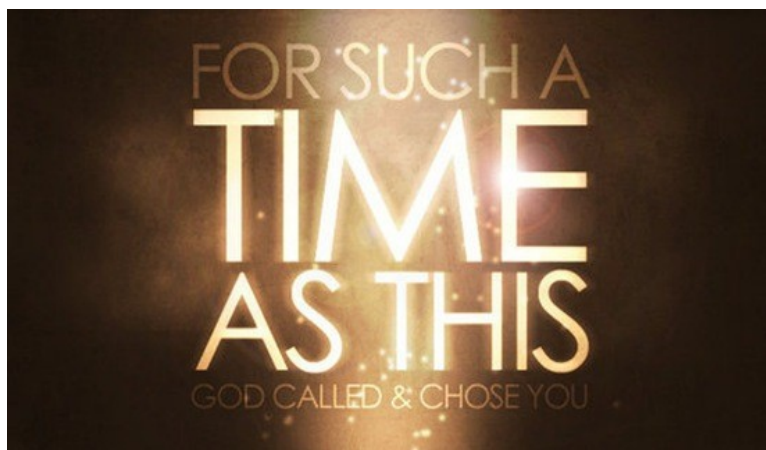
Nothing can take the place or bring a sense of satisfaction like living a life of purpose. If you don't discover your purpose and chart a course to live it out, you can be one of those who end up bitter and feeling empty.

Instead, realize like Esther in the Bible, you have been born now “for such a time as this”. Esther had a divine purpose to help deliver her people, she was a Jew. Nobody knew or had heard of Esther before she was brought into the king's palace, but, after a careful selection of beautiful women Esther was picked to be the new queen. (Esther2:17)

Haman, an advisor to the king, convinced the king to approve a plan to kill all of the Jews. Mordecai, Esther's cousin sent a message to Esther who was now in the king's palace and asked her to go before the king and request that he save all of the Jews.

One problem, when anyone went in front of the king the king could allow or deny them access to him and if denied it meant death. So, it wasn't some simple decision for Esther to make, and at first, Esther refused to go.

When Mordecai heard of her decision he sent Esther a strong rebuke: “Do not think in your heart that you will escape in the king's palace any more than all the other Jews. For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. **Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for *such* a time as this?**” (Esther 4:13-14)



"It is not how much we do, but how much love we put in the doing. It is not how much we give but how much love we put in the giving."

—Mother Teresa

In that moment Esther discovered her purpose and went to see the king. The king allowed Esther to speak to him and she invited him and Haman to a banquet. At the banquet she told the king that she was a Jew and told him of the plan to kill her people and that it was Haman who was behind this plan. The King had Haman killed and then had the decree to kill the Jews reversed. (Esther 7:1-7)

If Esther hadn't fulfilled her purpose the Jews would have had a different end and the lives of many would have been affected. Esther was placed in the position as queen for a purpose. You have been placed where you are at this moment for a purpose. **Who knows if**

you are not where you are for such a time as this!

Regardless of where you are, or what you do, you have a God given purpose. It might not be to be a Queen or moving to another country and becoming the next Mother Teresa, but your purpose is just as important!

You have a purpose. Even if you've messed up or failed in some way you can start over. It is never too late to start living your purpose or to start over again. Moses was 80 years old when he started living his purpose. Peter failed by denying Christ but was given another chance and went on to fulfill his purpose. Don't limit yourself or limit God.

Living a life of purpose is an adventure. There are many twists and turns along the highway of life. There will be obstacles and trials, but God has a plan to help you navigate through every situation. Your purpose will impact the lives of people along the way.

God prepared, before you ever were born, a destiny that you should walk in. Discovering purpose and walking in it means connecting with the creator - God and letting him lead you in your purpose - purpose is a journey not just destination so just start walking forward toward God and He will lead you into fulfilling your destiny.

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“Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn’t do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover.”

—Mark Twain

Do You Know Your Purpose?

Write your purpose:

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“Connecting with God is not about becoming part of a religion or joining a church, but it's about having a relationship with Jesus Christ.”



Connecting With the Creator

Connections are an important part of life. We were created for connections. The most important connection we need to make is with God. God designed man to be in relationship with him and others.

The only way you can live a life of purpose is by connecting with God. He is the source of life and the source of purpose. God is real and He wants a personal connection with you. Getting connected to God requires more than believing in His existence. God wants you to know Him, not just know about Him. You were given life because God wanted to give you the chance and the choice to choose to know Him. God never forces anyone to connect with Him, it is our choice. Since God is the Creator of your life and the Creator of this world, connecting with Him is essential to discovering purpose. He is the key.

So, how do you connect with God? You connect with God through His Son Jesus Christ. John 14:6 tells us that Jesus, “***is the way, the truth, the life no one comes to the Father except through (him).***” In other words the only way to connect with God is through Jesus.

Many are challenged with the idea of connecting with God. Some struggle with the idea of there being a God, others feel they will have to give up all the fun things of life, and still others feel there is no way God would ever accept them.

I don't know where you are in the process of connecting with God but I can assure you God is real and Jesus is real and you were created to have a personal relationship with Him and He wants to connect with you.

God fully understands who we are, our weaknesses, the questions we have and barriers that exist between us and Him, that's why He sent His Son Jesus to build a bridge between us and Him so we could connect. It is through Jesus that we can know God personally. Why would He do this? John 3:16 tells us, *"For God loved the world so much that He gave His only Son so that anyone who believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life."* **God loves you and created you to know Him personally.** This is not about a religion but about having a relationship. It is in that relationship you are able to discover your true destiny and live a life of purpose.

It is your decision and choice whether to connect with God or not. To connect with him you must personally make the decision to put your trust in Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and Lord.

We receive Christ by personal invitation. Jesus said, *"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him."* (Revelation 3:20)

You receive Christ by faith. *"For it is by grace you have been saved through faith, and not of yourselves, it is a gift of God - not by works so that no one can boast."* (Ephesians 2:8,9)

Just to agree that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and

that He died on the cross for your sins is not enough. Nor is it enough to have an emotional experience. You must receive Christ by faith as a decision of your will. It requires you to believe in your heart and declare with your own words your belief in Jesus and who He says He is; the Son of God, your savior and Lord. Romans 10:9 puts it this way, ***“If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”***

If you've never made that decision or if you're not sure and this expresses the desire of your heart you can settle the issue by praying the following prayer and Christ will come into your life as He promised and you will be connected with God!

Prayer is just talking with God. God knows your heart and is not so concerned with your words as He is with the attitude of your heart. Here is a prayer you can follow to help you get connected with God:

Jesus, I open the door of my heart to you and ask you into my life. I believe you died on the cross in my place and were raised from the dead. I need you to be my Savior and Lord. Thank You for forgiving me of my sins and giving me eternal life. I surrender by my life to you and am committed to serving and living for you all the days of my life.

If you prayed that prayer I want to help you grow in your relationship with God. I have written a book titled, "What's Next" -

[click here for a FREE copy.](#)

While getting connected with God is the most important connection we need to make, getting connected with other Christians is important as well. If you're connected to God but not to others then you still can't reach your full potential because God created us to do life together. Living a life of purpose will require connecting with others.

Christianity is about developing relationships and building community. We need the fellowship of others to encourage us and help us grow. The two greatest commandments given by Jesus are focused on our relationship, with God and with one another. "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is *the* first and great commandment. And *the* second *is* like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.'" (Matthew 22:36-40).

The early church had a major focus and emphasis on fellowship and building relationships. We read in Acts 2:42 **"they devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and to the fellowship"** . The Greek word for fellowship is "*koinonia*" it can be translated communion, fellowship, sharing, and/or participation.

As Christians we were created to have fellowship with the Father and with one another. The Apostle John emphasizes the importance of fellowship in 1John 1:3 & 7, "that which we have seen and heard we declare to you that you also many have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ... vs. 7 if we walk in the

light (in fellowship with God)...we have fellowship with one another" In other words, the basis of our fellowship (connecting) with one another is our relationship with Christ.

The people in our lives are a gift from God. They are there to encourage, exhort, correct, and sharpen us. ***“As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.”*** (Proverbs 27:17) Living a life of purpose will flow from our connection with God and with one another.

Notes: _____



"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away and behold, all things have become new."

2 Corinthians 5:17

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Know Who You Are In Christ

Do You know who you are? I am not talking about your name or occupation but who God made you to be - the real you. Knowing who you are in Christ is one of the most important elements of living a life of purpose. The image you have of yourself determines the type of person you are, the life you lead, the vision you carry, your faith level, your ability to overcome and succeed in life. What you believe about who you are is the foundation of setting the course of your future. Fulfilling God's purpose for your life depends on knowing who you are in Christ.

Many have developed an inaccurate self image of themselves based on what others have labeled them, some as a result of a significant person in their life saying something like, "you will never amount to anything" or by siblings or peers who labeled them as a loser or fat or ugly, etc., and still others because of past mistakes, failures, or disappointments. They have allowed their lives to be negatively impacted by the opinions of others.

As followers of Christ we need to develop the image of ourselves based on what God has said about us. You have a new identity in Christ. 2Corinthians 5:17 says, "if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." You are a new creation in Christ.

The question is, are you living your life in the light of what the truth of God's Word says about you, or

are you allowing the lies of the enemy to keep you bound in guilt, inferiority, fear and negativity and as a consequence living your life far below the level God has for you? You will set the direction and level of your life according to **how you see yourself!**

If you continue to be a negative person who carries a negative belief about yourself you will hinder the ministry of the Holy Spirit through your life. That is why it is so important that you know who you are. Right now, make a positive decision to believe what the Word of God says to you as a born-again, Spirit-filled follower of Jesus Christ. What He says about you, and what you say about you, are often two very widely separated positions of opinion!

Living a life of purpose requires choosing to live according to what God declares about us in His Word as His new creations in Christ. If we do not know who we are in Christ we will live a life based on what our own mind-set dictates to us. Our mind-set and way of thinking about us usually sets a standard far below that which God has set for us. What level are you living at?

In Judges 6 we find an example of a person who did not know who they were and as a result he was living life far below the level God had for him. His name was Gideon and because of a wrong self image he had negative mind-set and life-style. Israel was in bondage to the Midianites at this time. Their strategy was to keep Israel in bondage by controlling the food supply. The people of Israel lived in fear and kept the likes of Gideon physically weakened. Gideon, however, had managed to secretly grow some wheat and was in the process of threshing it when an angel

of God appeared to him. Gideon in the natural was malnourished, hungry and lean! Yet, in spite of those circumstances, the angel proclaimed to him, *"The Lord is with you, you mighty man of valor."*

What Gideon was experiencing, feeling and believing was not what the angel was declaring! The angel saw the potential in Gideon to rise to greater things, but at that point in time Gideon did not know who he was. He did not know the power of the word and will of God for his life. Gideon was so caught-up in his own circumstances, disappointments and discouragements he could not take it all in. His response was a negative, "How can it be? - Why is all this happening to me? - Where's God in all this? - I'm from a poor family and the least important one at that! - There must be others better than me! "

Because Gideon did not know who he was, he spoke what he saw, felt and thought - his life was filled with negativity, complaining and excuses. But God declared to him that he was a mighty and victorious man. Gideon was now faced with making a choice. The choice was: 1) Do I believe what the angel (God's Word) says about me?" or 2) Do I believe what I say about me?

If he chose the first, he would be able to see things change for the better. He would discover and know who he really was in God. If he chose the second, life would continue on its negative way. He would never know who he was as a man of faith and a man of God.

After some convincing Gideon chose to believe what God said, and from that time forward things

changed. Gideon rose up to lead Israel back into God's plan and place of being victors and not the victims. The more Gideon aligned his thinking with God the more he discovered who he was - and the more he grew in his strength as leader. In fact, Gideon's life so changed that he became a powerful force for good and God. Under his Leadership Israel enjoyed 40 years of safety and security (Judges 8:28), whereas prior to that they were slaves to the Midianites.

You are faced with the same choices for your life as Gideon had. Are you going to believe what God says about you or are you going to believe what others say about you?

So, how do you know who God says you are?

He reveals it to us in His Word. Knowing who you are in Christ is discovering what the Word says about you and believing what God's Word says about you more than what you or others say about you! There are over 60 verses in the New Testament that declare who we are in Christ. They are the - "in Him, In Christ, In Whom, through Him" scriptures. The following are a number of them. Begin confessing these over yourself every day.

1. **I am God's child.** John 1:12, "*But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children, even to those who believe in His name.*"
2. **I am Christ's friend.** John 15:15, "*No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you*

friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you."

3. **I have been justified.** Rom. 5:1, "*Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*"

4. **I am united with the Lord, and I am one spirit with Him.** 1Cor.6:17, "*But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him.*"

5. **I have been bought with a price. I belong to God.** 1Cor.6:19-20, "*Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price.*"

6. **I am a member of Christ's body.** 1 Cor.12:27, "*Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it.*"

7. **I am a saint.** Eph. 1:1, "*Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints who are at Ephesus and who are faithful in Christ Jesus.*"

8. **I have been adopted as God's child.** Eph. 1:5, "*He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will.*"

9. **I have direct access to God through the Holy Spirit.** Eph.2:18, "*Through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father.*"

10. **I have been redeemed and forgiven of all my sins.** Col.1:14, "*In Whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*"

11. **I am complete in Christ.** Col. 2:10, "*In Him you have been made complete...*"

12. **I am free forever from condemnation.** Rom.8:1-2, "*Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*"

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death."

13. **I am assured that all things work together for good.** Rom.8:28, "*We know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.*"

14. **I am free from any condemning charges against me.** Rom.8:31-34, "*If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? Who will bring a charge against God's elect. God is the one who justifies.*"

15. **I have been established, anointed and sealed by God.** 2 Cor. 1:21-22, "*Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, Who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge.*"

16. **I am hidden with Christ in God.** Col. 3:3, "*For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.*"

17. **I am confident that the good work God has begun in me will be perfected.** Phil 1:6, "*For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.*"

18. **I have not been given a spirit of fear, but of power, love, and a sound mind.** 2 Tim.1:7, "*God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and sound judgment.*"

19. **I can find grace and mercy in time of need.** Heb. 4:16, "*Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we*

may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

20. **I have been chosen and appointed to bear fruit.** John 15:16, "*You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit--fruit that will last.*"

21. **I am God's co-worker** (1Cor.3:9) 2Cor.6:1, "*As God's fellow workers we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain.*"

22. **I am seated with Christ in the heavenly realm.** Eph. 2:6, "*God has raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus.*"

23. **I am God's workmanship.** Eph. 2:10, "*We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*"

24. **I may approach God with freedom and confidence.** Eph. 3:12, "*In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence.*"

25. **I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.** Phil. 4:13, "*I can do everything through him who gives me strength.*"

Make sure you know who you are in Christ today! Your future depends on it! To live a life of purpose depends on it! Don't ever let anyone tell you again that you are a nobody, that you are no good, that you're a failure or that you're not favored by God. According to the Bible, you are specially created by God and called according to His purpose. **Know who you are in Christ,** and step into your destiny, and discover your true purpose.



*God made you unique.
No one can do what you do
the way you do it.
So, go do what you do best.
Be you!*

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Know How God Has Made You

Not only is it critical to know who you are in Christ, but you need to know how God has made you. Psalms says, "For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well".

God made you unique. There is no one else like you. You won't find two people in the whole world who have the same fingerprint or voiceprint. Why did God make you different from every person who's ever lived? Because He wants you to know how special you are and how much you matter to Him.

God has given each person their own personality and placed in each person spiritual gifts and abilities. Do you know what personality type you are? Do you know your predominate Spiritual Gift? Do you know what your aptitude is? These are clues to your purpose.

It is important to be who God made you to be and be the best at it. Too many times we try to be something we are not. We allow peer pressure or others to influence us into being something we are not. You were created to be an original don't die a copy.

The following story demonstrates this point:

Once upon a time the animals decided they must do something heroic to meet the problems of a “new world” so they organized a school. They adopted an activity curriculum consisting of running, climbing, swimming and flying. To make it easier to administer the curriculum, all the animals took all the subjects.

The duck was excellent in swimming. In fact, better than his instructor. But he made only passing grades in flying and was very poor in running. Since he was slow in running, he had to stay after school and also drop swimming in order to practice running. This was kept up until his webbed feet were badly worn and he was only average in swimming. But average was acceptable in school so nobody worried about that, except the duck.

The rabbit started at the top of the class in running but had a nervous breakdown because of so much makeup work in swimming.

The squirrel was excellent in climbing until he developed frustration in the flying class where his teacher made him start from the ground up instead of the treetop down. He also developed a “charlie horse” from overexertion and then got a C in climbing and D in running.

The eagle was a problem child and was disciplined severely. In the climbing class, he beat all the others to the top of the tree but insisted on using his own way to get there.

The moral of the story is simple everyone is unique and gifted for what God created them to be. If he created you to be duck saint swim like crazy and

don't try to be an eagle. If you're an eagle saint sore as high as you can and don't get upset at the squirrel because he can't fly like you can. It takes each one being the best they can be the way they were created. You were born an original don't become a copy. Determine to be the best you!

It's been said that, "Our potential is God's gift to us, and what we do with it is our gift to Him". The Lord is waiting on each person to rise up and be who they really are. Long before you were born, God intended you to be a someone ... with a purpose.

Knowing how God has made you and shaped you as a unique individual is vital to fulfilling your destiny. This chapter has been about discovering how you are shaped and how it impacts your purpose.

Who we are is a combination of several different factors;

1) **Our Personality**. Personality is the way you act, the way you feel, and the way you think. The bases of your personality is the way you think, because the way you

think determines the way you feel and the way you feel determines the way you act.

Proverbs 23:7 tells us, "as a man thinks in his heart, so *is* he"

2) **Our Spiritual gift/gifts**. Every person has been given spiritual gifts from God. Romans 12:4-8 "For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and individually

members of one another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, *let us use them*: if prophecy, *let us prophesy* in proportion to our faith; or ministry, *let us use it* in *our* ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.” Each of you has your own gift from God and each is equally important to the function of the whole.

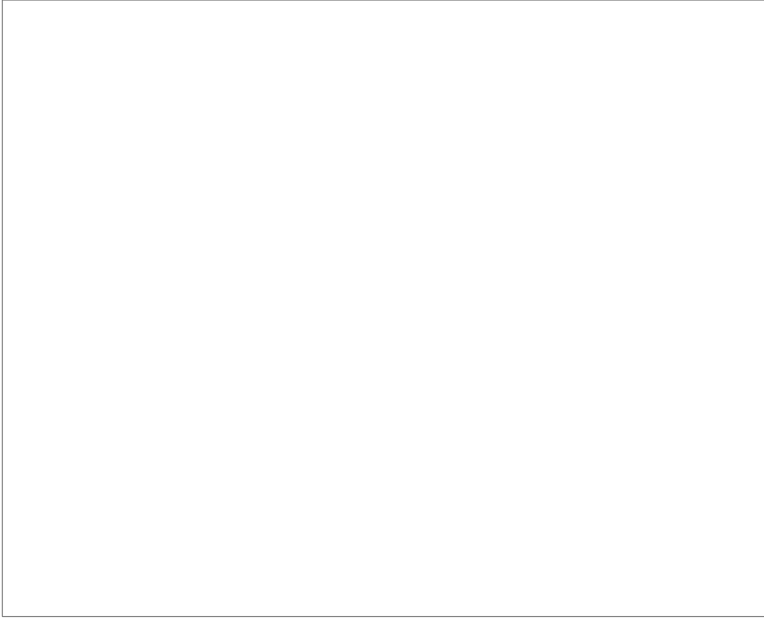
3. **Our Passion.** Passion is what motivates you. Everyone has different motivations and interests. There are some things you get emotionally connected with and other things you could care less about. That is a result of your passion, desires God has put in your heart.

4) **Our natural Gifts (aptitude)** Some feel like they don't have any special abilities, but you do! If you can raise your hand that's an ability. If you can quickly comprehend what you read that's an ability. If you can figure our math problems easily that's an ability. Some of you are interested in computers and some of you are scared of computers. Some of you have a natural ability with mechanical things. Many are good with numbers, words, speaking. Some have the ability to work with people, some in music, some can come up with great ideas and abstract thoughts and put them all together. The list goes on. Researchers tell us the average person has over 700 different abilities. God has given you these abilities as part of His plan for your purpose. We all have different abilities and they are not by accident. God gave them to you for a purpose.

5) **Our Experiences.** Experiences in your life impact who you are. God uses the experiences in your life to shape you into who He has destined us to be. He doesn't cause them all to happen but if we allow Him He works all things to our good. (Romans 8:28) He is the potter and we are the clay. (Isaiah 64:8)

All of these make up who you are and how God made you. There several different tests you can take that can help you identify your personality, spiritual gifts, and aptitude. The following are links to some online tests you can take;

- I. Discover Your Personality Type Test - [Click Here](#)
- II. Discover Your Aptitude Strengths Test - [Click Here](#)
- III. Discover Your Spiritual Gifts Test - [Click Here](#)



Which direction do you go?

*"Then you will be able to test and approve
what God's will is--his good, pleasing and
perfect will."*

Romans 12:2

Taking Steps Directed by God

Who's directing your steps? How are you making decisions for your life? What determines the course of your life?

Psalm 37:23 says, "*The steps of a good man are ordered of the Lord.*" Do you think that your life would be better if your steps were directed by God? God will direct your steps if you will allow him.

If you are going to live a life of purpose you will need to be directed by God, after all He has the map and knows what lies ahead and the destination for your life - your purpose.

Proverbs 4:11,12 says, "*I guide you in the way of wisdom and lead you along straight paths*". When you're directed by God your path will be straight with limited detours and interruptions, you'll not stumble. God has a road map for each and every one of us. God knows exactly what lies ahead and where He wants to take us. He knows all the twists and turns that lie ahead. He has the blue print for our whole life. We do not have to think up a plan for our life.

We need to discover His plan for us and then begin to take steps each day as He directs. After all, Jeremiah 29:11 declares, "*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*".

To reach your ultimate destiny and fulfill your purpose you will need to do it step by step. God knows the end from the beginning, but He does not always show you the ultimate destination or all the steps that will need to be taken. He wants you to live by faith, so He expects you to follow Him one step at a time.

To be directed by the Lord requires trusting Him. Proverbs 3:5 instructs us to, *“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct your paths.”* The key to unlocking God's direction is trusting Him and acknowledging Him in all our ways. This will require you to surrender your will to His will.

How to know God's directions:

1. **The Word of God**: The number one way God directs us is through His Word. Psalm 119:105 says, *“His Word is a lamp unto your feet and a light to your path”*. Read the Word of God daily and allow the Holy Spirit to quicken His Word in your heart.

2. **Pray**: Prayer is communicating with God. We should be talking with God each day and listening to what He has to say to us. It is in that time of prayer that you will get directions from Him. David, a man after God's own heart, took time to pray and get direction from God. Psalms 25:4, *“Show me your ways, O Lord; teach me Your paths”* and Psalms 119:136 *“Direct my steps by Your Word”* Psalms 32:8 tells us God, *“will instruct us and teach us in the way we should go; He will guide us with His eye.”* Pray and ask the Lord for direction to follow the path He

has for you and you will begin to hear from heaven the direction for your life.

3. **Being Led by the Holy Spirit:** God will direct you by the Spirit. Romans 8:14 says, “*As many as are sons of God they are led by the Spirit...*” As Christians we can and should be led by the Spirit. Proverbs 20:27 says, “*The spirit of a man is the lamp of the Lord, searching all the inner depths of his heart*”. Jesus said, “*when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.*” (John 16:13) The Holy Spirit will **guide you...and he will tell you what is yet to come.**

You don't have to be in the dark the Spirit will guide you based on what is yet to come. The Spirit of God speaks in a still small voice to our spirit. When our heart is in the right place and focused on Him we are sure to hear Him speak to us. Jesus said in John 10:27 says, “*My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me*”. We need to tune our spiritual ears into the frequency of His voice so will hear Him.

So, if you want to live a life of purpose seek the Lord for His direction for your life. For God to accomplish His will in our life, we need to learn how to be led by the Spirit of God. This is true not just for the major decision in life, but for every decision we make. God wants to be involved in your life. That is how much He loves and cares for you.

STRATEGIC



"A failure to plan is a plan to fail."

Strategic Plan for Your Life

It has been said, “that those who fail to plan - plan to fail“. If you are serious about living a life of purpose then you need to create a strategic plan to follow.

The purpose of the plan is to give you a written blue print to follow for God’s vision (purpose) for your life. Proverbs 29:18 tells us, “Where there is no vision, the people perish...” So, having a vision, purpose, clearly defined is critical for fulfilling your destiny.

Your personal strategic plan needs to be written out. Habakkuk 2:22 says, “write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it.” Is fulfilling God’s destiny for your life worth investing the time to write out a plan?

When you create a written personal strategic plan it will help you:

- Increase your effectiveness in fulfilling your purpose.
- Make the best decisions that move you toward your life purpose.
- Focus your time and resources on your purpose.
- Maximize your energy and effort toward your purpose.
- Gain direction and insight to fulfill the purpose for your life.
- Prioritize your time, resources, and abilities for your purpose.

God has equipped you with everything you need to live a life of purpose. Writing a Strategic Plan for your life is a tool to help you tap into all God has provided to maximize your potential and fulfill God's purpose and destiny for your life. Your personal strategic plan is your road map for life.

Developing a strategic plan for your life is all about stewardship. A steward is a manager or administrator. He takes care of other people's property, and is rewarded or punished for how well he does his job. Jesus explained the principle of stewardship in the parable of the talents:

"For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey. Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. And likewise he who had received two gained two more also. But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord's money. After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them. So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, 'Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.' His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' He also who had received two talents came and said, 'Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.' His lord said

to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' "Then he who had received the one talent came and said, 'Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.' But his lord answered and said to him, 'You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. Therefore take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents. 'For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'" (Matthew 25:14-30)

As Christians we are stewards. God has entrusted us with our time, talent and treasure, our very life belongs to Him. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 says, "*Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.*" God expects us to be good stewards of our life and all that He has given to us. To do so requires discipline. It's easy to squander what God has given, or to think that the things God gives are really our own. However, if we have made Jesus Lord of our lives we don't own anything, we are just taking care of God's property. Our time is not ours, but

it is a gift from God that we should use in ways that would please and honor God. Paul tells us to “redeem the time,” in other words, make the most of every opportunity.

Our life is a gift from God. Our lives should make a difference in the world, we can either waste it, spend it, or invest it! God wants us to use our life for His purpose. We should plan to invest our life! Psalms 90:12 says, “*teach us to number our days*”.

The following is a template you can use for developing a written strategic plan for your life. There are several different approaches to developing a strategic plan. If you have used another system or have a plan in place that is working for you great! This is a very simple way to get started writing out a “Life Strategic Plan”.

There are four parts to the process of this plan:

1. **Purpose** -the reason for your existence
 2. **Goals** - things that need to be accomplished to achieve your purpose.
 3. **Strategies** - the “how to” to accomplish each goal.
 4. **Steps** - this is the action plan needed to accomplish the strategies.
-
1. **Develop a personal written purpose statement for your life.**

The foundation of any personal strategic plan is “your purpose statement”. This will describe in a sentence or two your reason for existence. This is your personal vision and it will be the basis of the next steps in this process and will give you direction and help guide you in living out your destiny.

Your life purpose is not to be confused with your career or job. It is much more than that. You can change careers or lose your job, but your God given purpose will always exist as long as you live.

In the world of strategic planning you will see terms like vision, mission, purpose, calling, and other similar words. Some will delineate the difference between mission and vision and purpose, which is fine. I mention this only to let you know I am aware of the differences and different approaches to the task of developing a strategic plan, and again, if any of those work for you, great. I don't want to lose anyone over terminology in this process of creating a Life Purpose Statement. This is a simplistic approach to help those who need it to get started. Feel free to use and adapt this process in any way that works for you.

Your “personal vision” should excite you because it will be focused on your passion. Don't worry about whether you have all the pieces in place to achieve your life purpose. Think big, take the lid off as you develop your purpose statement. However, it should be obtainable given enough time and resources. Just make sure to include God in your plan. What is impossible with man is possible with God, it is the God Factor.

The following are some guidelines to help you develop your personal purpose statement.

1) . It should be redemptive, impact people and it should require the use of all your gifts and abilities.

2) Talk to others who know you and ask them to write down 5 to 10 things about you that add value to others around you.

3) Do your own self assessment of what you feel your strengths are.

4) Use the assessment tests included in this book to help you identify your spiritual gifts, personality type and natural gifts.

5) Compare and consolidate from all the above sources to create a list to worked from.

6) Write a draft that you can modify and develop into your purpose statement. Look for common elements from each source and try to encapsulate all of them into a short comprehensive statement or two.

Some examples of life purpose statements:

Y Bill Bright's Life Purpose Statement was to -"accomplish the Great Commission in my lifetime".

Y Steven Covey's Life Purpose Statement is to "live with integrity and to make a difference in the lives of others".

Y To use my gifts to encourage, teach, love, and disciple the people in my life and to, glorify God and make Christ known,

Y To grow spiritually and serve as a vessel of God's will. I will strive to make a positive difference in

every person I interact with and always continue to improve my body, mind, emotions and spirit with truth and love. I remain teachable and grateful.

- ÿ To make an eternal difference in the lives of children, through the empowering of the significant adults who “coach” children, to identify God’s purpose for their lives.
- ÿ My purpose is to bring servant leadership to my family, my church, my profession, and the world.
- ÿ My purpose is to bring hope and healing to other Christian women who have experienced difficult events in their lives.
- ÿ My purpose is to be a help mete to my husband and Godly mother to my children.
- ÿ My purpose is to use my medical skills as a doctor to minister Gods healing, hope and love to the people I serve.

Your personal purpose statement is what will guide you and give you a sense of direction. Your personal purpose statement can change as time passes. There are different seasons in life that may cause a change in your focus. As you grow spiritually and develop some of your gifts and abilities you may become more specialized or broaden your scope of purpose. Now that you have your Personal Purpose Statement go on to step two.

2. **Write a list of goals you need to achieve to accomplish your purpose**

Goals should always be attainable and measurable. A personal strategic plan is no good without well defined goals. Goals can be big or small, they can be long term or short-term. Goals that are clearly defined with a specific time frame increase the chances of reaching your goal. Goals can include personal growth and development i.e. getting a masters degree, losing weight, getting organized, etc. They can be related to needed resources i.e. vehicle, computer, office, building, equipment, cash, etc. They can include developing relationships and connections. They can be related to levels of production.

Begin making a list of what you need, things that need to be done, processes that need to be implement, systems that need to be developed, etc. Then begin to format each of them in to specific goals and then prioritize and list them.

For example you may need an office or place of business to fulfill your purpose, so one of your goals might look like this:

1. Lease an office space by May 1st with 1000 to 1200 square feet of space located within 6 blocks of the center of down town for \$1500 per month or less.

Notice this goal is very specific and has specific time frame. This enhances the likelihood of accomplishing this goal.

While some goals are easy to be specific with and quantify others may be more subjective and less

specific. Do your best to make them as precise as possible with some way of measuring your success.. The idea is to create a clear target you can aim for and then evaluate if you hit the center of the target.

You will have five to as many as 50 or more goals listed to achieve your purpose. You will continue to refine and add to this list as you move forward. Once you have your goals listed go on to the next step.

3. Write two to seven strategies for each goal

Every goal you set will require two or more strategies to meet the goal. These are the “how tos” of accomplishing your goal. Lets use the example from above to create a couple of strategies;

1. Personally researching and looking for available properties that fit the criteria.

2. Contact a commercial realtor to help locate available properties.

These are two different possible strategies that could be used individually or collectively to achieve the goal.

Once you have your strategies written out for each goal go on to the next step.

4. Write out the steps - the actions you need to take to carry out each strategy.

Each strategy will require you take one or more steps, actions, you will need to take to implement and carry out each strategy.

Lets continue with the example we have been using. To carry out the first strategy of “Personally researching and looking for available properties that fit the criteria.” The following would be the steps of action we would need to take;

- 1) Create a map showing the area with in 6 blocks of downtown.
- 2) Drive the area looking for lease signs.
- 3) Look through the real estate section of the classified ads for properties for lease that meet my criteria.
- 4) Check Craigslist and other real estate website for potential properties.
- 5) Make a list of all potential properties.
- 6) Contact the owner or agent to make appointments to view each property.
- 7) Choose the best option and make an offer.
- 8) Enter into a lease.

You will need to write out the steps needed for each strategy for each goal. There may be several steps and each step should be detailed enough that you are able to easily carry out the action or someone you delegate the action to can carry out the step. Once you complete this step you have viable written Personal Strategic Plan that will help guide you in living a life of purpose. Congratulations!

Step Into Your Destiny...

Sometimes the hardest part of living a life of purpose is getting started. Like peeling an orange, the hardest part is getting it started. Now that you've discover your purpose and created a strategic plan to follow its time to get started. It is time to step into your destiny.

Living a life of purpose is a faith walk. We walk by faith and not sight. (2Corinthians 5:7) Living the life God has designed for us will require us to trust Him. In Mathew 14 verses 22-33 there is a great story of Peter walking on the water.

"Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away. And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there. But the boat was now in the middle of the sea tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary. Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear.

But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid." And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water." So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. But when he saw that the wind was boisterous he was afraid; and

beginning to sink he cried out, saying, “Lord, save me!”

And immediately Jesus stretched out *His* hand and caught him, and said to him, “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?” And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, “Truly You are the Son of God.””

Can you imagine all the things that were going through Peters mind when Jesus said, “Come”. Peter had to make a decision to trust Jesus. He had to take a step of faith to get out of the boat and step out into the water. To step into your destiny, you have to get out of the boat, the boat of comfort, familiarity, safety, and step into your purpose and destiny. You have to trust Jesus and begin to walk by faith. The good news is Jesus is with you. So, if you get tripped up or begin to doubt yourself He is there to help you get back up and encourage you.

The life you were born to live is an adventure. Are you ready to live that adventure? In fact it is a great adventure!. Steven Curtis Chapman sang a great song by that title, “The Great Adventure” and the lyrics says,

“I opened up the Bible and I read about me, said I'd been a prisoner and God's grace had set me free. And somewhere between the pages it hit me like a lightning bolt. I saw a big frontier in front of me and I heard somebody say "let's go!

CHORUS

Saddle up your horses we've got a trail to
blaze

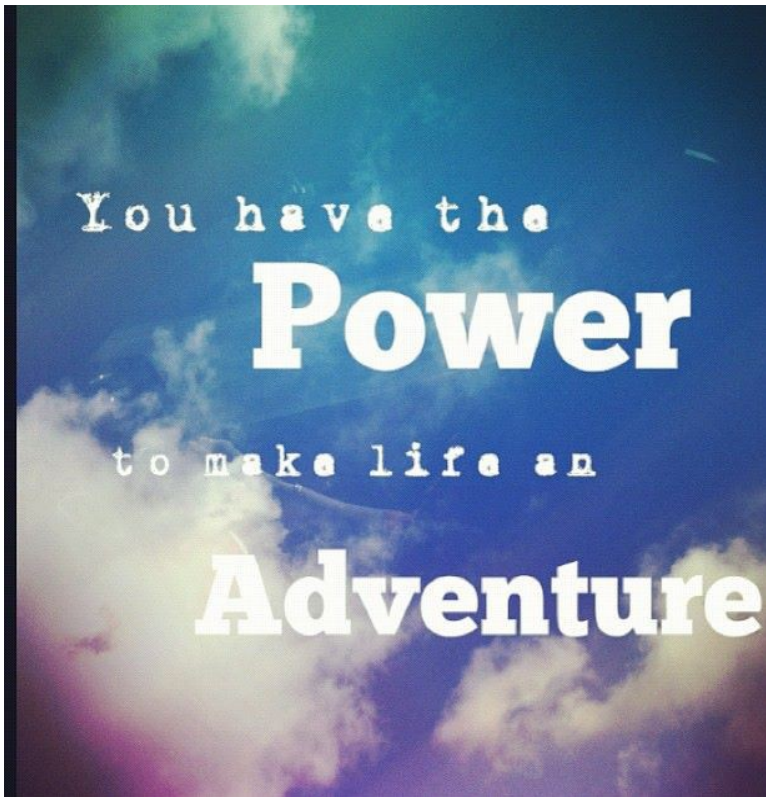
Through the wild blue yonder of God's
amazing grace

Let's follow our leader into the glorious
unknown

This is a life like no other - this is The
Great Adventure

Come on get ready for the ride of your life
Gonna leave long faced religion in a cloud
of dust behind And discover all the new
horizons just waiting to be explored. This
is what we were created for."

Your were created for your purpose! Step into your
destiny and live a life of purpose! It is a Great
Adventure! You have a trail to blaze and you can do it
through God's amazing grace. Go ahead and step
into your destiny.



**"You can never cross the ocean unless you
have the courage to lose sight of the shore."**

—Christopher Columbus

Finish Your Race

The Bible compares living our life to that of a race. Hebrews 12:1-2 says, “Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares *us*, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

You have a race to run. The race that is set before you is your purpose. It is not a sprint or even a mile run, it is a marathon. Charting your race and getting started are very important and crucial for success in life. However, once you start the greatest danger to living a life of purpose is finishing the race.

Overcoming Obstacles

To finish your race you will need to overcome obstacles and barriers that will try to hinder and discourage you from finishing your race.

Joshua faced a major obstacle to fulfilling his purpose. His purpose was to lead the Israelites across the Jordon river and possess the promised land. However, after finally crossing the Jordon, Joshua found himself standing before the great wall of Jericho.

If Israel was to possess the promised land they were going to have overcome this obstacle. Jericho was the first city they had ever seen that was surrounded by huge walls. It looked impossible. We read the story in Joshua 6:1ff -

“Jericho was securely shut up because of the children of Israel; none went out, and none came in. And the Lord said to Joshua: “See! I have given Jericho into your hand, its king, and the mighty men of valor. You shall march around the city, all you men of war; you shall go all around the city once. This you shall do six days. And seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams’ horns before the ark. But the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets. It shall come to pass, when they make a long blast with the ram’s horn, and when you hear the sound of the trumpet, that all the people shall shout with a great shout; then the wall of the city will fall down flat. And the people shall go up every man straight before him....

Verse 15

“and it came to pass on the seventh day that they rose early, about the dawning of the day, and marched around the city seven times in the same manner. On that day only they marched around the city seven times. And the seventh time it happened, when the priests blew the trumpets, that Joshua said to the people: “Shout, for the Lord has given you the city!

Verse 20

“so the people shouted when the priests blew the trumpets. And it happened when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat. Then the

people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city.”

You will face walls just like Joshua. If you are going to finish your race and live a life of purpose you will need to know how to overcome them as you march towards fulfilling your destiny.

Making Adjustments as You Run

As you run your race, it is critical to monitor how your life strategic plan is unfolding. Are you achieving your goals? Or are you missing the target? Or are there unexpected events you encounter? By evaluating your life plan and monitoring developments along the way you will be able to adjust your plan, modify your strategies where necessary and take your life in the direction needed to fulfill your purpose. You may need to alter your course many times while successfully navigate the race of your life.



Run with Endurance

You will need to run your race with endurance.

Endurance implies there is something opposing us. Jesus promised us there would be opposition. He said, "In the world you will have tribulation..." (John 16:33) and "to him that overcomes" (Rev) To overcome there must be obstacles.

Endurance can be defined as, "The ability or strength to continue or last, especially despite fatigue, stress, or other adverse conditions, to have stamina." Endurance is what keeps you in the race to the finish.

In life we will encounter times of stress and adverse conditions, that's why the Word tells us to lay aside everything that hinders us from running our race. Can you imagine trying to run a mile carrying a 100 lb. bag of potatoes? Yet, often that is how we try to run the race of life, carrying the weight of the cares of the world and the guilt of sin. So, no matter what has happened, in your life, it is critical to lay those things aside. Cast your cares upon the Lord (1Peter 5:7) and receive God's mercy and forgiveness. (Hebrews 4:16).

Endurance is developed and requires perseverance. Jesus encouraged the church in Philadelphia to "*hold fast* what thou hast" Rev3:11, "*hold fast ... firm unto the end*" [2]), he did not mean to simply remain at the same level of commitment and experience. 8:31)

At times, all we feel we can do, in the words of Paul, is "hold on." When it would be easier to "take a break," we must "press on toward the mark." (Phil 3:14) When no

Keep Your Focus on Jesus as You Run

There are two important applications to keeping your focus on Jesus.

The first is looking to Jesus as your source. Who do you look to?

Often we get our focus on others; family, our jobs, the government, even the church as our source for help and provision. Some look to themselves; their abilities and their efforts rather than to Jesus. The only way to finish the race God has assigned is to keep your focus on Jesus. He said, "I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing." Apart from Jesus we can do nothing only in Him can we live the life of purpose He has called us to. Keep your eyes focused your source. *"It is in Him you live, move and have your being."*

The second application is not allowing potential dangers to distract us.

We see a great illustration of this when Peter walks on the water. "And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me." -Matthew 14:29,30

Peter was able to walk on the water, until he took his eyes off Jesus, looking at the wind and waves instead. Every race is filled with potential pit falls and distractions. As you run your race it is important to stay focused.

I like to play golf. I enjoy the beauty of the course. God's incredible creation is on display - the blue sky, green grass, birds, trees, flowers, streams and lakes, and all that nature has to offer. The objective of the game is to par each hole. There is a clearly marked path from the tee to the green one is suppose to follow. However, there are distractions and dangers on every hole. There may be trees, sand traps, water hazards, or perils all that need to be avoided. The idea is to keep your ball on the beautiful green grass of the fairway avoiding all the potential dangers.

I can tell you from experience if you get your focus on the hazards instead of the green your mind becomes filled with doubt, fear, and other confusing thoughts and invariably you hit your ball into the hazard.

If you allow the storms of life- offences, setbacks, unfair situations, life's problems, etc. to distract you they can knock you out of the race. The lesson is simple—keep your focus on Jesus and you won't sink!

As You Run Encourage Yourself

One of the greatest dangers to finishing your race is discouragement. Everyone who decides to live a life of purpose will encounter difficulties and circumstances that can discourage you if you allow them to.

In 1Samuel 30 we read about David and his army of men after several days of battle returning to their home in Ziklag only to find that it had been burned, plundered, and their

wives and children carried off by the Amalekites. They were devastated to the point of tears. The men turned on David and talked of stoning David.

David was hurt and in distress. Discouragement was trying to destroy his life and it might have except for this- "*David encouraged himself in the Lord his God*" (1Samuel 30:6)

Who encouraged David? David encouraged David! It's great to be encouraged by others, but there are times we have to encourage ourselves like David did.

It is important to note that David did not just encourage himself but he "**encouraged himself in the LORD**" The LORD is always there to strengthen and encourage us. He is faithful!

As you run your race and when you encounter setbacks or difficulties encourage yourself in the Lord and continue pursue your purpose. Be courage!

Don't Quit

.The only way you fail with God is to quit. In baseball you get three strikes and then your out. With God you get to keep swinging until you hit it out of the park. Don't quit keeping swinging. In football there are four quarters and the game is over and if you are behind you lose. With God you keep playing until you win. Don't quit - keep playing!

I can't tell you how many people I have ministered to who start living their life of purpose and then when they face adversity or opposition they quit. Often they give up right before they see the breakthrough and the victory that is assured if they do not quit.

Galatians 6:9 says, "let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart". In other words if you do not quit there is a due season! Too often we become impatient with life wanting God to hurry up, but his timing is perfect. If you will not give up but instead stay faithful doing good you will reap a harvest in God's due season

If things go wrong, if your race becomes hard, if you hit a wall or a setback don't quit, instead press on. You never know how close you are to victory. It may seem like your not making any progress and your tempted to give up, however victory is just ahead if you stay in the race.. Don't quit!

Conclusion

You only have one life to live, from the day you were born until the day you die. What happens between those two dates is your life. There was a man, who as he walked through a historical cemetery filled with the tombstones of many famous Americans, noticed how each stone, some very large, some small and others very ornate, all had the date they were born with a “DASH” and the date they died. There was nothing about their lives - accomplishments, successes, or legacy, their whole life represented by a simple “dash”.

What is the dash in your life? Your life is a gift from God. He has a divine plan for your life, but it is your choice how you live your life. You can choose to waste it, spend it, or invest it. Life is short so make it count.

Our lives on earth have a morning, a noon and an evening. Most do not think about it until the “noon” of their life. What on earth am I here for? How will I make the best of the time I have left?"

This book is about helping you live a life that counts, to live a life of purpose. Focus on the truly important things in life, things that are eternal. Allow God to direct and help you set eternal priorities and stay focused on the things that make a difference.

No matter what season of life you are in it is never too late to re-align your life and begin moving in the right direction. I invite you to make a new

commitment today to begin to write the dash in your life with purpose and destiny.

Use this book and the processes and tools within it to help you find your purpose and write a strategic plan to fulfill that purpose. Your life is a gift from God and He has design you for a purpose. It is up to you to live out that purpose.

Personal Prayer of Commitment

Father, I realize the first step to success in life is making Jesus the Lord of my life. I believe that Jesus Christ is Your Son and that He was crucified, buried, and resurrected to provide eternal life and all of its benefits for me in this life as well as in the life to come with You in heaven.

I surrender my life and my will to you, and I accept Jesus, as my personal Savior and Lord.

Thank You for empowering me with the Holy Spirit. I want to live out my purpose, the purpose you created me for.

Thank You, Lord, for giving me Your plan, strategies and directions for living a life of purpose and achieving the success you want for my life. I have absolute victory in You, Lord Jesus! Thank You!

Signature

Date

PURPOSE QUOTES

"You can never cross the ocean unless you have the courage to lose sight of the shore." —Christopher Columbus

"When one door of happiness closes, another opens; but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one that has opened for us." —Helen Keller

"Always do right. This will gratify some people and astonish the rest." —Mark Twain

"Destiny is not a matter of chance, it is a matter of choice. It is not a thing to be waited for, it is a thing to be achieved." —William Jennings Bryan

"Out of clutter, find simplicity. From discord, find harmony. In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity." —Albert Einstein

"The time is always right to do what is right." —Martin Luther King, Jr.

"I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I know: the only ones among you who will be truly happy are those who have sought and found how to serve." —Albert Schweitzer

"It is not how much we do, but how much love we put in the doing. It is not how much we give, but how much love we put in the giving." —Mother Teresa

**"Wisdom is knowing what path to take next...
Integrity is taking it."**

"If you don't design your own life plan, chances are you'll fall into someone else's plan. And guess what they have planned for you? Not much." —Jim Rohn

"It's never too late to be what you might have been." —George Elliot

"Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover." —Mark Twain

"The greatest danger for most of us is not that our aim is too high and we miss it, but that it is too low and we reach it." —Michaelangelo

"Every well built house started in the form of a definite purpose plus a definite plan in the nature of a set of blueprints." -Napoleon Hill

"It's not the years in your life that count; it's the life in your years." ~ Abraham Lincoln

About the Author



Bruce Edwards is a pastor, speaker, and Bible teacher with over 30 years of leadership experience in business and ministry. He has a passion to help people experience the abundant life provided through Jesus and a calling to teach and communicate the principles of God's Word with clarity, simplicity and boldness. He has a Master Degree in Business management and is a graduate of Bible College in Pastoral Care. He has served as the Associate Pastor at Victory Christian Center in Tulsa, Oklahoma for over 20 years. He has been married over 40 years to the love his life, Trudy. They have two children and six grandchildren.