

THE PURSUIT OF DIVINE PURPOSE

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Purpose is the reason for existence. Purpose is the driving force behind every man or organization. Purpose is the original reason for creation. Purpose is mission statement. Purpose is the vision of God for one's life or any organization.

"Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails. (Proverbs 19:21 NIV)"

From the above scripture, we can deduce the following:

1. Purpose precedes plans.
2. Purpose is more important than plans.
3. Purpose is more powerful than plans.
4. Plans may change, but purpose never changes.
5. Purpose outlives plans.
6. Purpose is better than plans.
7. Plans may fail, but purpose will not.
8. A man's plans may be out of the purpose of God for his life.
9. For plans and purpose to agree, you must know the purpose of God for your life by seeking God.
10. Purpose is the why of life.

Purpose is God's plan for your life. Find it and pursue it without turning away from it.

Knowing and understanding purpose creates focus. And focus builds momentum. And momentum gives birth to achievement.

Purpose determines design and material of construction. It is the purpose for which you were created that necessitated the personality, gifts and talents you were given by God. It is not by accident that you are who you are. There is originality in you that you must identify and use to your advantage and to better our society. That is why you can identify your assignment here on earth by the gifts and talents you possess. What you need to become, what you were created to be is in you. Identify your purpose. You don't need to envy another. You don't need to wonder why you are not like the one you admire. You were constructed to be somebody else and fulfill a particular purpose.

Until you know why you are in existence, you will never find fulfillment and satisfaction. As fish-cannot survive outside of water, you cannot prosper and find fulfillment outside the purpose of God for your life. There is a place of appointment for every man, except you find it; life will be without fulfillment, and full of crisis.

"The word of the LORD came to me, saying, before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart, I appointed you as a prophet to the nations". (Jeremiah 1:4,5)

Before we were born into this world, God knew us and had a plan made for every single one. Every man is born with a contribution to make to society. And that contribution is the purpose of God for your life. Find it. So we are in this world to fulfill a purpose. We are not here to drift along without direction. We must locate the purpose of God for our lives and fulfill that purpose.

Life is like a drama. Every man is an actor, acting out what has been written in the script of God for him. Your part in the great drama is called purpose. Find it and follow the script.

Fulfillment in life comes when one is in the centre of God's plan for his life - you cannot find fulfillment and joy in labour until you start carrying out the purpose of God for your life.

God's purpose when identified becomes your vision, dream, or goal for life. Your life will be centered on it. Life therefore is responsibility to the purpose and plan of God for your life.

Paul centered his life on the purpose of God for his life when he identified it.

"On one of these journeys I was going to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. About noon, O king, as I was on the road, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, blazing around me and my companions. We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.' "Then I asked, 'Who are you, Lord?' "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,' the Lord replied. 'Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen of me and what I will show you. I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.' "So then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven. First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and to the Gentiles also, I preached that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds. That is why the Jews seized me in the temple courts and tried to kill me. But I have had God's help to this very day, and so I stand here and testify to small and great alike. I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen—that the Christ would suffer and, as the first to rise from the dead, would proclaim light to his own people and to the Gentiles." (Acts 26:12-23 NIV)

Jesus also committed himself to pursuing the purpose of God for his life here on earth.

"My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. (John. 4:34. NIV)

KNOWING GOD'S PURPOSE FOR YOUR LIFE

“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, “Plans to prosper you and not to harm, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when seek me with all your heart, I will be found by you” declares the LORD...” (Jer.29:11-14)

"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. (Matt 7:7-8 NIV)

To know God's purpose for your life:

1. Seek God with all your heart to know his purpose for your life.
2. Pray much about it till it is revealed to you.
3. Take note of the gifts and talents you have.
4. Take note of the things that run through your mind – the things that give you concern, the likely contribution that God wants you to make to the society. Everyone is created to contribute something to the society.

"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. (Matt 5:13 NIV)

- If you hate injustice, and there is a burning desire in you to help the down trodden and oppressed, may be God has called you to be a lawyer or politician.
- If there is a burning desire to fight crime in you, then God wants you to be a police officer or detective.
- If there is a desire in you to help the sick and see them healed, then you might be well off as a medical doctor or faith healer.
- If there is a burning desire to see people turn from their evil ways and turn to God, may be God wants you to be a preacher.

IDENTIFY YOUR GIFTS

To accomplish the purpose of God in your life, God gives gifts that will help. So identifying your gifts and talents will help you to identify the purpose of God for your life.

To identify your gifts and talents, identify those things you are interested in as a person, the things you would naturally do with ease and excitement those things you do easily without anyone forcing you and which you can do several times without getting bored; the things you do with great excitement, and give you a sense of fulfillment. These are pointers to the talents leading to the purpose of God for your life.

Your future is located in the gift you have in you. **Every gift helps to fulfill the purpose of God for your life.** Do not despise the beginning stage, for it will bring you to lime-light and fulfillment in life. Your prosperity lies in it.

If your heartbeat is towards music, identify whether it is in songs or instruments or both that you will be good in. Under instrumentals, identify the instrument to specialize on.

If you have a flare for drawing, playing with clay, painting, or you love playing with colours, you will be better off as an artist.

If you have a craving for electrical or electronic appliances – you like to investigate how it is made, and like to try to fix them when they develop a fault, you may be better-off studying and becoming an electrical or electronic engineer. This may be also true if your inclination is toward machines, cars and furniture. Check yourself to find out where you fit in.

If your inclination is towards sports, find out whether you will be best as competitor, trainer, administrator, or commentator. You can build a career in sports.

Those who have been destined to be leaders in the secular world or church, always find they attract attention. Even as teenagers, people look up to them for direction and advice. They are born leaders. People just come to them. They have the gift required to lead people, offer direction and proffer solutions to problems.

What joy it will be when such people are submitted to Christ, and full of the Holy Spirit. Their leadership will be vibrant, anointed and produce tremendous results.

JOSEPH AS AN EXAMPLE

Like Joseph whose story is told in Genesis 37, 39-47, all it takes for you to excel in life is working in integrity and the fear of God. You will always end up as a leader of the people. You don't have to fight or quarrel to get a position. Your integrity and faithfulness will get you where God wants you to be.

The story of Joseph is a beautiful and good example of the fulfillment of divine purpose in a man's life. Because of the divine plan of God for Joseph, God gave him favour in the sight of his father. This provoked hatred from the brothers. When the time was ripe, God intimated him of his plans for his life by giving him two dreams that placed him above all his brothers and his parents. Though he did not understand it at that time, it was settled in the mind of God that it must be.

"Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him all the more. He said to them, "Listen to this dream I had: We were binding sheaves of grain out in the field when suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright, while your sheaves gathered around mine and bowed down to it." His brothers said to him, "Do you intend to reign over us? Will you actually rule us?" And they hated him all the more because of his dream and what he had said. Then he had another dream, and he told it to his brothers. "Listen," he said, "I had another dream, and this time the sun and moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me." (Gen. 37:5-9 NIV)

The event that followed helped to bring Joseph's dream to come to pass. His brothers out of envy in accord sold him to the medianite merchants, who sold him to Potiphar of Egypt one of Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the guard.

It doesn't matter where you are, your gift will always manifest and make a way for you. It wasn't long before his leadership qualities because of the purpose of God for his life became noticeable by Potiphar, such that he handed his household and everything he owned to Joseph to administer.

Because of his integrity in the fear of God, he refused to sleep with Potiphar's wife who tried hard to make him sleep with her. She lied against Joseph to punish him for refusing her. He was sent to prison.

In the prison, his leadership quality became visible. The prison warder gave him charge over all in the prison. God's favour followed him everywhere he went because of His plan for him, and Joseph's integrity and faithfulness in the midst of all the afflictions he had seen and experienced.

It was in the prison that the GIFT which God intended to use to open the way for him and bring him before kings started to manifest.

"A man's gift makes room for him, and brings him before great men. (Proverbs 18:16 NKJV)

He became an interpreter of dreams. He interpreted accurately the dream of Pharaoh's Cupbearer and Chief Baker. His interpretation came through as he said it.

The Cupbearer forgot about Joseph despite his promise to speak to Pharaoh on his behalf for his release. At the fullness of time for the fulfillment of divine purpose in Joseph's life, God gave two dreams to Pharaoh which no one could interpret. It was then the Cupbearer remembered Joseph and mentioned him to Pharaoh. When he came into the presence of Pharaoh, he came without the slave clothes, because it was time for him to be exalted to the position of greatness. Integrity and the fear of God was about to be rewarded.

After interpreting the dream, Pharaoh made him his second in command – He made him Prime Minister over all Egypt. Destiny is now been fulfilled. The leadership training in Potiphar's house and in prison was now to be given full expression in the position of Prime Minister of Egypt. It was not by his power or by might, but by the Spirit of God.

"So he answered and said to me: 'This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, 'Says the LORD of hosts'. (Zech. 4:6 NKJV)

Nine years after ascending the throne of Egypt, the picture God put in his head twenty two years ago in a dream came to fulfillment when his brothers came and bowed to him to purchase grain. They bowed three times to Joseph before he made himself known to them.

The purpose of God for placing him on the throne became clearer when Joseph saw his brothers. He told his brethren that they did not send him away, but God sent him to Egypt to save his family and the nation of Israel from becoming extinct through the famine. '

"Then Joseph could not restrain himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, "Make everyone go out from me!" So no one stood with him while Joseph made himself known to his brothers. And he wept aloud, and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard it. Then Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph; does my father still live?" But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed in his presence. And Joseph said to his brothers, "Please come near to me." So they came near. Then he said: "I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. But now, do not therefore be grieved nor angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God

sent me before you to preserve life. For these two years the famine has been in the land, and there are still five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvesting. And God sent me before you to preserve a posterity for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you who sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt". (Gen 45:1-8 NKJV)

Joseph story teaches us that in all things, God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose (Rom. 8:28).

The purpose of God will come to pass in your life as you continue to love God by working in his commandments. Joseph's leadership qualities were trained in the house of Potiphar and in prison. It matured in prison. This shows that the experience of life help to train us and build us for the purpose of God for our lives. The gift of interpretation of dreams was given to help him become what God destined him to be.

Your gift will help to make you who God wants you to be. Do not neglect your gift. Nurture it and use it to the glory of God, and one day, it will bring you before great men.

DEEP THINKERS

These are people who give deep thought and consideration to issues. They, in their thoughts set out the various results of actions. They are not usually the outgoing type. They spend most of their time alone. They take great delight in searching out truths and facts about the various issues that come their way or interest them. They are not necessarily shy people, but like to be alone most times. They always come out bold in gatherings and discussion groups to speak their mind and convictions on various subject-matters. It is nearly impossible to make them change their opinions or beliefs. This gift makes them to study hard on issues as religion, philosophy, sciences etc. They are good researchers and investigators.

Any man with such a gift may be well off as a preacher, teacher, counselor, writer of books and commentaries, investigative reporter in a news paper, a detective in the police, military or security organization, and a researcher and inventor in the sciences. This quality (gift) enables such a person to enjoy long periods of studies observation and investigations in studies and experiments in the laboratories. He is always relaxed, paying careful attention and discovering things that would not have been noticed in a brief glance. These kinds of people have keen eyes - nothing passes them without notice. They are able to observe in great details their surroundings, distinguishing between various items and things.

Identify your gift and the area God has destined you to do well, and get into it.

LITERARY ABILITY

This gift is recognized in people that love stories, debates, discussions and various writings, some young people give expression to this gift by joining the literary clubs, debating societies, drama unit of their schools or churches. These are groups that entail lots of talking and discussions on matters of interest. They are good talkers, as well as great listeners.

People with this ability, express it by becoming lawyers, story tellers, writers, dramatists and historians. People with this gift have the ability of putting into memory

details of the things they listen to or read as far as it is in story form. Stories and events thrill them. They are easily motivated to attempt to make changes in the society through what they listen to and observe in the lives of people. These kinds of people sometimes consider other people without zeal for argument and discussion as timid. This is not necessarily true, because each man's gift is different. All you need do is to locate your gift and give it full expression.

DUAL PURPOSE AND MULTI-TALENT

It is not unusual to discover that you have multi-talents and may be dual purpose for being on the earth. You may be gifted in music and also endowed with a good skill in acting. You must learn the ability to organize yourself to manage the gifts and be fruitful.

It is of great importance that you know that no gift is of less importance than the other. They are all gifts from the same God. But some gifts are meant to assist you in one "Chief" gift that God had destined to use to bring about his purpose for your life.

David had several gifts. They were however tools to attain and maintain the place he was expected to occupy in life, that of being king over the great nation of Israel.

David was a shepherd boy. In the process he killed a lion and bear. This gave him the opportunity to fight and defeat Goliath. This in turn brought him recognition and popularity in the nation of Israel. David was also a player of instrument of music. He played on the harp at the request of King Saul as a therapy for his healing each time he had a demonic attack on his mind. He was also a song writer. He wrote more than half of the Psalm of the Holy Bible (Over 73 Psalms were written by him). All this gifts help him to get to the position of king of Israel.

From the life of David, you can see that the gifts are aids, and they are not meant to confuse you. They are to act as helpers to the call and purpose of God for your life.

When you identify the purpose of God for your life, respond to it immediately. Don't struggle with God. Don't delay action to a later time - Don't procrastinate.

"Then the LORD said to him: "Go, return on your way to the Wilderness of Damascus; and when you arrive, anoint Hazael as king over Syria. Also you shall anoint Jehu the son of Nimshi as king over Israel. And Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel Meholah you shall anoint as prophet in your place. It shall be that whoever escapes the sword of Hazael, Jehu will kill; and whoever escapes from the sword of Jehu, Elisha will kill. Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him." So he departed from there, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he was with the twelfth. Then Elijah passed by him and threw his mantle on him. And he left the oxen and ran after Elijah, and said, "Please let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you." And he said to him, "Go back again, for what have I done to you?" So Elisha turned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen and slaughtered them and boiled their flesh, using the oxen's equipment, and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he arose and followed Elijah, and became his servant". (1 Kings 19:15-21 NKJV)

“And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. Then He said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.” They immediately left their nets and followed Him. Going on from there, He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets. And He called them, and immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him”. (Matt 4:18-22 NKJV)

“As Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, “Follow Me.” So he arose and followed Him”. (Matt 9:9 NKJV)

DANIEL

Daniel had a dual purpose on the earth. He was destined to be a Prophet and a Ruler (administrator). But the foremost purpose is the prophetic ministry. God so arranged it that the prophetic ministry will open the door for the administrative position he (God) had intended for him. The administrative position will bring Daniel closer to the corridors of power in Babylon and Persia, and enable him to make the LORD known, speak and stand for him.

The dual purpose complemented each other. The good news is that he was able to manage both effectively but kept his attention more on the prophetic call. You can be a preacher and a businessman or involved in another profession at the same time. You can be a teacher and a trader at the same time. The same goes for other professions. The gift of interpretation of dreams, visions, signs and symbols was the talent God used to bring about his purposes in the life of Daniel.

Daniel’s integrity, fear of God, love of God and commitment to the obedience of God’s laws and commandments enhanced the plans and purposes of God for his life. If you will put all this in place in your life, God will bring to pass all his plans for your life.

Identify your God given gift and talents. And develop them, for they will help you to fulfill the purpose of God for your life.

(To be continued)

SUCCESS TIT-BITS

- 1. Don’t underestimate your problem or your potential power to cope with it creatively.**
- 2. Don’t exaggerate your problem. Play it down, and pray it up.**
- 3. Don’t wait for the problem to solve itself. There is a time and place for patience. That is after you have tried every avenue possible and have planted as many seeds of solutions as you can.**
- 4. Don’t aggravate the problem. We have the power to make any problem better or worse depending on our reaction.**
- 5. Never throw away an idea just because it seems impossible to you. Give it a chance.**

6. Never underestimate the value of an idea. Every positive idea has within it the potential for success if it is managed properly.
7. There is something wrong with every good idea. Therefore never reject an idea because you see something wrong with it. Isolate the negative from the possibility. Neutralize the negative. Exploit the possibility.
8. Never reject an idea because you won't get the credit! God can do tremendous things through the person who doesn't care who gets the credit.
9. Never go to bed a loser, always get up a winner.
10. Intensity of desire, a definite goal, a worthy purpose and perseverance are what it takes to achieve success.
11. When you are committed to serving God, God is committed to blessing you.
12. Until you know where you are going, you will get know where.
13. Never give up believing for it is your faith that will give you the breakthrough you need.

WISDOM FOR ASSOCIATION

1. There are those who add to your life, and there are those who subtract from it. Pay attention to those who add to you.
2. God does not relate with a man except on the basis of a covenant. Pay attention to your covenant with God and make sure that you are faithful to it.
3. You need good willed people to get to where you are going. Learn to nurture and keep relationships that are clean and rewarding.
4. Just as you are a solution to someone's problem, someone is a solution to your problem.
5. You will always attract the kind of person you are.
6. There are those who are difficult to relate with. Are you one of them?
7. Kind people always get connected to people that will greatly bless their lives, though that is not their motive for showing kindness.
8. The one who shows favour will be favoured.
9. Respect other people's feelings and your feelings will be respected.
10. Getting along well with people is not a gift, but an act that must be learned and practiced.

RENEWING THE MIND

1. When one is worrying, he is literally strangling or choking his own creative powers.
2. It requires 64 facial muscles to frown and only 14 to smile. Be joyful always and you will always look young and fresh, and your creative powers will function better.
3. What you hear repeatedly, you will eventually believe.
4. A change of mind leads to a change of experience.
5. The way you think determines the way you act. The way you act determines your habit. And your habit determines your experience.
6. You are a sum total of your thoughts.
7. Your thoughts reveal who you really are. What kind of thoughts do you think?
8. Faith is the conclusion of the meditations of the mind based on the information fed it.
9. Worrying is an oppression of the mind. That is why worrying makes the body to malfunction.
10. Understand the way the mind works and you will understand why things are the way they are.