

The Life You Were Meant to Live

(Discovering Your God-Given Mission in Life)

“Brothers, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of the prize yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”
(Philippians 3:13-14)

BIBLICAL
BASIS

Is it really possible for leaders to live their life on purpose? Is ministry merely about reacting to needs around us, or is it about something more? Can we play offense and not just defense with our lives? Does God have a specific mission for each of us to fulfill? The answer to each of these questions is “yes,” and in this exercise, you will receive the tools to live the life you were meant to live.

Five Biblical Foundations

1. We all have been given a _____ for our lives.
2. We are most _____ when we are fulfilling our purpose.
3. Not everyone _____ their God-given purpose.
4. Our purpose is _____ from our personal inward design.
5. We will be _____ on our obedience to our God-given calling in life.

“For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.” (Romans 11:29)

“Walk worthy of the calling with which you have been called.” (Ephesians 4:1)

How God Called Leaders in Scripture

In the Bible, we see at least four ways that God revealed someone's purpose in life. Their calling unfolded just like it does for ordinary people like us today:

1. _____ (Example: The Apostle Paul)
God reveals your purpose in a moment or an event and it becomes instantly clear.
2. _____ (Example: Esther)
God reveals your purpose over many years, step by step, as you capitalize on opportunities.
3. _____ (Example: Jeremiah)
God reveals your purpose early in life; you always remember being called.
4. _____ (Example: Joseph)
God reveals your purpose in a general sense. As you move toward it, He provides the details.

CHECK YOUR
HEART

Following in Jesus' Footsteps

Our Lord was very aware of His calling in life. Christ was given a purpose. We too, have been given a purpose. At the end of His life, Jesus prayed these words:

“Father, I have glorified You on earth, having accomplished the purpose You have given Me.”
(John 17:4)

Later He said: *“As the Father has sent Me, so I send you.”* (John 20:21)

Understanding Your Purpose

Earlier, we said our purpose is built from our personal inward design. To understand your life purpose, one place you should look is inside your heart:

1. _____ (What abilities do you naturally possess?)
2. _____ (What are your primary motivational gifts?)
3. _____ (What do you really want to do?)
4. _____ and _____ (What produces the most when you do it?)
5. _____ and _____ (What do friends affirm about you?)
6. _____ and _____ (What are you compelled to pursue?)
7. _____ and _____ (What do you enjoy doing?)
8. _____ and _____ (What's in front of you now, as an opportunity?)

Uncovering Your Life Purpose

A second step toward understanding your life purpose is to align yourself with God's purposes. Your purpose in life is not something you create but rather uncover. It is God-given and resides within every believer. The following are boundaries to make sure your purpose is God's idea, not merely your own.

Your Purpose Ought To...

1. Begin with God's Priorities

It begins with His agenda, not yours: the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. Ask: “God, what are You doing in the world and how can I join You?”

2. Revolve Around Your Identity

Next, your purpose should reflect your answers to the list above, “Understanding Your Purpose.” It will be unique to your gifts, passions, and desires.

3. Include Others

God's purpose will not be fulfilled in isolation. It will always include people and it will involve serving people. You cannot do it alone.

4. Be Bigger Than Yourself

Your purpose will usually take a lifetime to fulfill. It will be God-sized. Richard Bach was asked how to know if our purpose is fulfilled. He stated, "If you're alive, it isn't."

5. Contain Life-Changing Convictions

Only if you have something worth living for, do you really have something worth dying for. Your purpose should be about activity to which you would give your life.

KEY POINTS

6. Have Eternal Value

Eternity should be affected in some way by the fulfilling of your purpose. Don't limit it to simply moving things around here on earth. Make it count for eternity.

An Exercise for Writing Your Purpose Statement

The following is a list for life planning. We suggest you take a day alone with God and respond to the ten items below. Use a separate sheet of paper and take your time. From this list, begin to write a statement of purpose for your life.

1. _____

What needs tug most at your heart? What are the things that make you cry or make you angry or cause you to become passionate?

2. _____

What are the major hallmarks that have made up your life? List significant books, people, events, mentors and accomplishments that have shaped your life so far.

3. _____

What recurring themes or issues keep coming up in your conversations, sermons or Bible studies you deliver? Are there subjects you return to regularly?

4. _____ and _____

What specific resources do you have at your side that you could employ as you fulfill your mission? These could be possessions, skills and people that help you.

5. _____

What is your style of leadership, your personality and your spiritual gifts? What unique means of influence do you use when you try to accomplish a task?

6. _____

What are some of your aspirations or ideas that could be a God-given, clarified vision for the future? What are the things you'd love to do before you die?

CHECK YOUR HEART

7. _____

This is it. Begin to write out your purpose statement that answers the question: Why do you exist? Why did God give you to the world? Write out the central mission for your life in one to three sentences.

8. _____

Based on your mission statement, describe in detail what you see as the ultimate results of your life, as if you could see your contribution from the other end of it. Start each vision statement with the words: "I see..."

9. _____

Now list words that describe your deepest values. They should be principles that drive you. These values guide the decisions of your life and keep you on course. These should be simple, descriptive words; you should list no more than six.

10. _____ and _____

Finally, list the areas of your life (spiritual life, family, professional, social) that are important to your purpose. List specific goals that will enable you to turn the lofty purpose statement into a practical "to do" list that you can begin to implement:

- Lifetime Goals: What do you want to do over your lifetime?
- Five-Year Goals: What do you want to see happen in three to five years?
- One-Year Goals: What do you want to do in the next year?
- 90-Day Goals: What will you do in the next three months?
- Next Steps: What steps will you take now in order to get started?

ASSESSMENT: Find a Christian leader you believe is living his or her life on purpose. Locate someone you believe has a mature statement of purpose for his or her life. Ask, "How did you arrive at your purpose?"

ACTION PLAN

APPLICATION: Write out a statement of purpose based on the truths of this lesson.