

Called to His Purpose



"And 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."

Romans 8:28

EMPOWERED FOR
GOD-GIVEN SERVICE

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TITLE: CALLED TO HIS PURPOSE

ISBN: 978-0-9689258-7-4

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Cover Design / Layout: Sarah Van Pelt

Printed in Canada by:

Project L.A.M.B.S. International Inc.

Box 20569 Steinbach, MB Canada R5G 1R9

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Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the New International Version Study Bible, International Bible Society 1973, 1978, 1984, 1995. © Zondervan Corporation

December 12, 2006 First Edition

November 6, 2011 Second Edition

Leadership Series

Book 2

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PREFACE

Welcome to the discipleship / leadership series. These little booklets were designed to give basic information concerning various topics about our Christian faith in Christ Jesus.

The purpose of this series is to stimulate thought and to foster a clearer understanding of discipleship and servant leadership. These booklets can be used as a discussion tool for personal study, family devotion, youth meetings or in cell groups. Our hope is that this information will stir the readers and encourage them to go deeper into personal research and study.

Our desire is that these booklets will be a blessing to the reader and a tool that can be shared with others as a gift of encouragement.

Please feel free to mail or e-mail us for more copies or to just write to us with any feedback concerning the content of these studies. We hope you enjoy this offering of knowledge and experience. We pray that Christ will draw you into an ever deeper personal relationship with Himself as you study.

Your servants in Christ,

Rev. Dr. James and Hkaw Win Humphries

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INTRODUCTION

*And 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**.*
Romans 8:28

Sometimes it is hard to grasp that there is a reason for us to be here on earth. We are not just to take up space and make waste; our lives are divinely planned out by an all-knowing and loving God. The key to understanding this is to see that we are His workmanship. He desires to make us into the image and character of His Son – to make us more like Him. He is the potter and we are the clay. The struggle is to let the potter do the molding, submitting to His hands. We also need to see that the potter knows that not every vessel will be the same – each one has its unique differences. His ultimate purpose is to make you more like Him.

God knew you before you were born. He knows the number of hairs on your head and is intently interested in you. He wants to call you and speak to you each day with a specific purpose for your life. He desires above everything else to have a personal relationship with you.

The word “purpose” has many synonyms, which are important if we hope to understand the bigger picture of God’s calling for our lives. Synonyms for purpose are: aim, design, function, idea, intention, object, point, principle, reason, desire, goal, hope, target, single-mindedness, steadfastness, will, and

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result. These words all point in a direction and demand some form of action on our part.

For many years, the church and its disciples have been driven to find out what people's spiritual gifts are. However, we do not understand clearly that all gifts are given for a purpose. They are not just given to the individual for his/her own edification, but for ministry to the total body. The gifts are to be used as a tool to help carry out your God-given purpose for life. They are an outward expression of what is in your heart. Everything has a reason for being, including your talents, gifts and personality.

It is also important to see that God has a divine purpose for you, your family and for us as a church. Christ desires to teach us how we can walk and live out His purpose for our lives. He gives us the power of the Holy Spirit by which to do it.

What follows are some signposts that we find throughout the Bible that assist us in learning God's power and purpose for our lives.

SCRIPTURAL SIGNPOSTS

Scripture is the foundation-stone that we are to build on. It is our hope that these Scriptures will take you deeper into what the call of Christ is and the importance of understanding God's purpose for your life. Let us hear from the Word and commit to do as the Spirit leads.

*God is mighty, but does not despise me; he is mighty, and firm in his **purpose**.* (NIV) Job 36:5

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As already stated, one of God's main goals for us is that we become more like Christ. He is firm in His purposes and is never changing. With this truth we realize it is we who need to be changed and discover His purposes for our lives. God is not out to enslave us, but to bring us into alignment with His will. This frees us, giving us hope and a reason for living.

Job's life was full of challenges, yet he knew in his heart that God had a plan. As he continued to trust God, God proved Himself mighty to Job and to those around him.

*I cry out to God Most High, to God, who fulfills his **purpose** for me.* (NIV) Psalm 57:2

David's life was full of all kinds of twists and turns, but as he yielded his life to God he knew the Creator of the universe would see him through. God would keep all His promises and covenants with him. Likewise, our life is full of challenges, but if we take hold of God's hand He will walk us through.

We can look at Christ's example as He cried to the Father in the garden of Gethsemane, "yet not what I will, but what You will" (Mark 14:36). We all have to come to a crossroad where we battle out who will be in authority over our lives. The question we must answer is whether we have the faith to trust Him because He knows what is best for us. The challenge is whether we are willing to die to ourselves. Jesus said that a grain of seed must go into the ground and unless it dies (or is broken open) it will produce nothing (John 12:24). He wants us to break open, get rooted and sprout up and produce a plant that will bear fruit for His glory. God's vision for you is to walk in His power and strength and to produce fruit that will prove that you are His.

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David's life often mirrored the character of God and how one could personally walk with Him each day through all kinds of struggles and trials.

*The Lord will fulfill his **purpose** for me; your love, O LORD, endures forever—do not abandon the works of your hands. (NIV)*
Psalm 138:8

David, like all people, struggled with “letting go and letting God.” Some days it just did not make sense the way God was leading, yet David stayed firm on the fact that God loved, cared for and would guide him. He knew that God had only the best in mind for him; all he needed to do was rest in the Lord's loving arms.

David prayed that God would not abandon His purpose for him. He asked the Lord to keep molding and making him. Often we want to be the potter and not the clay. We want to mold ourselves into our image and not into God's. The hardest bridge to cross is to “let go and let God.” It is hard for us to see and to comprehend God's bigger picture for our lives. However, we need to remember (as David did) that God does have a divine purpose and (because of His great love) He will not leave us or forsake us.

David's desire was that God's purposes would prevail. He wanted and desired to stay in step with God's will for his life. David was not perfect and he made many mistakes, but with God's help he was able to focus on becoming a true friend of God.

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

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Solomon tells us that the pain and struggles that we face are used to accomplish God's divine purpose for our life. If we look at a potter working on a lump of clay, we can see it takes time to form something beautiful. The potter has to shape us, adding water when we seem a little dry; other times it looks like the potter is starting all over again. However, we must remember the potter carries within His mind the image of what He sees that lump of clay can look like.

When we let God's way prevail there might be pain and frustration, but the final result will be worthwhile. He will not give up on us, so we need to remember not to give up on Him.

*But I said, "I have labored to no **purpose**; I have spent my strength in vain and for nothing. Yet what is due me is in the LORD's hand, and my reward is with my God."* (NIV) Isaiah 49:4

Isaiah struggled with the idea of whether God really knew what He was doing with his life and with the lives of the Israelite people. He examined his life and felt that he had labored for no purpose. Many pastors, teachers and missionaries often struggle with this same question. Did my years of labor have a purpose or value to them? Did I do anything to touch those around me or to impact my world? Paul had to remind the church that some people planted, others nurtured the crop and others brought in the harvest, but it is God who brings the increase.

We all want to have purpose in our lives. We desire to make a difference, but cannot see what is happening to the seed that God has planted. Even years after our home-going, the

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purposes of God will be fulfilled because God has promised it. Whatever we sow we shall reap.

We should not focus so much on a reward here on earth, but know that there will be an eternal reward for those who have laboured for the Kingdom of God. The key is that we must not grow weary in well-doing. Remember that the Lord has everything in His hands. God misses no detail at all.

*...so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the **purpose** for which I sent it. (NIV) Isaiah 55:11*

We can be assured that when God speaks, it will happen. What He plants will bring a harvest. There is no power here on earth or in the heavenlies that can stop God's purpose for ourselves and the world. He is Creator of everything and all things are in His hands; the power of His spoken word will achieve what He purposes it to do. The challenge for the human disciple is to see God as God, to let Him do His complete work in and through our lives. He has our best interest in mind.

We need to have the faith to believe in His purpose. The centurion commander knew this when he told Jesus that He did not have to come to his house; He just had to speak the words. He knew that if Jesus willed for the paralyzed servant to be healed, it then would happen (Matthew 8:5-13). What God speaks forth will come back as fruit for His glory, and will accomplish His purposes.

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*But the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected God's **purpose** for themselves, not having been baptized by John. Luke 7:30*

The religious leaders of the Bible had challenges in trying to figure out what God was doing. John the Baptist was teaching a baptism of repentance, Jesus was teaching about the Kingdom of God and that He was the only way that one could get to heaven.

Jesus presents to the disciples steppingstones to walk on in order to move forward to a place of maturity. Our journey today is no different. It starts by being faithful in little things (humbling ourselves) and by taking the time to find out God's purpose for our lives. These religious rulers were being called by John to repent, be obedient and follow through with the step of baptism. Baptism seemed humiliating for them. They would watch others but their pride kept them from taking part. Because of this they found themselves outside of God's purpose for their lives. The religious leaders could not see how this step would lead to a deeper walk with God.

Life with God starts by being obedient and taking the first step toward His purposes for your life. We should not reject God's will but accept God's divine purpose for us. When this step is taken it begins a journey that will affect our lives for all eternity.

*Therefore, in the present case I advise you: Leave these men alone! Let them go! For if their **purpose** or activity is of human origin, it will fail. But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God. (NIV) Acts 5:38-39*